

Main Street Board (Economic Development District)

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 2, 2025

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Location: Baker Fire Department

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. and commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Board Members Present

Name	Role
Cedric Murphy	President
Shaelisa Bradley Hunt	Vice President
Willie Williams	Treasurer
Kermit Johnson IV	Secretary

Absent

- Michel Woods

Guests and Affiliates in Attendance

Name	Role
Dante Bidwell	Lead Consultant
Darnell Waites	Mayor, City of Baker
Madison Harris	Intern

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **Motion:** Willie Williams moved to approve the minutes with any necessary amendments.
 - **Second:** Vice President Shaelisa Hunt
 - **Result:** Motion carried unanimously.
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4. Review and Adoption of Bylaws

- Discussion led by Willie Williams, who supported the adoption of the bylaws and emphasized the board's flexibility to amend them as needed.
- Members were encouraged to raise any future concerns or proposed changes through formal discussion.

Motion to adopt the bylaws as presented was carried unanimously.

5. Retail Strategies Economic Development Presentation

Presenter: Dante Bidwell, Lead Consultant

Overview

Retail Strategies, headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, presented a detailed analysis and strategy for retail development in the City of Baker.

Key Points Discussed

- Baker trade area has approximately **\$700 million** in household income being spent elsewhere, signaling strong opportunity for local economic development.
- Leakage trends show spending gaps between younger and older populations.
- Strong need for transparent collaboration with landowners to facilitate commercial investment.
- Certain existing properties were identified as potential obstacles to new development.
- Baker highways see **7–10 million vehicles annually**, making it attractive to national chains.

Strategic Considerations

- Proactively engage realtors, developers, and property owners.
 - Prioritize investment-ready sites and address inconsistencies in available data.
 - Enhance the city's retail appeal through zoning, infrastructure, and marketing initiatives.
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6. Strategic Planning and Future Meetings

Upcoming Meetings

Date	Meeting Purpose
July 2025	Potential Virtual Meeting with Retail Strategies
August 2025	Joint Meeting with Baker Economic Development District and Convention Center

Discussion Highlights

- Emphasis on supporting sustainable growth, especially for residents aged 30–40.
 - President Murphy stressed the need for consistent commitment among board members and partners.
 - A contingency plan should be in place in case current initiatives are delayed or derailed.
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7. Public Comment

Topics Raised

- Concerns from local entrepreneurs about increasing rent and insufficient small business support.
- Property owners are slow to complete renovations, even after obtaining permits.
- Rent increases following renovations are deterring new tenants.
- Suggestions included rent moratoriums and enforcement mechanisms to ensure properties are move-in ready.
- Discussion included use of **Tax Increment Financing (TIFs)** and the role of planning and zoning in activating high-traffic retail locations.

Board Comment

- Willie Williams reiterated the concern over rising rents post-renovation and emphasized the need to review city policies to address this.
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8. Closing Remarks

President Cedric Murphy delivered closing remarks at approximately **5:12 p.m.**, reaffirming the board’s responsibility to support Baker’s long-term growth.

Quote: “Let’s get Baker better.”

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 5:12 p.m.

10. Summary of Action Items

Action Item	Deadline / Timeline
Schedule July virtual meeting with Retail Strategies	July 2025
Begin coordinated outreach to developers and landowners	Ongoing
Explore rent stabilization or oversight mechanisms	August Meeting
Prepare agenda for August joint meeting with BEDD & Convention Center	Prior to August Meeting