



DESOTO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, March 10, 2025

The Board of Directors of the DeSoto Development Corporation (DDC) met on **Monday, March 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Council Conference Room located in City Hall at the DeSoto Town Center, 211 East Pleasant Run Road, DeSoto, Texas 75115, The meeting was streamed live on Facebook and archived on the websites.

As authorized by Section 551.071(2) of the Texas Government Code, this meeting may be convened into a closed Executive Session to seek confidential legal advice from the Corporation's attorney on any agenda item listed herein.

“Pursuant to Texas Government Code Sec. 551.127, on a regular, non-emergency basis, members may attend and participate in the meeting remotely by video conference. Should that occur, a quorum of members, including the presiding officer, will be physically present at the location noted on this Agenda.”

**REGULAR SESSION** - THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER by President Michael Baldwin at 6:02 p.m.

**Present:**

Michael Baldwin, Board President  
Felicia Pierson, Secretary/Treasurer  
Akilah Wallace, Director  
Mark Jones, Director  
Dr. Micaela Herndon, Director  
Dr. Ahmad Garrett-Price, Director

**Staff Present:**

Matt Carlson – DDC Chief Executive Officer  
Antoine Long - Economic Development Manager  
Soledad Garcia – Economic Development Project Coordinator  
Melba Hill – Economic Development Specialist  
Lakeita Sutton – Assistant Director of Financial Services

**Also Present:**

Kaleb Smith, Attorney

Director Mark Jones offered the invocation.

**REGULAR AGENDA— NEW BUSINESS**— Items for discussion and/or possible action:

1. The DEC Network Quarterly Update – Kara Lehnert

Kara Lehnert provided an update on their partnership with the DeSoto Development Corporation, which began in March 2024. She shared with the board:



- **Entrepreneurial Support Event**

In October, the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce hosted the DeSoto Business Connect: Info Session & Mixer, sponsored by Plains Capital, in partnership with the DEC and the EDC. The event encouraged participation in DeSoto's community and showcased available resources to help businesses thrive. There was diverse attendance but low local participation.

- **Upcoming Events and Opportunities**

Several upcoming events were announced, including the Dallas Collaborative for Capital Access convenings on March 18<sup>th</sup> and September 17<sup>th</sup> and pitch competitions for accelerator programs. These events aim to provide capital access and support for entrepreneurs. Ms. Lenhart emphasized to the board the need for panelists for these events. 2025 Events and Programming will include:

- Entrepreneurial Wellness Workshop
- Boot Camp for Entrepreneurs
- Big Idea Pitch Competition
- Food and Beverage Workshop
- Capital One Financial Readiness Workshop Series

Strategies for promoting events were discussed, including using visuals and social media. The need for increased engagement during the DEC office hours at the DeSoto Area Chamber was discussed. Suggestions included themed sessions to attract more participants and improve attendance.

1. Professional Services Presentation/Discussion Campus Innovations Group – Jeff Stone

Mr. Carlson led a discussion on developing a bio-life science campus, including office, lab, and educational, residential & retail/recreation spaces. The need for a preliminary site plan to assist in pairing companies with development partners was highlighted. The Campus Innovation Group was introduced to assist in bridging gaps between real estate, developers, industry needs and potential end-users

The Campus Innovation Group introduced themselves, highlighting their real estate, healthcare, life science investment and corporate strategy expertise. They aim to assist in planning, development, and monetization strategies for the bio-life science campus, leveraging their extensive experience in partnerships and public-private collaborations.

The meeting outlined a long-term vision for DeSoto to become a model city for healthcare innovation. The strategy includes attracting high-paying jobs and creating a thriving community through proactive development and partnerships.

Also discussed was the potential to form a partnership with UT Southwestern to establish a healthcare and life science campus in Southern Dallas. The partnership aims to leverage UT Southwestern's interest in expanding into Southern Dallas and its existing relationships to facilitate development.



The importance of aligning the project's vision and mission with community needs was by Board members who emphasized the need to focus on the community's vision of improving health rather than strictly external influences.

The board authorized formation of a subcommittee to engage with external partners for research and discovery. The subcommittee will work with CGI to develop a work plan and finalize a scope of engagement. emphasized establishing partnerships with external experts to enhance project outcomes.

### 3. Professional Services Presentation/Discussion Panthera Solutions – Jason Mastoris

The meeting discussed a program in collaboration with Panthera and Dallas College to offer hands-on Bio-Life Science training to students at DeSoto High School. Principal Campbell of DeSoto High School would use skills assessments to identify students inclined towards this specific career field, with a goal of 12-20 students. A selection process may occur if the number of interested students exceeds the course capacity. The initiative aims to provide students with hands-on experience and certification and dual enrollment with Dallas College.

Panthera and Dallas College have partnered to provide unique training opportunities for students, offering paths in bio-tech and bio-manufacturing. This partnership is the first of its kind in the nation and aims to provide students with job opportunities from \$22 to \$25 an hour.

A proposal was discussed to invest \$40,000 in setting up a lab space at DeSoto High School for workforce training in bio-life sciences.

A motion to support the Panthera BioSolutions program with \$40,000 was made by XXX and unanimously approved.

### 4. Updates and Discussion of the Thorntree Project

The board had previously sought authority to negotiate with Russell Glenn Development. However, the negotiations will not proceed as initially envisioned, and further information will be provided in the future.

### 5. Finance Status Report as of December 2024 and January 2025 – Lakeita Sutton, Asst. Director of Financial Services

#### **December 2024 Statement**

The first sales tax payment of the 2024/25 Fiscal Year was received and revenue expectations for December 2024 were met..

This revenue reflects sales tax received for October 2024, which is 4% more than October FY2024. Interest revenue was in line with the projection for December. Total revenue as a percentage currently stands at 12.4%

Expenditures are well under budget, expending 13.6% of the budgeted amount year-to-date



## January 2025 Statement

Revenue expectations for January 2025 were met. Sales tax revenue is down \$60,725 compared to this time last year. Interest Revenue decreased by \$8,703 from the previous year due to reduced interest rates. Year to Date revenue as a percentage of the overall budget stands at 20.1%.

Year-to-date Expenditures are currently 19.9% of the budgeted amount.

### 6. Projects, attraction efforts, site visits, and general operations report Matt Carlson – Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Carlson delivered a brief update on the business plan goals, department goals, and staff personal and professional development plans that is summarized in the attached report

### 7. Follow on discussion of the February 22, 2025, Joint Meeting

President Baldwin stated the joint meeting was successful. Attendees will provide a recap at the next board meeting.

### 8. Discussion of Board make-up and appointment procedures

Mr. Carlson reminded the board of the vacancy on the board due to the resignation of Vice President LaTosha Herron-Bruff needs to be filled. The city council will handle the appointment process, and candidates with relevant experience are encouraged to apply.

The board meeting schedule was also reviewed, with a proposal to change meetings from Monday to the second Thursday of each month to accommodate the city manager's availability. On a motion from Mark Jones, Board meetings will be held on the second Thursday of each month beginning in May, 2025.

## CONSENT AGENDA

The DDC Chief Executive lists items on the Consent Agenda and recommends them to the DDC Board of Directors for a single vote of approval. At the request of a board director, any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda for a separate vote.

1. Consider approving the December 2024 and January 2025 Financial Statements
2. Consider approving the January 13, 2025, Regular Meeting board minutes.

**All board items were approved unanimously on a motion by Director Mark Jones and second by Director Felicia Pierson.**

## D. EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE:

Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087

1. Discussion of potential incentives for Project Red Elephant

**This item was tabled until next board meeting.**



**E. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Take any action as a result of the executive session

**F. BOARD AND LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES**

Councilman Byrd was not in attendance.

Director Wallace acknowledged March as Women’s History Month and March 10<sup>th</sup> as a national day of rest for black women, recognizing their contributions and the importance of rest.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:15 p.m.

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J. Matt Carlson—Chief Executive Officer