



**Columbia Area  
Development Partnership**  
Richland County's Economic Engine

**Columbia Area Development Partnership (CADP)  
Board Meeting Minutes  
September 22, 2025 | 11:30A.M.  
Parker Poe Conference Room  
1221 Main St., 1100, Columbia SC29201  
Jessica Mackey, Co-Chair Damon Jeter, Co-Chair**

**Board Members Present: Damon Jeter, Co-Chair; Kim Smith; Stephen Cutler; Robert Dozier; Paul Livingston; Tracy Dunn; Heather Mitchell**

**CADP Staff Present: Jeff Ruble, Melissa Harrill, Carrie Turner, Terry Wise**

**Guest Present: Ray Jones; Beth Webb**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Co-Chair Jeter called the meeting to order at 11:48
  
- II. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** Mr. Livingston made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dozier and adopted unanimously, without debate.
  
- III. **APPROVAL OF 7-28-25 MEETING MINUTES:** Mr. Livingston made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dozier and approved unanimously, without debate.
  
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION:**
  - A. **Financial Report**

Mrs. Harrill gave a detailed report of finances of the CADP noting that she is working closely with the accountants; details of the FY25-26 budget reported by Mrs. Harrill included various categories of expenditures utilizing charts and graphs for clarity. Mrs. Harrill noted the presentation of the bar chart is an ongoing process and she will request

the full chart of accounts.

**B. Report of Executive Committee Meeting**

**i. Policy Discussion:** Mr. Ruble presented the policy which will guide the consideration and approval of hotels for certain incentives. In discussing the requirements for full service hotel development, Mr. Ruble stated there are 5 hotels currently that meet the desired criteria and the Board has tentatively approved 1 more. The guidelines suggest the Board continue giving incentives until reaching a number of 8 to 9 hotels. This allows accommodations for athletic teams associated with tournaments. Mr. Livingston noted that boutique hotels may not be what we want to consider due to the possibility of not meeting the requirements to be considered full service. The requirements needed to be considered as a full-service hotel are: 24/7 access, a cocktail bar, full service restaurant, meeting facility and fitness facility. These are all of requirements needed to potentially bring the NCAA tournament to Columbia SC. Co-Chair Jeter noted that this is a step in the right direction and addressed the flexibility of being able to make changes to the policy as needed moving forward.

**ii. Project Report:** Mr. Ruble reiterated the authority of the Executive Committee to act with the authority of the Board to move forward with suggested projects or decline to move forward. Mr. Ruble summarized the projects the Executive Committee approved at its meeting. Those projects were Project Steam, Project Senate, and the Industrial Sale of Property. Co-Chair Jeter asked where would we see the funds from the sale of property? Mr. Ruble explained the funds go back into the Economic Development Fund and are used for future acquisitions. Mrs. Mitchell commended staff on how quickly the Policy and Project Report were put together and reiterated, the need to support bringing the hotels to the city in order to continue the economic growth with tourism and events. Mrs. Mitchell noted the need for market analysis as we continue with this process to ensure that we are not over saturating the market with new hotels.

**C. Engagement**

**i. Public Sector:** Mr. Ruble spoke on public sector engagement with the City of Columbia, noting that it could be beneficial to have the City of Columbia EDC Chair and the Richland County EDC Chair in attendance for varied and or specific meetings relevant to engagement. In the future, there are plans to introduce other public sector entities, notably the Town of Forest Acres, Irmo, Blythewood, Arcadia Lakes.

**ii. Private Sector:** Mrs. Webb spoke to the work within the Private Sector including giving the investment tiers and corresponding tier names. Mrs. Webb noted working through some of the new” operational challenges, while being strategic in the process. Mrs. Mitchell asked

about the commitment term, and Mrs. Webb noted the term is for 2 years. The payment frequency is determined by the investor with the options to Pay in Full, Annually or Quarterly.

**iii. Targets:** Mrs. Webb indicated some of entities staff was reaching out included, Law Firms, Banks, Architectural Firms, Engineering Firms, Existing Industry, Real Estate/Brokerage Firms, Construction Companies. Mr. Cutler asked if the CADP had any type of portfolio, indicating the benefits of investing in the CADP. Mrs. Webb noted that the CADP did not at the present time. Mr. Cutler stated USC is in full support of the contributing to CADP and he would like to have some form of documentation showing the ROI that comes with partnering with the CADP. Mr. Ruble agreed stating his goal is to show companies a clear ROI for contribution to the CADP. Mrs. Mitchell asked if contribution to the CADP be considered as an incentive. Ray Jones made mention that companies are eager to partner.

#### **D. 2025-2026 Plan of Work**

- i. Recruitment and Retention:** Mr. Ruble discussed Multi-family housing and Workforce opportunities.
  - a. New Projects:** Mrs. Mitchell inquired about the Board receiving more information regarding project summaries, fees and locations. Mr. Jones noted that that staff was currently working to find a balance with distribution of information while also maintaining confidentiality. Electronic workbooks were suggested, Mr. Dozier recommended the services of Board Effects and OnBoard AI as possible options.
  - b. Evolution of Commercial Incentive Program:** Richland County has been identified as a desirable location for commercial development. However, due to certain cost barriers related to property tax cost, many commercial developers are unable to locate in the County. Accordingly, the County evaluates potential commercial developments for incentives based on certain established criteria and the eligibility of a commercial development for incentives is considered by the Board on an individual basis. Mr. Ruble indicated that it was time to re-examine the criteria that commercial developments would be evaluated against and told the Board he would bring a recommendation to them at a future meeting.
- ii. Marketing and Events:** Mrs. Turner spoke to some of the upcoming events hosted by the CADP. In the month of October: Cornerstone Workforce Training Center Open House planning is underway; envisioning a two-part event consisting of (1) media and EI tour with private EI-Scout Q&A, (2) Community Open House with mini-tours or self-guided tours. Meet & Greet with staff and leadership; varied audience. On February 4 the Richland County Legislative Delegation Reception; CADP will have a table and the top two levels of investors get a table as well; all investors to get an invitation to attend. The Board will be added to invitee list as attendees.

V. **OLD BUSINESS:** None

VI. **ADJOURN:** Co -Chair Jeter called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Mr. Dozier. The meeting adjourned at 12:57 pm.