

**CITY OF MONROE
DOWNTOWN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
300 W. CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
October 8, 2025 - 9:00 AM
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval/Acceptance of Minutes August 20, 2025
4. Recommendation of Downtown Master Plan
Steering Committee
5. Adjourn Meeting

CITY OF MONROE
DOWNTOWN MONROE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
300 W CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112
August 20, 2025
MINUTES

DAB Members: Chair: Joyce Rentschler, William Heisner, Clint Lawrence, Courtney Garrison, Lisa Boix and Greg Moore were all present.

Member(s) Absent: Sheila Crunkleton

Staff Present: Assistant City Manager, Jeff Wells

Visitors Present: John Powell, 2209 Carmel Oak Lane Monroe, NC 28112

Item 1: Call to order

Joyce Rentschler called the Wednesday, **August 20, 2025**, Downtown Advisory Board Regular Meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Item 2: Roll Call

Roll was documented by Donna O'Keefe through a sign-in sheet.

Item 3: Approval of June 18, 2025 and July 16, 2025 Minutes

Joyce Rentschler, introduced this item.

Motion: Bill Heisner made a motion to approve the June 18, 2025 and July 16, 2025 Minutes of the Downtown Advisory Board Meeting.

Second: Greg Moore

Action: The motion to accept the June 18, 2025 and July 16, 2025 minutes passed unanimously.

Item 4: Updated Phase II Downtown Furniture Project and Ordinance

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item.

Donna O'Keefe explained to the board that she was returning to them to present the Phase II furniture plan with an umbrella option as requested at their last meeting. She explained to the board that she had used the time to study the sun pattern of these businesses as well as worked with the furniture vendor to determine which tables and locations could accommodate an umbrella. She emphasized that she was presenting the recommendation from Sister Bay Furniture. Ms. O'Keefe explained that the updated plan would ensure the furniture was sized appropriately and would unclutter downtown and ensure walkability of the sidewalks.

Donna O'Keefe explained to the board that in addition to the furniture plan the city would need an ordinance that would define outdoor furniture and restricted areas within the Downtown District, as well as provide the details of enforcement. She explained that she would be requesting their recommendation of the design plan with umbrellas, and ordinance to General Services Committee

and ask that they recommend the plan, ordinance, and budget amendment to City Council.

Donna O'Keefe presented the updated the Phase 2 Downtown Replacement Furniture plan for each of the Eat, Meet and Dine businesses in downtown along with recommended umbrella locations and vendor options, and projected project total cost. Ms. O'Keefe explained that the plan now included Boba Tea which was not open at the time the original Phase II plan was conceived. She explained to the board that the arms of the chairs were removed in order to reduce the cost and allow the addition of Boba Tea.

Ms. O'Keefe explained that Courthouse Pour picnic table on Hayne Street was downsized, a four top table was also downsized and benches will be used to right size the furniture at this location. She also highlighted the recommended umbrella locations for this business. Next Ms. O'Keefe reviewed the Franklin Street corner in front of Courthouse Pour and Peddlers Paradise. She reviewed the setup of a two top and four top were planned in front of Courthouse Pour. She explained that no seating would be on the sidewalk side of the square tables to ensure walkability of the sidewalk. Ms. O'Keefe then reviewed Peddlers Paradise plan. Ten seats are planned in front of that building.

Clint Lawrence asked why all of the tables couldn't have umbrellas. Ms. O'Keefe explained that the size of the umbrella and location of doorways and awnings for example, required the vendor to limit the number of table with umbrellas. She explained that she believed that the size of the umbrellas that were planned would shade most of the area. Ms. O'Keefe used Local Logic as an example. She then pointed to a two top on the Franklin Street corner and showed how it would interfere with pedestrians walking around that corner.

Bill Heisner asked if business could use the umbrellas they have. Ms. O'Keefe explained that the ordinance would explain that in detail, but if they wanted an umbrella in the designated locations, they would have to purchase an approved umbrella. She further explained that the ordinance included a fine schedule to enforce this rule. Ms. O'Keefe shared that she had been able to source a local umbrella option that was only a third of the option presented by Sister Bay.

Mr. Heisner asked Ms. O'Keefe how we would ensure the tables were not moved. She explained that she would be monitoring to ensure the placement was maintained. She explained that placement was an important part of the plan to ensure ADA compliance.

Joyce Rentschler asked about who would own the umbrellas. Ms. O'Keefe explained that this would also be covered in the ordinance, but that umbrellas and bases would be owned by the business and that the city would not own or maintain the umbrellas of the businesses. Businesses can choose to have them or not have them, and the cost would not be reimbursed. They must use the approved umbrella with no exception. Ms. O'Keefe told the board that the businesses had already been educated and informed on the umbrella plan.

Donna O'Keefe continued the presentation with Main Street in front of Oasis, JamZ, Local Logic, Patty and the Dogs, and Gingham Girls. She explained that the Patty and the Dogs and Gingham Girl locations were the sunniest spots in the plan. Ms. O'Keefe moved on to East Frank on Franklin Street. The set up ensures the maximum seating. The plan preserved the amount of seating they already had with this configuration. Ms. O'Keefe recommended two umbrella holes be added to the plan in front of East Frank.

Ms. O'Keefe review the umbrella selection with the board along with the features, colors, and cost. Clint Lawrence asked the size of the umbrella. Ms. O'Keefe shared that they were 7 ½' in size. Ms.

O'Keefe review the cost of \$79,442.80 (\$72,153.10 original cost before additions). She reviewed the umbrella and base cost from Sister Bay of \$906 vs. the umbrella cost of \$330 and 80 lb. base \$139 from Outdoor Living. She reminded the board that they are commercial grade and that the small tables do not require a base. Color selected are Khaki and Royal Navy.

Ms. O'Keefe reviewed the downtown code of ordinance amendment to Title XV: Land Usage Chapter 150 Downtown District Ordinance. The ordinance defines outdoor furniture, restricted areas within the Downtown District, and enforcement details. Ms. O'Keefe read the ordinance with emphasis on the uniformity of the furniture to ensure its placement will not restrict access, pedestrian use. She also reviewed the grandfather detail in the ordinance to cover existing furniture. She pointed out several specific benches that will not be removed. Americana will also be grandfathered as they had made a significant investment in matching size appropriate outdoor furniture. Ms. O'Keefe made special mention of the new grants and how they were written to provide assistance to future businesses. The Phase II plan covers all of the businesses in this category and accomplishes the goals the board and staff had for this project. Ms. O'Keefe explained that future furniture must comply with the selected furniture.

Ms. O'Keefe requested that the board recommend the furniture plan and ordinance to the General Services Committee and ask them to recommend the project and ordinance to City Council along with a budget ordinance.

Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Bill Heisner made the motion to recommend the Outdoor Furniture Ordinance and the Phase II Downtown Furniture Replacement plan to the General Services Committee and ask that they recommend the project and Budget Ordinance to City Council.

Second: Courtney Garrison

Action: Joyce Rentschler, William Heisner, Clint Lawrence, Courtney Garrison, and Lisa Boix voted to recommend the ordinance and furniture plan to the General Services Committee. Greg Moore voted against.

Item 5: Grow Monroe Grant Application for 704 Consignment and Boutique

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item.

Donna O'Keefe asked the Downtown Advisory Board to consider and recommend a Grow Monroe Grant for Tina and Bobby Boling, owners of 704 Consignment and Boutique, located at 300 E. Jefferson Street. She explained that the Boling's have entered into a two-year lease with AWB and Associates, LLC for a 1050 square foot retail space. She reviewed with the board that the owners are eligible for \$6 per sq. ft. or a maximum of \$6,300 through this grant program. She explained that Mr. and Mrs. Boling are only eligible for a maximum of \$6,300.00 in rental assistance through this grant.

Ms. O'Keefe explained that 704 Consignment and Boutique is eligible for the full grant amount of \$6,300 in rental assistance and has provided all the necessary documentation. The grant would reimburse \$3,150.00 at the end of six months, and \$3,150.00 after twelve

months. Ms. O'Keefe reminded the board that proof of timely rent payment in full is required before funds can be released.

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Greg Moore made the motion to approve.

Second: Clint Lawrence

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6: Monroe Fall fest 2025, Sponsorship Application

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item

Greg Moore recused himself from this item.

Donna O'Keefe brought back to the board the request to consider and approve a \$1500 Retail Sponsorship to Greg Moore, owner of Home Brew, and the event organizer for the Monroe Fall Fest on October 11, 2025. This event brings traffic and vitality to downtown. Ms. O'Keefe share with the board that 11 business are participating, and this is the first application submitted for Q1 o FY 26.

Ms. O'Keefe asked the board to approve the application and amount of \$1500 to Greg Moore.

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Clint Lawrence made the motion to approve the Retail Sponsorship for Q1 to Greg Moore, event organizer for Fall Fest.

Second: Bill Heisner

Action: The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Item 7: Adjourn (Action Required)

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Bill Heisner moved to adjourn.

Second: Greg Moore

Action: The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 am



STAFF REPORT

TO: Downtown Advisory Board
VIA: Jeff Wells, Assistant City Manager
DATE: October 8, 2025
FROM: Donna O’Keefe, Downtown Manager
SUBJECT: Downtown Steering Committee

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Shook Kelley was selected as the vendor of choice for the City of Monroe’s Downtown Master Plan, and was approved by City Council in September of 2025. Shook Kelley has requested city staff assemble a Downtown Steering Committee to lead the project. The Downtown Master Plan Update project will span a minimum of 12 – 18 months and will lead to final recommendation by Shook Kelley to the City of Monroe’s City Council and senior leadership. This project will focus on downtown along with several of its neighboring sub-districts like Five Points and the Historic District.

REVIEW

The DSC members selected share a deep interest in the downtown area and have the ability to provide a local perspective and guidance throughout the master planning process. They also represent a broad cross-section of community interests to ensure the plan addresses many different perspectives. These DSC members will bring their unique knowledge, local perspective, strategic thinking, and individual expertise and have agreed to meet the time required to attend regular meetings and workshops. The group will work collaboratively to share their opinions and to consider different viewpoints, so that the group can build consensus.

This group includes the following:

- **Residents:** Especially those living downtown or in adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Business owners:** Including retail merchants and other commercial property owners in the downtown district.
- **Property owners:** Both residential and commercial.
- **Civic leaders:** Members of non-profits, historic societies, and other advocacy groups.
- **Professionals:** Individuals with a background in architecture, urban design, planning, or engineering.
- **Specialized groups:** Representatives from educational institutions, cultural organizations, public safety, and other specialized groups.

The role of the DSC is to advise and guide project planning efforts, review project deliverables, assist with community outreach and engagement efforts, and provide community expertise and insight on issues and priorities throughout the process from a community standpoint.

The DSC (as a whole) has the following responsibilities:

- Assisting in the establishment of Project priorities and the vision statement.
- Providing guidance and input on the plan's goals, policies, and draft documents.
- Encouraging public participation and representing broader community interests.
- Provide guidance on appropriate public engagement activities.
- Advising the City's Downtown Advisory Board and City Council.

- Assisting in public outreach efforts and promoting awareness of the project.
- Evaluating project options and alternatives.
- Sharing project information and obtaining feedback from the community.

Individual DSC members have the following responsibilities:

- Serve as stewards of the planning process to the community.
- Engage thoughtfully in the issues brought before the DSC.
- Represent and advocate for the interests of his/her constituency as well as the interests of the Downtown Master Plan as a whole.
- Share insightful information (historical, background) with the DSC.
- Assist in informing constituencies about the Downtown Master Plan effort.
- Work to identify solutions to issues that arise, and openly/objectively discuss and evaluate those options.
- Attend all meetings and review the meeting agenda packet materials prior to the meeting.
- Review draft technical and planning content before community workshops or open houses, and help to resolve any holes or issues from a community perspective.
- Review summary content from the other planning efforts to identify common and distinct issues that have an important bearing on the Project.
- Communicate community concerns and perspectives to City Staff and project Consultants.
- Attend community engagement events, such as open houses, workshops, etc.

RECOMMENDED DOWNTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

	First Name	Last Name	Description
1	Chris	Duggan	Local Attorney (Main Street)
2	Drew	Lawrence	Lawrence Associates Owner
3	Peter	Karlan	Resident and Rehab contractor of two building downtown
4	Amanda	Cameron	Vice President First Citizens, resident, and grew up in Monroe, raising kids in Monroe
5	Michelle	Lancaster	VP of Strategy - Wingate University
6	Dr. Joseph	Milner	Dr. in Monroe, Tourism Board, and Historic District Resident
7	Jason	Hill	Historic District Resident, and new restaurant owner (formerly in the finance field)
8	Jason	Walle	Owner of Chain Reaction on Main Street
9	Griffin	Walters	Second and Third generation influencer
10	Mary Helen	Secrest-Treece	Legacy Property Owner
11	Byron	Jones	Divisional Operations Manager Superior Crane; Monroe Resident, and Downtown Property Owner
12	Clare	Purdy	Main Street Property and Business Owner - Presson Building and Art Gallery (Live in unincorporated Monroe)
13	Father Ben	Roberts	Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in Monroe
14	Jordan	Hennessee	Historic District home owner and Air BNB owner, Better Car People, Wingate Grad.
15	Andre	Yadow	Walk Safe Monroe
16	Jordan	Griffin	Managing Partner - Leitner, Bragg& Griffin, Also Property Owner on Hayne Street

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting the Downtown Advisory Board recommend the Downtown Master Plan Steering Committee as presented and direct staff to make their recommendation to The General Services Committee and to City Council for their approval.