



Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
8 a.m. July 15, 2025
111 S. Tejon St, Ste. 703, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Board members present: Sam Clark (remote), Troy Coats, Jordan Empey, Jeff Finn, Chris Lieber, Laura Neumann, Jeremy Shirley (remote), Brandy Williams (remote)
Board members absent: Carrie Bartow, Jim Smith, Patrick Stephens
Staff members present: Chelsea Gondeck, Sarah Nurmi, Pat Rigdon, Carrie Simison, Austin Wilson-Bradley, Ana Valdez
Guests: Jessica Thompson, Allison Zimmerman

Call to Order & Welcome

At 8:03 a.m., Chris Lieber called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

None.

Minutes

The board reviewed minutes from the May 20, 2025, board meeting. Jeff Finn put forth a motion, seconded by Laura Neumann.

Jeremy Shirley noted that his name was incorrect on the minutes and requested a correction in the meeting minutes. The board unanimously approved the amended.

Financials

Dated May 31, 2025

The board reviewed the financial statements for the period ending May 31, 2025. Laura Neumann motioned to accept the financial statements, Jeremy Shirley seconded, the board unanimously accepted the financials.

Banking Resolution

The board reviewed the banking resolution. Jeff Finn motioned to approve the banking resolution, Troy Coats seconded, the board unanimously approved the banking resolution.

Presentation

Master Plan Follow-Up

Chelsea Gondeck reviewed the updated visions, goals, actions steps, assets, opportunities, and challenges with the board, noting these have been drafted based on public input and requesting that the board provide suggested revisions.

Chris Lieber shared appreciation for City Council and Downtown Partnership's commitment to public engagement, highlighting key community priorities such as safety, parking, green space, and resident-focused amenities. Chelsea noted that outreach included both DDA residents and neighboring communities and confirmed that expanded efforts through the Downtown Partnership led to more balanced and representative feedback. Community feedback was positive overall. The board briefly discussed maintaining strong collaboration with Downtown neighborhoods.

The board participated in a discussion about the current stage of the master plan. Chelsea addressed inquiries regarding the Drake property, Downtown's changing demographics, and changes to the anti-displacement section.

Lastly, Chelsea outlined the next steps, including continued engagement through upcoming meetings and events, along with online participation options. A full draft of the updated plan is anticipated by September, followed by board and public review and final design formatting.

Governance

Amended and Restated Bylaws

Chelsea Gondeck shared that a detailed review of the DDA bylaws was completed to ensure they align with current practices, clarify language, and clean up inconsistencies. One of the key proposed changes is the introduction of officer term limits as the best practice, aimed at encouraging healthy board turnover. Clarification has also been added regarding partial terms and eligibility criteria, which require board members to represent the DDA in some capacity.

Jeff Finn supported the term limits with an example from another board and raised broader questions about how services are administered by the Downtown Partnership on behalf of the DDA. Chelsea noted that some of these topics may fall outside the scope of the bylaws but welcomed further discussion.

There was consensus to postpone any action on the bylaws until a future meeting.

Officer Slate Review

The board discussed the separation between board terms and officer terms, focusing specifically on officer roles. Chris Lieber, who has served as chair for two full years and whose board term runs through 2027, expressed support for healthy and strategic leadership turnover and openness to transitioning out of the chair role. With upcoming priorities such as the master planning process and CEO search, the board acknowledged these may present opportunities for leadership changes.

Jeff Finn offered to step down as vice chair. Sam Clark expressed interest in serving as vice chair, while others noted an interest in officer positions but did not currently have the capacity to serve. Officer roles are reviewed and set annually.

A motion was made to retain the current officer slate and revisit the discussion at a later meeting.

Guest Allison Zimmerman left at 9:05 a.m.

Grants

Retail Incentive: Eden Oaks

Austin Wilson-Bradley outlined a retail incentive grant application for Eden Oaks, a custom woodworking and cabinetry business located at 122 Kiowa St., which also includes the Med Café property. The business, established in Colorado Springs in 2000, is opening a Downtown showroom and plans to further activate the space through woodworking and cooking classes, as well as an art gallery. Three full-time employees are dedicated to the Downtown location.

Approximately \$90,000 was invested prior to the grant application, which is ineligible for reimbursement. Staff recommended a \$15,000 grant to support eligible tenant improvements.

Board members expressed support for the application. Comments highlighted the benefit of adding business diversity and hard retail options to underutilized Downtown buildings. There was a brief

discussion on sales tax allocation, noting that revenue is tied to the business's licensing location. The rarity of retail incentive grant requests was also noted and appreciated.

Jeremy Shirley motioned to approve the grant proposal, Laura Neumann seconded, the board unanimously approved the \$15,000 grant proposal.

Retail Incentive: Green Mountain Haven

Austin Wilson-Bradley presented a retail incentive grant application for Green Mountain Haven, a new experiential retail business located in a retail strip across from Palmer High School. The business offers a variety of craft-based workshops including candle making, painting, terrariums, and more. The business also plans to sell handmade products.

This marks the owners' first brick-and-mortar location, with most of their operations focused on hosting large group workshops in the studio space. While they do not serve food, they do have a liquor license. The business has signed a three-year lease and occupies a smaller space that requires no tenant improvements, as noted by the building owner, Troy Coates.

Staff recommended a \$10,000 grant, representing a little over 20% of the business's eligible startup costs, which primarily cover inventory and materials. Board members were supportive, noting the value of experiential retail and the investment in northern downtown.

Jeff Finn motioned to accept the \$10,000 grant proposal, Lauran Neumann seconded, and the board unanimously approved with Troy Coats abstaining.

Building Enhancement: 31 N. Tejon

Austin Wilson-Bradley presented a grant request for a large, multi-story Downtown property with four stories of office space undergoing significant renovation, including brick restoration, new awnings, lighting, and interior modernization. The building was previously under-occupied but is now attracting interest from new tenants. Staff recommended funding approximately 20% of eligible costs.

Board members expressed support for the investment, especially on the Kiowa side, which has experienced long-term vacancies and faces challenges due to the one-way street and nearby bus station. They also discussed the balance between historic preservation and activation, with some concern about precedent related to painting historic brick. Discussion also noted that grants typically focus on smaller-scale material improvements rather than larger structural projects like this.

Finn noted, for the record, that in past projects such as Giuseppe's, the board scrutinized every detail, down to signage. He emphasized the importance of maintaining that level of attention to context, whether related to precedent or location.

Lauran Neumann motioned to approve a \$12,500 grant to be used specifically for brick restoration, awning, and lighting improvements, explicitly excluding painting from the eligible uses. Troy Coats second the motion, and the board unanimously approved the proposal.

Other

Clean & Safe Update

Pat Rigdon shared updates on the Clean & Safe program, highlighting the addition of outreach ambassadors, increased supplemental security staffing, and enhanced vehicle monitoring. While efforts will focus on main pedestrian areas, security will extend throughout the entire DDA district. City Council has been briefed.

Chelsea Gondeck shared that just under \$1 million has been raised to date, with continued fundraising efforts underway. She and Pat emphasized they are open to funding from any source. While the program has not yet reached its full funding goal, Chelsea expressed confidence that the gap will be closed.

Staff noted the Clean & Safe program will be regularly evaluated and remain flexible to adjustments. Supplemental security will track key activity metrics, while Rigdon will produce monthly data reporting. A task force is also being formed to guide the program with final recommendations expected at the end of the 19-month pilot.

Brandy Williams left at 9:57 a.m.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Chris Lieber adjourned the board meeting at 10:01 a.m.