

Baker Main Street Economic Development District Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, September 8, 2025
Time: 4:00 PM
Location: Baker City Fire Station
3701 Groom Rd.
Baker, LA, 70714

1. Call to Order, Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Cedric Murphy, President of the District, at approximately 4:05 PM. Dante Bidwell welcomed attendees and explained the meeting was rescheduled due to the previous week's holiday. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Willie Williams.

2. Roll Call

Board Members Present

Name	Role
Cedric Murphy	President
Lisa Bradley Hunt	Vice President
Michelle Woods (Virtually)	Board Member
Myra Victor Harris	Board Member
Willie Williams	Treasurer
Kermit Johnson, IV	Secretary

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **Motion:** Treasurer, Willie Williams
- **Second:** Vice President, Shaelisa Bradley Hunt
- **Result:** Motion carried unanimously.

4. Baker Overlay District Project – Presentation by Villavaso and Associates

- Representatives from Villavaso and Associates (Stephen Villavaso, Fred Neal, Jr. and Andrew Tritch) provided an update on the overlay district project, including the project's background, schedule, and the importance of in-person engagement.

- The consultants outlined the next steps, including a draft overlay district plan by December, and emphasized the need for board input on design, development standards, and funding mechanisms.
- Discussion included the importance of Main Street’s appearance, accessibility, and the use of overlay district tools (e.g., facade grants, signage, lighting, and landscaping).
- The consultants shared examples from other communities and encouraged board members to consider inspiring “main street” areas for future reference.

5. Discussion of Economic Development District Sales Tax

- Dante Bidwell explained the process for introducing a 2% sales tax within the Main Street EDD, to be managed by the board and used exclusively for district improvements.
- The city attorney is drafting ordinance language for the tax, which will require board and city council approval.
- There are no residents in the district, so no public vote is required.
- Discussion included the importance of communicating with local businesses about the board’s role and the benefits of the tax.

6. Public Comment

- Board members and the public discussed the need for a clear vision and identity for Baker, the importance of visual plans to gain public support, and the need for ongoing communication with both businesses and residents.
- The board agreed to consider hosting a business forum or sending introductory communications to district businesses.
- The consultants assigned “homework” for board members to bring examples of appealing main streets from other communities to the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.