



EDACC Business Recruitment and Incentives Program Committee		
October 1, 2025		7:32 AM
EDACC Conference Room		
Meeting called by	Jim Cox called the meeting to order at 7:32 AM.	
Type of meeting	Business Recruitment and Incentives Program Committee	
Facilitator	Chair - Jim Cox	
Note taker	Linda Peplau	
Adjourned	8:26 AM	
Attendees	Jim Cox, Ben Stapleton & Mark Wills	
Staff/Guests	Rick Evans, Cheney Eldridge (via phone conference), Anita Patel, Stuart Hilsman & Linda Peplau	
Meeting Agenda		
1 minute	Jim Cox	
Discussion	Jim Cox called for a motion to jointly approve the agenda for October 01, 2025, Business Recruitment and Incentives Program Committee meeting & the minutes for the August 06, 2025, Business Recruitment and Incentive Committee meeting.	
Conclusions	Motion: Ben Stapleton 2nd: Mark Wills Motion passed unanimously (3-0)	
Minutes of Previous Meeting		
0 minutes	Jim Cox	
Discussion	See above.	
Conclusions	Motion: Ben Stapleton 2nd: Mark Wills Motion passed unanimously (3-0)	
Old Business		
0 minutes		
Discussion	N/A = the meeting went straight into New Business.	

New Business	
22 minutes	Cheney Eldridge
Discussion	<p>Cheney Eldridge shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that the county is in the process of creating a new Zoning Classification designated specifically for data centers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * S-1 zoning (Special/Tech Park) * Narrative * Blueprint * Formal designations and controls for streamline procedures * Proper zoning designations * Target date for implementation is January 01, 2026 <p>Jim Cox shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues the discussion regarding the new Data Center Zoning Classification designation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Possible permissions and restrictions. • Discussed Greenpointe in Harlem GA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning ○ Future development plans • Shared the daily lake water evaporation amount vs lake water usage amounts for a water loss comparison. • Tax Abatement & incentive discussion (for current project and future projects). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussed setting meetings with partners for a round table discussion on an incentive plan. • Considered some future acquisition possibilities and strategies rolling out of the current project. • Discussed Columbia County leadership (open seat for Board of Commissioners). <p>Ben Stapleton shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben emphasizes the significance of being pioneers in our region regarding tech parks/data center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The future opportunities are endless, from future technology to geothermal possibilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Weather modifications * Cooling towers (Jim Cox asked Ben to compile a cooling tower list for our region for touring). ○ Elaborated on the complexity of cooling towers for energy efficiency vs housing units. ○ Ben expanded on the new systems that use glycol for less water evaporation/water conservation.
Discussion	



Updates		
31 minutes		
Discussion	<p>Cheney Eldridge shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheney opened a discovery discussion for targeting future projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Industry types? ○ County leaders recommendations? ○ Board member suggestions? ○ Open to any suggestions and asks that if anyone hears of anything, to let her know. • SRS-CRO match funding update. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anita Patel is probing opportunities to use the remaining funds before the end of 2025. ○ Cheney asked the Committee if they know of any opportunities that EDACC can partner up with to use the remaining eligible funds. ○ Cheney reported that Sklyer Andrews (Augusta Press) wrote an article after our last board meeting, citing some comments from the board pertaining to CTAE's gap programs. • White Oak Tech Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forecasting discussion regarding future construction impacts, parking needs and time frame. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discussed construction impacts on the surrounding community and construction time frame. * Mark Wills mentioned the increased volume of hotel stay/needs during Amazon's construction @WOak. He recalls that Thompson's hotels were booked solid and hotel prices increased. * Jim Cox mentioned limited RV accommodations due to hurricane Helene impacts. * Ben Stapleton shared that it might be a good idea to lock in pricing at the new Grovetown hotels. He brought up Airbnb as a lodging option. * Cheney relayed that once an end user is disclosed, we will explore operational needs for the new user. ○ The committee considered the future vision for White Oak. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Food trucks * Hotels * Commercial development ○ Jim Cox brought up the need for a Comp Plan review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * minor revision - every 5 years * major revision - every 10 years • Jim Cox reported that Marvel Studios has left the states to film overseas (UK) for cost savings. • Discussed land acquisition ideas/plan. • Anita Patel shared a quick BE Pro BE Proud update. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No availability till April 2026 ○ Anita is working out the logistics of booking and paying this calendar year for SCS CRO funding. • Anita Patel provided a brief Master planning update. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ House is contracted and paid for. ○ Anita is working on locking in a caterer. ○ Jim Cox shared some caterer recommendations. 	
Adjournment		8:26 AM
Conclusions	<p>Jim Cox called for a motion to adjourn. Motion: Ben Stapleton 2nd: Marl Wills Motion passed unanimously (3-0)</p>	
Next meeting: December 03, 2025		Economic Development Authority Conference Room