



EDACC Board Meeting Minutes						
November 19, 2025					EDACC Conference Room	
Meeting called by	Chairman, Rick Evans - called the meeting to order @ 7:31					
Type of meeting	Board Meeting					
Facilitator	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Note taker	Linda Peplau					
Adjourned	8:35 AM					
Board Attendance	Rick Evans	Y	Mark Wills	Y	Stan Shepherd	ABSENT
	Jim Cox	Y	Jean Garniewicz	Y	Kerry Bridges	Y
	Mark Herbert	Y	Ben Stapleton	ABSENT	Rick Toole	Y
Staff/Guests	Chris Driver (Hull Barrett), Cheney Eldridge, Anita Patel, Stuart Hilsman, Linda Peplau, Dr. Steven Flynt (CCBOE), Commissioner, Connie Melear (CCBOC), Dr. Tom Clark (The Alliance for Fort Eisenhower), William Eubank (Thomas & Hutton) & Skyler Andrews (Augusta Press)					
Meeting Agenda						
1 minute	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Discussion	Chairman, Rick Evans called for a motion to jointly approve the agenda for the November 19, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting & the minutes for the October 22, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting.					
Conclusions	Motion: Kerry Bridges 2nd: Mark Herbert Motion carries unanimously (7-0)					
Minutes of Previous Meeting						
0 minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Discussion	See above.					
Conclusions	Motion: Kerry Bridges 2nd: Mark Herbert Motion carries unanimously (7-0)					

DACC Financial Report	
3 Minutes	Treasurer, Mark Wills
Discussion	<p>Treasurer, Mark Wills reported on the following items in the October 2025 financial report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that audits are still currently being conducted. This report will not require a vote (for information ONLY). • Page 1 (balance sheet): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provided a Balance Sheet/Statement of Net Position summary report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Highlighted the reduction balance in the Phase III checking account due to the monthly loan interest payments. * Explained the rent line item of the report that is erroneously reflecting rent income for the Chamber of Commerce's portion of the rent. * Rick Evans informed the board that he has spoken to County Finance to reclass the rent income error that should be an offset to rent expenses. • Page 2 & 3 (monthly expenses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Masters Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * House & van rental are paid in full. • Page 6 (2026 FY budget). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treasurer Wills reported that the budget is tracking well, with percentages aligning as expected. ○ Noted that the budget report appears slightly skewed due to the inclusion of earnest money, which was not accounted for in the original budget • Mark Wills asked if there were any questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No questions were presented. <p>Chairman, Rick Evans reported that he recently spoke to Leanne Reece and shared that the audit is still being conducted and should be finalized soon.</p>
Conclusions	No need for approval until the FY2025 audit is complete and finalized.
Chairman's Report	
2 Minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans
Discussion	<p>Chairman, Rick Evans shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County/Community Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was reiterated to the board that Cheney continues to keep the county well informed on the progress of all projects. ○ Rick Evans expressed his sincere appreciation to Chris Driver for his dedicated efforts on the recent projects. ○ Rick conveyed his appreciation to Commissioner Mealer for the county's steadfast relationship and collaboration with the EDACC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Shared a few updates from county commissioner meeting the day before (11/18/2025). * Expressed a new appreciation & gratitude for our county commissioners/representatives.

EDACC Committee Reports	
6 minutes	Mark Wills for Property Development Committee (11.14.2025) Jean Garniewicz for Existing Business Development & Workforce Dev. (11.14.2025)
Discussion	<p>Mark Wills for the Property Development Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics covered at the committee meeting on 11.14.2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Zoning Classification designated specifically for data centers ◦ Horizon South signs replacement options ◦ Signage at White Oak ◦ Childcare discussion ◦ Evan Towne Center growth with Pinnacle Bank <p>Jean Garniewicz for the Existing Business Dev. & Workforce Dev.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics covered at the committee meeting on 11.14.2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Continual Masters 2026 planning ◦ Annual Wage/Compensation Survey incentive plans for a high participation outcome ◦ Signage options for Horizon South & White Oak signage ◦ GA Power Hurricane Helene yearbook/information book ◦ Project and industry visits updated from Stuart Hilsman
Project Updates	
8 minutes	Project Manager, Stuart Hilsman & Project Manager, Anita Patel
Discussion	<p>Stuart Hilsman & Anita Patel shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizon South signage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The EDACC expressed interest in taking a proactive approach to signage at H.S. in light of upcoming expansions. ◦ There are plans to reach out to existing industries in the area to initiate a conversation about signage. ◦ The EDACC's objective is to collaborate with the Property Dev. Committee, the county and the industries for a cohesive & aesthetically please sign plan. • Existing Industry visit report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Amazon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * AGS-1 distribution center (3000 employees) * AGS-5 sortation center (700 employees) • Event updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A.I. Lunch and Learn - Augusta Tech. (12.10.2025) • Brownfield coalition update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Augusta Development Authority will be submitting the application. • Retail updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ N Bee Tween shop moved to a new location (4272 Washington Rd. Evans GA) ◦ Winston's Tavern is now open (Premier Apartments) • SRS-CRO application updates.

Economic Development Update

13 minutes

Executive Director, Cheney Eldridge

Discussion

Executive Director, Cheney Eldridge shared the following:

- Cheney shared a **Phase III/DC- Data Center update**.
 - Noise study information (70 decibels = to a vacuum cleaner)
 - Buffers already in place
 - Plans to use closed loop water technology for water conservation
 - Confirms that all infrastructure will be paid by the end user
 - DC zoning regulations prohibit the installation of wells (no wells will be used in PH3)
 - Confirms that Trammell Crow will apply for a DC zoning status.
 - * 12/05/2025 - Rezoning application submission date
 - * 01/15/2025 - Planning Committee review
 - * 02/03/2025 - County Commissioner meeting for vote
- Jim Cox asked for clarification on the **EPD** (Environmental Product Declaration) guidelines relevant to the Data Center.
 - Chris Driver and Rick Toole both stated that the state sets the standard that the county must obey, but the county can and often does set stronger, more restrictive guidelines in place to protect wet land and flood plans. They further stated that Columbia County did a great job with their due diligence in researching other data center's standards and learned from the discover period before setting the DC zoning guidelines.

Discussion

- **Development Authority Board Training**
 - Board members must complete an 8 hour BM course within 12 months of appointment assignment.
 - Members must complete an additional 2 hours of training every year after their 1st year.
 - Matt Forshee with Ga Power will be conducting the class.
 - * Dates that will be sent out in a poll to vote on are:
 - * 12/02/2025 2pm-5pm
 - * 12/05/2025 10am - 4pm
 - * 12/09/2025 9am - 2pm
 - * 12/11/2025 anytime
 - * 12/12/2025 anytime
 - * Rick Evans suggests inviting the county commissioners to the board training for a deeper understanding of the Development Authority's role.
- Jim Cox raised the question if White Oak had been **timbered** in the past.
 - After touring the Phase III parcels, Cheney confirmed that she does not believe the land has ever been timbered.
- Jim Cox addresses **disinformation** circulating regarding the data center.
 - Cheney shared that Skyler Andrews has been a great partner in helping circulate accurate information to address the public's questions and to help keep them informed.
- **Photometric/light pollution at White Oak:**
 - Kerry Bridges shares GA Power was 1st in the county to change to LED lighting for a directional lighting output to mitigate light pollution.
 - Jim Cox shared that he has confidence that a photometric study will be conducted by Trammell Crow.

Public Comments

22 minutes	Commissioner Connie Melear (CCBOC), Dr. Steven Flynt (CCBOE), Dr. Tom Clark (CSRA Alliance for Fort Gordon), William Eubank (Thomas & Hutton) & Skyler Andrews (The Augusta Press)
Discussion	<p>Commissioner, Connie Melear (CCBOC) shared the following county updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hurricane Helene updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Connie thanked Kerry Bridges and the entire Georgia Power team for their exceptional efforts in hurricane relief. ◦ She especially thanked Kerry for sharing the Georgia Power Hurricane Information Book with everyone. • Commissioner Melear updated the board on her new position as Chairperson on the Library Board. • Informed the board that the next Columbia Co. Planning Commission meeting is on 11.20.2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The committee will vote on the draft for the county's comprehensive plan (Foundations for the Future). ◦ Highlighted and explained some of the mapping designations pertaining to technical industries on the comp plan. <p>William Eubank (Thomas & Hutton) shared the following county updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a lift station update. • Will complemented the landscaping at the entrance of White Oak. <p>Skyler Andrews (The Augusta Press) shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared of his efforts to address misinformation in the community by providing accurate reporting. • Expressed gratitude for being appreciated by our board. <p>Dr. Steven Flynt (CCBOE) shared the following school updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-Force updates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Thanked the EDACC Board for being so involved in helping facilitate a strong future workforce for our community. ◦ Expressed gratitude for having trusted counselors such as his Advisory Committee for feedback and plan adaptation. ◦ Shared the conceptual development process for the Auto Body program currently included in the curriculum. ◦ Career Expo, Health Care Expo & Work Place Competition (Richmond Co.) updates. • Provided updates on school construction progress. • Rick Evans extended his gratitude to Dr. Flynt for the traffic study conducted by the school board to support county planning efforts. <p>Dr. Tom Clark (CSRA Alliance for Fort Gordon) shared the following fort updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleased to report that the government is now open and operating as usual. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 44 days of government closure. ◦ 40% of the workforce on the installation was impacted by the closure. • Reported that the Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center remains operational, though it is currently facing financial cutbacks. • I-20 interchange updates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ New conceptual designs have been introduced to enhance the project's potential for success. • Provided an update on personnel changes at the Fort. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lt. General Maria Barrett has officially announced her plans to retire from the United States Armed Forces. ◦ Lt. Gen. Christopher Eubank has been appointed to succeed Lt. Gen. Maria Barrett as the leader of U.S. Army Cyber Command (ARCYBER).
Discussion	



Calendar of Events		
1 minute	Chairman, Rick Evans	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• December 10, 2025 - Executive Committee Meeting - 7:30 a.m.• December 12, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting - 7:30 a.m. (Christmas breakfast to follow meeting)	
Closed Session		
8 minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans	
Discussion	Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to enter closed session. Motion: Jean Garniewicz 2nd: Kerry Bridges Motion carries unanimously (7-0) Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to exit closed session. Motion: Jean Garniewicz 2nd: Mark Herbert Motion carries unanimously (7-0)	
Conclusions	Chris Driver (Legal Counsel) reported that 2 property matters were discussed during the closed session. Motion 1: Mark Wills made a motion -"I make a motion for the Development Authority to dedicate all roads and utilities located in the White Oak Business Park to Columbia County to the extent such roads and utilities have not already been dedicated. The chairman is authorized to execute all necessary documents." 2nd: Jean Garniewicz Motion carries unanimously (7-0) Motion 2: Mark Wills made a motion -"I make emotion to amend the White Oak Business Park Declaration of Covenants to remove the property presently under contract to sell to Trammell Crow." 2nd: Jean Garniewicz Motion carries unanimously (7-0)	
Adjournment		8:35 AM
Conclusions	Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to adjourn the November 19, 2025, EDACC board meeting at 8:35 a.m. Motioned: Mark Wills 2nd: Jean Garniewicz Motion carries unanimously (7-0)	
Next meeting: December 12,2025		EDACC All