



## MINUTES

Wednesday, May 28, 2025  
Western Vista Conference Room  
1920 Thomes Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82001

### I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 11:10 am.

### II. ROLL CALL

**Members Present:** Councilman Scott Roybal (President), Wendy Volk (Vice President), Janelle Rose, Danica Mrozinsky, Brian Bau, Lorrell Bellotti, On Zoom: Jamie Winters,

**Members Absent:** Amber Nuse, Dave Teubner

**Staff Present:** Sophia Maes, DDA Administrator; Miya Debusk, DDA Social Media Assistant; Charles Bloom, Planning and Development Director

**Members of the Public Present:** Glen Garrett, Paul Bellotti. On Zoom: Erin Fagan, City Planner; Jennifer McClelland, City Council Executive Assistant; Erin Fagan, City Planner; Amber Ash; City Chief of Staff

### III. DISCLOSURES / ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.)

None.

### IV. WORK SESSION

Maes began the meeting with a recap of the previous Work Session, which focused on defining the role of the DDA per WY state statute. She reminded the Board that the DDA role is to stop the spread of blight and to maintain/increase property values in the Downtown District, and that it's not designed to run events or directly promote businesses. She stated there are several tools the DDA can use for this purpose, including the creation and implementation of development plans (adopted by the governing body), landscaping and public improvements, business recruitment and retention, and other economic improvement activities.



The Board affirmed support for moving away from the perception of the DDA as an event organizer and instead focusing on infrastructure and strategic economic development.

### **A. DDA Subcommittee Identification and Creation**

Maes began the topic of subcommittees and capacity expansion by opening the discussion on DDA Board priorities for the next fiscal year based on the Plan of Development goals. She stated in the last work session, the following goals were prioritized: 15th Street Experience, Public Communications & Perception, Resource Repository with Benchmarking Tools, Downtown Parking Enhancements, Streetscape/Greenscape Enhancements, and Winter Events (with strategic value). Maes confirmed the Work Session was an open, informal discussion.

Lorrell Bellotti raised concerns on the negative public sentiment around the 15th Street project, perceived lack of clarity about the DDA's role, responsibilities, and authority, the need for clear messaging, consistent communication, and boundary-setting with the public and City Council. Bellotti stated she is tired of being beaten up by the public and the negative sentiment around the projects for Downtown. Volk stated Visit Cheyenne began the 15<sup>th</sup> St Experience project, and then it transitioned to the City. She stated that the DDA doesn't own the project, the City does, but they don't have as much influence on the project. Bau stated the 15<sup>th</sup> St Experience project is important for the DDA as it's a Plan of Development project. He stated that unless people are being directly communicated with, they seem to feel uninformed and blindsided. Mrozinsky wants to focus on the positives and why the DDA supports the project. Rose stated the DDA needs to define its role in these projects and overall mission and communicate what that is. She stated that advocacy is part of the DDA but not the whole role. She stated that communication with Council needs to improve when it comes to Downtown Projects. Bau echoed that the DDA can't do a lot and isn't responsible for a lot. He recommends maximizing influence by focusing on statute and doing the best the DDA can in implementing the Plan of Development. Rose asked if the DDA could help facilitate some of the Downtown projects. Roybal stated that historically the DDA was fairly independent and didn't have much collaboration with the City. He stated that the DDA has become more relevant in the past 18 months. Volk recalled when Amber Ash was Executive Director and she assisted with the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Lighting Project utilizing 6<sup>th</sup> Penny funds. She stated many thought it was a DDA project, but they really did more communication and coordination with the City. She stated that the 15<sup>th</sup> St Experience will be similar. She stated that she doesn't want staff to burn out. Bellotti stated that the most clarity she's received in her time with the DDA was the succinct recap Maes gave referring to the purpose of the DDA. She stated she would like to have consistent and succinct communication both internally and externally. She questioned why the DDA is doing Screen on the Green. Bau stated it was low hanging fruit that improved public perception of the DDA. Bellotti wants to ensure the purpose of the DDA (preventing blight and increasing property values) is communicated over and over again. Roybal agreed that the DDA needs to home in on the ability to say no. Bau agreed that the DDA must have a clear vision and boundaries to prevent getting



hijacked by pet projects from other entities. Bellotti stated that we need to define what our role is in support efforts such as business promotion and events. Bau echoed the need for a Downtown Merchant's Association. Maes stated the Rawlins DDA has a similar structure, and she is in contact with the Downtown Development Foundation to see if there's an opportunity to bridge the gap that the DDA can't fill. Rose agrees that the DDA is not here to promote individual businesses and can't be blamed for poor sales. Mrozinsky agreed and stated she's heard from others that the DDA shouldn't be promoting individual businesses. Winters asked what the DDA could do regarding the 15<sup>th</sup> Street Experience as the City is well into design. Bau stated that he got a lot of feedback, and the City Engineer incorporated the feedback. He stated there is an opportunity for some streetlight funding that the DDA may be able to support. Winters asked if there are other projects the DDA should focus on since 15<sup>th</sup> Street is already well underway. Maes asked if this should not be the highest priority this year. Winters said possibly. Mrozinsky would like to get updates on each of the catalyst projects so Board members know what's going on and can facilitate communication. Rose would like the DDA to be a property owner representative to the City and believes the DDA should have a voice in overall logistics and how it affects the property owners.

Bau believes the DDA should champion the Plan of Development Catalyst projects. Roybal asked for a tab on the website for "Current Projects." Rose believes there needs to be a protocol for what DDA involvement will be, if it's in the Plan of Development then a Board member should be present. Mrozinsky highlighted the need to be involved and involve stakeholders earlier instead of when the DDA is at the end of its involvement with a project. Volk asked if the agenda could include a Plan of Development update item so the Board can evaluate next steps of involvement. She stated that DDA staff needs to be protected from burnout and that a communication procedure with the stakeholders needs to be implemented.

Winters asked if anyone was aware of the 3 Alleyway project. Maes is aware and needs to get the information on the Connect Cheyenne site. Winters states the project includes four alleys in the Downtown District. It started as a drainage issue for St. Mary's and has now expanded to other alleys. The City Engineer is working on the project, but he is not aware of the timeline for construction. He stated that since cleaning up the alleys is a Plan of Development goal, this project should be an item that the DDA is kept updated on it. Rose stated that drainage mitigation will happen no matter what, but any additional streetscaping is to be determined. She stated that staff shouldn't be taking responsibility for these projects but there is a place for the DDA to advocate to be most effective with resources and advocate for property owners who are affected. She would like to see as much work done while the project is occurring, versus having to go back and change things later. Winters spoke on putting the utilities underground, and that the DDA may assist in getting fiber optics downtown or putting in streetscape lighting. He wants to ensure the DDA is a part of the project before it's too late. Rose agrees that this project would be a great use of DDA resources as it enhances the capability to add businesses and conduits throughout downtown. Roybal passed a budget for \$6 million per year for storm sewer work. Rose is interested in how the DDA can engage utility companies to assist. Roybal hopes that having a focus on goals will direct staff.



Bellotti asked if the notes being taken by Maes would be a published document that is public facing. Maes stated that the notes would be typed up as priorities for the DDA for the next year and the DDA will vote to adopt the priorities. She stated the priorities would not need to go through Council. Bellotti wants to move the 15<sup>th</sup> St Experience down on the priority list and would like to reword it as “Support of City Projects that fall within the DDA Boundaries.” Mrozinsky wants to have an outlet for stakeholders to give their input on projects and DDA activities and wants to find a way for the DDA Board to address these but also assert boundaries and roles of the DDA versus the public. She wants the DDA to be empowered and a resource instead of deflecting responsibility. Rose wants to define the format of how the feedback comes in to ensure it’s relevant to the DDA functions. She suggested a possible quarterly town hall or coffee chat for downtown stakeholders. Bau stated that the DBC had at least one person going to Board meetings to stay up to date. He stated that the goal for these projects is for the Board to champion the projects and guide them so they serve everyone who will be affected. He is not sure how to navigate the negative public perception to build trust and still make the projects successful. Bellotti believes that the DDA has opened the door too wide to too many different types of feedback and needs to correct perceptions. Maes summarized that the highest priority may be to get internal alignment and clarity among the Board first. She heard the Board members want to know how to fulfill their roles as DDA Board members first, then the DDA can start addressing projects. Volk wanted to affirm that the DDA’s role is to fight the blight with tools like grants and some beautification. Bau stated there is a bigger vision than just grants. Volk agreed and stated that there should be communication on the City’s projects and the DDA can use the grant programs as incentives for investment along and adjacent to these projects. She believes the DDA should communicate to property owners near the projects on ways they can capitalize on the improvements. Rose believes the DDA has a big role in facilitating infrastructure as well. She also stated that there may be a need to have a more informal meeting than the monthly Board meetings. Bau wants to champion the projects without being positional.

Roybal wanted to note appreciation for the informality on the meeting to discuss perspectives in order to get Board alignment. Bau asked if Work Sessions could be held quarterly. Bellotti likes informal meetings to get real understanding and clarity. Volk agreed the informal meetings are helpful, especially for new members. She did state that formal meetings are helpful from a time management perspective. Bellotti suggested once every three months. Rose stated that the Board seems to be creating a strategic plan, and part of that is a reevaluation of the Board. Roybal stated that the Plan of Development is a plan, but the implementation is up to the Board.

Maes asked the Board what the next action step should be. She introduced some of Board member Teubner’s priorities and thoughts that had been discussed and asked what the Board sees as the best next move. Teubner’s priorities included:

- A cost-benefit analysis on the long-term DDA relationship with the City
- Developing baseline data and benchmarking



- Marketing and communications plan
- Alley Project and Pumphouse Design (rendering) to gain more community buy-in through visualization
- On-street parking design/signage
- Historical analysis of the DDA Directors, including how many years they served, what was accomplished, and what happened during the transitions
- Visits to other DDAs in the US (for example, Greenville, SC) to see what others have done

Maes mentioned the last item was relevant to the International Downtown Association and its annual conference, of which the DDA is a member. Bau asked if Maes would be able to attend, and stated that the 2024 Conference was extremely helpful, particularly hearing the influence that other DDAs have. He stated a secret goal for him is for Maes to have relationships with the businesses and property owners and other stakeholders to be able to influence and make things happen quickly. Director Bloom echoed a similar experience with the Fort Collins DDA, where they noticed a broken bollard on their tour and by the end it was being taken care of.

Volk voiced that she would like to have the DDA hire a photographer to get pictures of past DDA grant recipients to promote. Maes voiced concern about promoting projects that had not set the appropriate precedent. Volk confirmed we'd promote projects that are a great example of the use of DDA grants, but that we need to have digital assets.

Rose voiced that the number one priority is to get a functional website. Maes confirmed there have been inquiries about the Communications Plan RFP. Roybal suggested a sizzle reel on a kiosk or TV in the City lobby. Volk agreed that it may help City partners (staff, Council, etc.) to show what the DDA has done. She also stated that the biggest accomplishment has been getting the DDA stabilized. Bau stated the DDA should be the hub of activity for being the liaison and middle point for collaboration between downtown and the City. Roybal said the first thing is to get clarity in messaging on what the DDA is, what the core values are, and making sure projects either fit those parameters or are directed to the right party. Bau agreed that the DDA should be a resource to guide (even if we don't do the actual projects). Mrozinsky stated that as new projects come up, the DDA should have a way to evaluate how or if it supports them with clear parameters. This way when questions come up about why the DDA did or didn't support an action, there is a clear answer. Bau mentioned the Resource Repository will evolve over the next few months. Roybal wants to evaluate the accomplishments and progress at the next Work Session in three months. Winters stated that he had worked with previous Director Chenchar to create something similar such as a brochure or handout for resources. He doesn't believe it was finished, but it's an idea that's been there for a while. Rose stated those resources need to be physical and digital, and hopefully others can utilize for their resources. Mrozinsky asked if other departments could help with creating assets and resources. Maes agreed that there's appetite for resources compilation and communication in the City, but the effort will be coordinating and doing the design work. Rose stated that knowing the steps and



where to go with the City is gold and will be incredibly valuable to developers. Winters asked Director Bloom about a handout for the Brownfield Assessment Grant. Bloom stated the City's Brownfield Grant will not be renewed in October. Volk asked if there were funds that could be used for acquisition for a local dry cleaner property as a brownfield. Bloom stated that the RLF can be used for remediation, but not acquisition, and the Assessment Grant is for petroleum clean up, which does not really exist downtown. Maes stated that the DDA could acquire the property then use the RLF to remediate any brownfield issues. Bloom stated there is the ability to use the EPA Assessment Grant to compile planning documents as well as Phase 1 and 2 analyses.

Maes stated there were only thirty minutes left in the meeting. She summarized the goal of updating the mission to align with the discussions had by the Board, including updated the language on the webpage. Roybal asked if the updates would be for the new website or the City website. Maes clarified the current webpage is under the City and that would need to be updated until a new website can be developed via the RFP process. Bau suggested staff look at what other IDA members use for websites and communications, such as a package website for other DDA's. Rose stated she's received feedback that the Communications Plan budget is too low. Bau recalled the budget was increased and asked if that was still too low. Maes stated she corrected the RFP to state the \$60,000 was a starting budget and posted any corrections to the DDA website. Rose asked if the RFP has been posted on social media. Maes confirmed a social media post has been made and another was planned. Roybal asked if the information had been sent to the stakeholders. Maes confirmed it had been sent to the 1,600-subscriber email list. Bau stated he would never spend \$60,000 on a website. Rose stated that the feedback was from a boutique agency and clarified that budget was too low for the RFP's comprehensive communications scope. Maes agreed the scope was very comprehensive and the budget was too low. Rose mentioned she spoke with someone from the Nonprofit Network and would try to forward their contact info. Maes stated that if no proposals are received, she'd come back to the Board for a new strategy.

Maes moved into Subcommittees and Task Forces, acknowledging limited time the Board might be able to dedicate. She explained what these would look like and asked what level of engagement the Board would like to or be able to provide. Rose asked if having more Board involvement would make it too confusing and if the action items discussed are doable by the small staff. Volk recalled the experience with the 2025 Planter Program selection committee, where staff had a direct request and task for Board members. She stated direct delegation may be best instead of subcommittee or task force meetings. Bau stated he preferred task forces instead of subcommittees, as there's an end goal. Mrozinsky stated she didn't want multiple subcommittees to cause more multi-tasking for staff. Maes stated she needs more decision making from the Board so she can implement, which is where the subcommittees would come in. She wants to ensure the priorities are executed effectively without overwhelming the Board or staff. Roybal prefers task forces that can coordinate their own meetings.



Maes will create a 1-pager outlining the DDA's strategic operations (mission, vision, core values, etc.). Volk asked if Bloom and Maes would create a list of 50 or so projects that have used DDA programs that we'd like to highlight, and she would be happy to join that task force to get digital assets. She also believes it would be a good PR move as well. Rose stated that action should be part of the Communications Plan, but the website should come first. Maes stated she could put the digital assets on the current webpage. She's planning to use the same webpage but create more buttons to categorize and simplify it until the new website can be developed.

Mrozinsky would like to see the grant parameters defined more as the next big step. Roybal asked for a link to be sent to the stakeholders every time there's a major update or revision to the current webpage. Maes confirmed people can subscribe to updates but summarizing email communication could be helpful as well.

Rose asked for clarification on what the next step was for subcommittees. Maes clarified that the Board seemed to want staff to manage up and delegate specific tasks to board members instead of creating ongoing subcommittees or task forces. She stated this was a less structured approach, but was more project based. She would like to lay all of the priorities out on a timeline, create subtasks, and then delegate those to Board members and staff. Then at Board meetings, updates on priority progress can be given. She did mention the DDA has Monday.com for project management if anyone wanted access. She stated that if a need for a dedicated task force evolves, that can be revisited in the future.

## **B. DDA Lunch 'n Learn Itinerary Discussion: Touring Downtown**

Maes asked for Board input regarding the Lunch 'n Learn tours for the Board based on a few different options. She emphasized coordination, mentioning that if the entire Board goes on tours together it would constitute public meeting with a quorum. She asked for input to make the tours most effective. Bau suggested two trolleys with the same site visits, but breaking up the Board so a quorum is not met. Bau asked how the last tour was coordinated. Bloom stated the past tour followed public meeting requirements. Bellotti stated that having two different times and tours would be helpful for coordinating schedules as well. She mentioned that there are also concerns with the public going on tours and liability depending on the site (such as Pumphouse Park). Maes summarized that a few different tour options should be offered, with two one-hour sessions or one 90-minute session. Bellotti stated the first step is to determine what sites will be visited. Maes outlined the following:

- Past Grant projects
- Catalyst sites/pending projects (including alleys)
- Pending grants
- Anything in the Plan of Development
- O'Neil Corridor (Children's Museum, Healthworks, etc)



## CHEYENNE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

2101 O'Neil Ave., Room 205  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
(307) 433-9730  
[cheyennecity.org/dda](http://cheyennecity.org/dda)

- Stencil apartment tours/talk from superintendent
- Opportunity properties
- Spiker Garage office (potential DDA office)

Bloom suggested the Board to self-tours of Big Boy and Old Sadie. Bau asked to see areas or sites with development potential. Volk stated there are some apartment buildings that are not well kept and have potential for DDA funds or other investment. Volk commented that off-street parking is a major asset for commercial developers in reference to the Spiker Parking Garage. She doesn't know if that office would be a good fit for the DDA. Maes mentioned she has had conversations about how the DDA can better support the Clean & Safe Program, and an option to explore would be to share an office with Clean & Safe and solidify that partnership. Bau and Bellotti voiced support for that. Bau mentioned that he wants DDA staff to be comfortable and safe in their office space. Volk also wants to ensure the DDA staff don't get ambushed by stakeholders in a downtown location. Maes acknowledged that stakeholders have been respectful and defining the DDA role and responsibilities will help with what the stakeholders ask for. She acknowledged that the DDA does want stakeholder feedback and collaboration.

Maes asked Jamie for any final thoughts before the Zoom meeting ended abruptly. Bau suggested the Board form a Task Force to perform the Cost-Benefit Analysis over FY26 with Staff support. Bellotti mentioned Ranch Eats would be opening in the Western Vista lobby within the week and promoted the Food Truck Rally in the Western Vista parking lot on June 6 from 11am-2pm. Maes asked for help with setting up for Screen on Green on June 5. Winters emailed Maes with the request for biweekly updates from staff.

### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.