

**CALLED MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 6, 2022
DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN**

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met with members of the Downtown Redevelopment Authority and the Planning Commission in a called meeting for the presentation of the Downtown Vision Plan on September 6, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. EST, at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center located at 3743 Moon Lake Drive, Phenix City, Alabama. Upon roll call, the following council members were present: Councilmembers Arthur L. Day, Jr., Vickey Carter Johnson, Steve Bailey, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Councilmember R. Griff Gordy was not present. Also present were City Manager Wallace Hunter, City Attorney Jimmy Graham, and City Clerk Melony Lee. Department Heads in attendance: Deputy Building Official Ray Rogers, City Engineer Angel Moore, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Planning Specialist Jennifer Lowman, Economic Development Planning Director Tracie Hadaway, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, IT Technician I Brannon Prather, IT Technician I / Desktop Support Victor Dudley, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Chief of Police Ray Smith, and Utilities Director Charles Woody.

The following members of the Downtown Redevelopment Authority were present upon roll call: Councilmember Steve Bailey and Joe Lewis. David Jones, Susan Wiggins and J. W. Brannen were not present.

The following members of the Planning Commission were present upon roll call: Councilmember Vickey Carter Johnson, Don Ivy, Tony Taylor, Annie Lindsey, Jimmy Davis and Pat Howard. Billy Sims, Sierra McKissic and Eliza Phillips were not present.

Mayor Lowe called the meeting to order.

Mayor Lowe delivered the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Tracie Hadaway, Economic Development Planning Director, to introduce the Downtown Vision Plan presentation. Ms. Hadaway thanked everyone attending the meeting in person or who is viewing the presentation by Zoom Video Conference. Ms. Hadaway stated that Mayor and Council saw a need to revitalize Phenix City's Downtown Vision Plan. Ms. Hadaway also stated that the Planning and Economic Development Departments met with Orchestra Partners Development, LLC, downtown business owners, and people who have expressed interest in Phenix City's downtown area. Ms. Hadaway further stated that John Boone and Caroline Jenkins of Orchestra Partners Development, LLC, will present the Downtown Vision Plan. Mr. Boone stated that he is one of the co-founders of Orchestra Partners Development, LLC, a Planning and Redevelopment Organization out of Birmingham, Alabama. Mr. Boone also stated that their main focus is downtown redevelopments. They create plans and implement them by building local investment funds. Mr. Boone explained how the company came into being. Mr. Boone stated that Phenix City has a lot of potential to be greater than what it already is. Mr. Boone also stated that Phenix City has open areas and available land for development and it begins with creating and building connections. Mr. Boone explained the cost of suburban design versus urban design and the benefits for Phenix City to become more attractive and welcoming to business owners, shoppers, tourist, visitors or citizens from the surrounding areas. Mr. Boone stated that Ms. Jenkins would give a breakdown of a specific design for Phenix City. Ms. Jenkins stated that Mr. Boone presented the background of Urban Design. Ms. Jenkins also stated that she would focus on the proposed vision. Ms. Jenkins further stated that with the amount of space near the river-walk and with Columbus, Georgia being pedestrian friendly, that these were key

factors in the planning stage to create a pedestrian friendly downtown area. Ms. Jenkins reviewed the proposed design with entertainment options for the amphitheater, shopping, dining and residential living options. Ms. Jenkins' presentation divided the proposed downtown into district / areas for further development. Ms. Jenkins stated that the process would not happen overnight, but years of growing and building of and for Phenix City. Ms. Jenkins and Mr. Boone ended the visual presentation and opened the floor for questions. Mayor Lowe stated that in the presentation, they mentioned institutional capital. Mayor Lowe asked if comparing Phenix City to other large cities such as Washington, DC, was comparing apples to apples. Mayor Lowe also stated that Phenix City doesn't have many philanthropic people in the community to close the institutional capital. Mr. Boone stated that institutional capital can include big markets, hedge funds, local seed funds, banks, as well as high net-worth individuals. Mr. Boone also stated that local equity was used to fund Birmingham's downtown redevelopment. Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Manager, stated the seed fund will come as an investment for people who live in Phenix City to see their City continue in growth. Mr. Boone stated that local support creates a sustainable economic development. Ms. Jenkins and Mr. Boone continued the presentation. Councilmember Bailey stated that the Downtown of a City is its core. Councilmember Bailey also stated that buildings can be built but people need to patronize the businesses in order to be successful. Councilmember Bailey further stated that downtown Phenix City is in close distance to downtown Columbus, Georgia. Mr. Boone stated that in the long term, the market will work itself out. Mr. Boone also stated that the goal would be for people to live and shop in the downtown area which will allow an already growing City to continue to grow and strive, starting with the downtown area. Joe Lewis, Downtown Redevelopment Authority member, stated that because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, a lot of people began to work from home. Mr. Lewis also stated that it would be great for a person to live, shop and eat in the same area. Mr. Boone stated that compared to Birmingham, Phenix City is more affordable and as an added plus, it is located on the river. Mr. Boone also stated that he is a kayaker who has visited Columbus, GA, several times a year and this area is an unsung gem. Mr. Culligan stated that the presentation was coming to a close due to the start of the City Council Work Session meeting scheduled to start at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Culligan asked if anyone had any further questions to please direct them to Ms. Jenkins, Mr. Boone or the Economic Development Department.

Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Boone, Ms. Jenkins, and the Planning and Economic Departments for the Downtown Vision Plan presentation.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting thus adjourned at 3:03 p.m.