

MINUTES FOR THE
BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, September 10th, 2025

1. Roll Call

The following members of the Business Advisory Board were present:

Scott Lyttle – Chair
Andy Robertson
Brittany Reese
Jeff Carleton
Pook Carson
Abudujaannah Soud

Sheridan Mordue, Vice-Chair
Barri Allaire
Jocelyn Kearn
Isaac Atencio
Alfonso Brito

Also Present:

Peter Makowski, Department of Economic Development; Will Wright, Department of Economic Development; Ibrahim Ramazani, Department of Economic Development; Austin Kimmel, Salt Lake City Council; Liz Ward, Department of Economic Development.

Absent:

Alyn Toalepai

1. Approval of the minutes

- a. Review and Approval of July 9th, 2025, BAB Minutes.

Mr. Robertson made a motion to approve the minutes of June 11th, 2025. Mr. Carleton seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Briefing by SLCPD

Detective Bitseedy from the Salt Lake City Police Department provided an update to the Board, noting the department's transition under new leadership in Chief Redd who emphasizes strong communication with businesses. He reminded members about the importance of posting official SLC signed affidavit "No Trespassing" signs, especially as colder weather increases the likelihood of homeless individuals seeking shelter in private spaces like garages. These signs allow officers to take immediate enforcement action without contacting property owners. He also offered to conduct property walkthroughs and assist in obtaining the correct signage. Questions were raised about the potential electrification of the police fleet, which Detective Bitseedy said he would follow up on the question, adding that the fire department is already exploring electric vehicle options. He closed by encouraging members to reach out directly with any concerns.

3. Councilmember Petro

Councilmember Victoria Petro addressed the Board and shared her perspective on the City's financial preparedness and disaster response. She reflected on the lack of a legislatively restricted savings account, noting that while Salt Lake City had strong reserves last year, there was no dedicated fund to address emergencies like the recent Main Street fire. Councilmember Petro explained that while the City will draw on the Commercial Development Loan Fund and council fund balance to provide support, this approach weakens the city's financial position. She stressed the importance of having proactive measures in place, such as a disaster relief loan fund, so that the city can respond from a position of strength without sacrificing other critical resources.

Councilmember Petro also invited feedback from the business community on how best to target assistance. She highlighted the Downtown Alliance's quick response in raising nearly half a million dollars for displaced employees and argued that the City's role should focus on helping businesses reopen and generate revenue again. She raised questions about whether disaster aid should prioritize business owners or property owners, and whether city resources should go toward employees' short-term needs or toward long-term structural business recovery. Ultimately, she emphasized the need for policies that balance flexibility with strategic investment, ensuring Main Street remains active and resilient after crises.

4. Briefings by the Staff

a. Report from the Director.

Peter Makowski, Assistant Director of Economic Development, provided a few updates during the Business Advisory Board meeting. He began by announcing personnel changes within the Business Development team, Mr. Makowski introduced Colin Gibbs, the new Director of Business Development, praising his strong start and passion for the role. Mr. Gibbs shared his background as a Salt Lake City native with degrees in economics from the University of Utah and an MBA from Westminster. With over 20 years of experience in entrepreneurship, management, and consulting, he expressed excitement about bringing his skills to the city and working closely with the Economic Development team and local businesses.

Mr. Gibbs then highlighted recent projects and engagements. Mr. Makowski wrapped up the Open Streets program, noting lessons learned and securing funding to ensure its continuation, with plans to begin earlier and more coordinated preparations for next year. The department also conducted multiple site visits, including businesses impacted by the Main Street fire, and attended meetings with community chambers and business districts. Additionally, they supported ribbon cuttings for new ventures like The Yard and the Daily Plan co-working space, which employs individuals with disabilities and reinvests its revenue into supportive services.

In terms of ongoing initiatives, the team is working with the Sugar House Alliance, 9th South, and Downtown Alliance on special assessment area processes, as well as developing a new Buy Local initiative to replace Local First. On the financing side, the Economic Development Loan Fund recently disbursed a loan to Ski Trucks, with another pending for Hruska's Kolaches in Sugar House and Rich's Burgers and Grub. These efforts reflect the department's ongoing commitment to strengthening local business vitality, recovery, and long-term community growth.

5. Business Items

A. Main Street Fire Employee Relief Fund

Kristen Lavelett, Business Development Manager at the Downtown Alliance, presented on the creation and impact of the **Main Street Fire Employee Relief Fund**. She began by describing the devastating August fire that affected several downtown businesses, noting the fortunate fact that no lives were lost. In response, the Alliance quickly mobilized, launching the relief fund within hours of the fire. Through partnerships with the Salt Lake City Arts Council and community leaders like Ty Burrell, they rapidly raised awareness and collected donations. Within the first 24 hours, \$50,000 had been donated, and ultimately the fund raised nearly \$494,000—close to its \$500,000 goal. These contributions came from both large foundations, such as the Larry H. Miller and Eccles foundations, and hundreds of small community donations, showing broad support for affected employees.

Ms. Lavelett highlighted how funds were distributed directly to employees most impacted, initially prioritizing staff from London Bell, Whiskey Street, and White Horse, and later including Eva's employees as their challenges became clear. The Alliance also partnered with the Utah Restaurant Association and city departments to host an employee resource fair, connecting displaced workers to unemployment benefits, tenant services, food vouchers, and even free transit passes. Relief checks were distributed within one week of the fire, ensuring workers had immediate support for rent, bills, and insurance. Ms. Lavelett emphasized that while the donation portal has since closed, any remaining or future contributions will be directed to employees in need or placed into a long-term disaster relief fund for future emergencies.

B. Michelin Guide to Salt Lake City

Alfonso Brito, Board Member, presented a proposal to bring the Michelin Guide to Salt Lake City, drawing from his recent experiences training at Michelin-starred restaurants in Spain. He explained that Michelin recognition is the most prestigious global restaurant standard, elevating not only individual establishments but also the surrounding community. He noted examples from cities like Vienna and Barcelona, where Michelin stars boosted tourism, small business activity, and international visibility. Mr. Brito emphasized that Salt Lake City and Park City already have significant culinary talent, with restaurants capable of meeting Michelin standards, and argued that adding the region to the Guide could showcase Utah's food scene to the world, particularly as the city prepares for future events like the Olympics.

Mr. Brito also described the Michelin Guide process, including the anonymous inspections and criteria such as ingredient quality, mastery of cooking techniques, and consistency. He highlighted that while restaurants do not pay fees to be included, cities typically cover the costs of bringing Michelin inspectors, with figures ranging from \$300,000 in Denver to \$2 million in Florida. He suggested that a public-private partnership, supported by groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and restaurant associations, could help fund the effort. Mr. Brito concluded by stressing the potential return on investment through increased tourism and tax revenue, as well as the long-term prestige for Salt Lake's restaurant industry, while acknowledging that the next step would be to build interest and formalize a letter of intent to Michelin.

C. Ballpark Next Community Design Plan

Lauren Parisi, Senior Project Manager with the Salt Lake City Community Reinvestment Agency, presented the Ballpark NEXT Community Design Plan to the Business Advisory Board. She explained that the plan was developed through extensive community engagement and technical analysis, with the goal of transforming the Ballpark area into a vibrant sports, entertainment, and community destination. The design framework emphasizes honoring neighborhood voices, breaking up the existing "superblock,"

and integrating open spaces like Creek Park, Festival Street, and the Park Promenade. Ms. Parisi highlighted how the plan balances ambitious design ideas with achievable, phased development that reflects both community priorities and long-term urban growth.

Ms. Parisi also shared design concepts for adaptive re-use of the current ballpark structure, envisioning it as a multipurpose venue capable of hosting sports tournaments, concerts, and festivals with seating for around 9,000 spectators. The plan incorporates sustainability and health-focused elements such as daylighting hidden creeks, expanding green space, and prioritizing pedestrian-first environments. Ms. Parisi further outlined a phased roadmap for development, beginning with partial ballpark demolition, new housing, and interim street activations, followed by additional housing, a municipal parking garage, entertainment venues, and civic amenities. Her presentation underscored the CRA's commitment to creating a landmark destination that both preserves community history and supports future growth.

The remainder of the presentation and further discussion was tabled until October due to time constraints.

D. City Council Announcements

Austin Kimmel, Public Policy Analyst with the Salt Lake City Council, provided the Business Advisory Board with three quick updates to the board. He first noted that information is available on the Salt Lake City Council website regarding the Main Street Fire Assistance proposals, which had also been highlighted earlier in the meeting by Councilmember Petro. He encouraged members who want more details to review the Council's online resources.

Mr. Kimmel also shared that the Council recently finalized its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) decisions, approving funding for 32 projects last month. Finally, he announced that the Metro Water District of Salt Lake City and Sandy currently have two vacancies on its seven-member board. Since the City Council has appointed five of the trustees, he has encouraged interested applicants to apply by the October 8 deadline, with more information available on the city's website.

E. BAB Member Announcements

- A. Board Member Jeff Carleton announced the Marmalade Jam Fest on September 27, 2025

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.


[Scott Lyttle \(Oct 7, 2025 12:14:14 MDT\)](#)

Scott Lyttle, Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Business Advisory Board meeting held on September 10th, 2025.