



**City of Avondale Estates
Downtown Development Authority
Meeting Notes
January 13, 2026
5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

Members Present: Dave Deiters
Lisa Shortell
Tom Trocheck
Jennifer Joyner
Leigh Lynch
Andrew Rutledge
Morgan Perkins

Staff Present: Shannon Powell
Isabella Salazar
Ellen Powell
Josh Weston

Item #1 Meeting Called to Order (Deiters)

Chair Deiters called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Item #2 Agenda (Deiters)

Director Shortell motioned to approve the November minutes. Director Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Item #3 Avondale Estates Arts Alliance (AAA) (I. Pennington)

Ms. Pennington gave a thorough review of 2025 efforts and updated the board on 2026 plans.

- Exhibited 247 artists and 292 students in 2025.
- Held seven major shows (including school showcases) and regular mini exhibitions (hung in the smaller room). Mini exhibitors hang and sell their art and do not have to pay a commission to the AAA.
- Hosted 2000 visitors enjoyed the work.
- Sold nearly \$15,000 worth of art was sold in the past year.

- Worked collaboratively with the City to establish a process for 6 utility box and train overpass murals and secured grants from DeKalb County Ted Terry’s office to fund the projects.
- Successfully raised nearly \$14,000 this year with most of it (\$12,000) coming in the fourth quarter.
- Held their first fall retreat in November which allowed time for 2026 planning.
- Established 2026 goals to include hiring a bookkeeper, investing in baffles to calm the gallery echo, acquiring mobile walls, and fundraising \$15,000.
- Committed to 6 shows for 2026 including a school showcase, the Art of Narrative, LGBTQ show, Bigs and Smalls, Pet Portraits, and a Collaborative Show where two artists work together.
- The AAA will also be launching a donor program and applying for grants.

Item #4 Economic Development and Business Update (S. Powell)

- The building lease with the Avondale Arts Alliance is due for renewal and the DDA will discuss it next month.
- Galore Market and TBG senior housing are both moving along.
- Landscaping will soon be installed at Lanier Gardens.
- Avila is starting design work.
- North Avondale/East College construction is reaching the final stages. Light bases and landscaping plants are being installed. Medians are in progress. The traffic lights at the Twin Oaks/South Avondale corner have tentative approval from GDOT to be moved to reduce confusion; the city is in permitting for this to happen. Asphalt spots on the path will be repaired, and other areas will have improved access.
- Dekalb Water and Sewer is working on S. Avondale /Carl’s Corner/278. The abelia hedge will be addressed eventually as well.
- New business, Pepper Roost, has opened to rave reviews.
- The Dale has two open businesses – Cremalosa and Birdi Dental. Parma interior brickwork is finishing. The Book Bird is in the permitting process and hopes to open by late March. Restaurants will open this summer. The agreement with the DDA for restroom maintenance is in operation.
- The DDA will be discussing façade work on 90 N. Avondale at future meetings.
- Microgrants are still in progress. \$59,000 of a total of \$61,000 allocated has been awarded. Director Powell shared a spreadsheet of pending projects.
- Bids for the new Downtown Master Plan are due in mid-February. The DMP process will begin in April.

Item #5**Marketing and Communication****(E. Powell)**

The Jan/Feb hardcopy issue of the newsletter showcased the city's new branding. There is now a dedicated "Business News" section. The newsletter also ran the Avondale winners/runners up of the Best of Decaturish contest. Staff also ran a full-page ad and article in a Decaturish issue.

The Avondale Estates Centennial celebrations will run from August 2026 to January 1, 2028. The newsletter featured an article and a QR code to scan for a survey and volunteer opportunities. The business ENews letter will now be arriving to businesses on a bi-monthly basis instead of quarterly. A business survey will be in the next issue to help staff learn more about businesses and their needs.

The DDA sponsored "Spirit Awards" for business holiday décor resulted in increased business participation this year.

The new bike rack and accompanying information stands are complete.

The first quarter business promotion this year is a "Galentine" event on February 13 featuring women-owned businesses. Pink balloons will identify businesses with specials and treats. Twenty-one businesses have indicated their participation to date.

Wine and Art Walk (May 9) planning is well underway. The request for pouring station sites has gone out.

The DDA Dish blog will focus on the 2025 annual review for the next issue. DDA members will be considering additional blogs to contribute.

Item #6**Financials****(S. Powell)**

The board reviewed an income statement and balance sheet. 2025 numbers will still be in flux until the end of January. The staff reminded the board that because some items were approved mid-year, the income statement YTD does not always match with the 2025 adopted budget. This includes items such as business grants and The Dale landscaping.

The GA Fund One balance is \$4,800,512.60. (Notes receivable are \$4,925,000.)

Item #7**Work Plan and Operations Budget****(S. Powell)**

The board reviewed the 2026 budget, which has changed somewhat from the December version to reflect additional information. The board will adopt again in February.

The board briefly touched on the future need for and implementation of a budget amendment process, a capital budget, and a different tracking mechanism to better identify projects and funding that run over multiple years.

Public Comment

Comments were made about public art and the adjudication process for determining what is acceptable. Further comment was made on programming for the green space. Director Powell responded that it is primarily a city process and they could address questions regarding green space programming outside of the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned

Director Trocheck motioned to adjourn. Director Rutledge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.