



MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS COMMISSION

Friday, June 25, 2026, 9 AM
114 North Main Street

Board Members Present: Lauran Stimac (Chair), Ray Brown (Treasurer), Victoria Robinson (Vice Chair), Ashley Cash (for Mayor Young), Brent Hooks, Ed Stephens III, Dorcas Young Griffin, and Senator Raumesh Akbari, and Karl Schledwitz

Board Members Not Present: Surayyah Hasan (Secretary), Willie Brooks, Councilman JB Smiley, Commissioner Mickell Lowery, Janice Banks, and Representative Antonio Parkinson

Staff Present: Chandell Ryan, Christine Taylor, Brett Roler, Penelope Rambin, Milton Howery, Grace White, Sam Caldwell, Tori Haliburton, Morgan Shaw, Nesha Cotton, and Sara Barrera.

Guests: April Bostick, Austin Jones, Jae, WMC 5, Neil Strebig (CA), and Member of Public

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM. The board welcomed new members Dorcas Young Griffin and Karl Schledwitz. Karl Schledwitz introduces himself as a long-time Memphian, involved in various downtown developments, and expresses his excitement to contribute. Dorcas Young Griffin introduces herself as the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Shelby County and mentions her upcoming role as President and CEO of MIFA, emphasizing her commitment to downtown Memphis. Christine Taylor called Roll to confirm quorum. After quorum was confirmed, Chairwoman Stimac called for approval of the April 24, 2026, minutes. Ed Stephens motioned to approve April 24, 2026 minutes, Victoria Robinson seconded the motion, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called for agenda item III: Financial Update

Penelope Rambin presented an overview of the board's financials, highlighting the CBD assessment and the Downtown Public Safety Grant. The CBD assessment was higher than budgeted, leading to an amendment for an additional \$700,000. 90% of the CBID assessment funds have been collected, with ongoing efforts to collect the remaining amounts. The Downtown Public Safety Grant received \$74 million from the state of Tennessee, with funds being used for pre-development expenses and earning interest.

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called for agenda item IV: Auditors Confirmed

Penelope Rambin presented the HHM CPA firm as auditors for fiscal year 2026, with an audit fee of \$31,500 and a tax preparation fee of \$4,200. After presentation, Ray Brown motioned to approve the firm as presented, Brent Hooks seconded the motion, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called for agenda item V: Ambassador Program Year 1 Review

Brett Roler presented 1st year review highlighting its impact and the partnership with Block by Block. The program includes cleaning, green, hospitality, safety, and dispatch teams, each with specific roles and responsibilities. The ambassador program has recorded over 160,000 tasks, including cleaning, safety

interventions, and hospitality interactions. Visual blight removal, panhandling intervention, and dog waste removal are significant challenges addressed by the team. Business check-ins have been conducted with over 10,000 interactions, building familiarity and relationships with downtown businesses. Year two goals include increasing staffing levels, expanding service hours, and leveraging technology and equipment to enhance the program's effectiveness.

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called for agenda item VI: Election of Nominating Committee

Chair Lauran Stimac introduces the nominating committee consisting of herself, Ed Stephenson, and Ashley Cash. Board members are encouraged to submit interest statements for leadership positions by July 16th. The nominating committee will meet to make recommendations for new officers, which will be presented at the August 27 board meeting. Brent Hooks motioned to approve the selected committee members, Karl Schledwitz seconded the motion, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called for agenda item VII: Downtown Safety Network

Robert Montgomery presented The Downtown Safety Network, a radio-based communication network connecting private buildings for proactive public safety. The network allows for immediate communication among stakeholders to address issues before they escalate. Participation criteria include having on-site security or building management to ensure the radio stays on-site. Two major stakeholders, Auto Zone headquarters and First Horizon Bank, have applied for the program, with more targeted outreach planned for specific corridors.

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called for agenda item VIII: Presidents Report

Chandell Ryan presented a brief Downtown update. New marketing team member, Miles Thomas, was introduced as the new Marketing & Communications Specialist. Recent marketing initiatives were highlighted, including the Brew Hop and \$5 parking deal. The Brew Hop campaign was well attended, and the \$5 parking deal received positive feedback. Upcoming events include the July 4th celebration, with fireworks, drones, food, and music planned at Tom Lee Park. Recent openings in downtown Memphis, such as the Baron Van Opera Bean and the River of Time Museum, are celebrated.

Chairwoman Lauran Stimac called for agenda item IX: New Business/ Adjournment

Seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.