



Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB)
Meeting
Hybrid Virtual / In-Person Meeting
Thursday, April 9, 2026, 2:00PM

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present: Joana Berling (Vice Chair), Carl Dawson (Secretary), Matt Brockelman, Kevin Craig, Ennis Davis, Peter Deiuliis, Frederick Jones, Joseph Loretta

DIA Staff Present: Van Christiansen (Redevelopment Coordinator), Ava Hill (Administrative Assistant)

Office of General Counsel: Rebecca Lavie

Office of the Mayor: Bill Delaney

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Berling called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. in Chair Ott's absence and presided over the meeting.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. MARCH 12, 2026 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD (DDRB) REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Board Chair Ott called for a motion on the meeting minutes.

Motion: Member Brockelman moved to approve the meeting minutes.

Seconded: Member Dawson seconded the motion.

March 12, 2026 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

B. DDRB APPLICATION 2026-004 CATHEDRAL COMMONS (CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL)

Staff presented the application for conceptual approval of Cathedral Commons, a proposed multifamily affordable housing development consisting of approximately 120 residential units across two three-story buildings, resident amenities, and on-site parking within the Cathedral District. Staff noted the project generally aligned with district character and that several technical compliance items, including build-to requirements and certain streetscape components, would be evaluated further at Final Approval.

Board Member Dawson raised questions regarding stormwater management, parking ratios, and construction materials, particularly balancing affordability with durability. Board Member Craig noted that several streetscape and design elements would require additional refinement at Final Approval. Board discussion generally recognized the project as a meaningful affordable housing initiative while emphasizing the importance of future technical refinements. Public comment focused primarily on bird-safe design considerations and the potential impact of building glazing on migratory bird populations. Additional comments generally supported affordable housing goals while encouraging continued environmental sensitivity.

Motion: Member Brockelman moved to approve DDRB Application 2026-004 with staff recommendations.

Seconded: Member Jones seconded the motion.

Vote: **Aye: 8** **Nay: 0** **Abstain: 0**

C. DDRB APPLICATION 2026-005 AMBASSADOR HOTEL (FINAL APPROVAL)

Staff presented the adaptive reuse and renovation of the historic Ambassador Hotel into a boutique hotel, including guest accommodations, restaurant, and hospitality functions. Staff noted the project met applicable Public Realm standards and was largely governed through Certificate of Appropriateness requirements due to the building's historic status.

Board Member Dawson inquired about historic window specifications and project timeline. Board discussion included multiple members expressed enthusiasm regarding adaptive reuse, design quality, and catalytic potential. Mr. Delaney, Mayor's Office, stated full support for the project.

Motion: Member Dawson moved to approve DDRB Application 2026-005 with staff recommendations.

Seconded: Member Deiuliis seconded the motion.

Vote: **Aye: 8** **Nay: 0** **Abstain: 0**

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D. DDRB APPLICATION 2021-007 – AMBASSADOR GARAGE (MODIFICATION OF FINAL APPROVAL)

Staff presented modifications to the previously approved Ambassador Garage design, including updated facade articulation, revised materials, improved screening, signage updates, and streetscape refinements intended to better align the structure architecturally with the adjacent Ambassador Hotel.

Board discussion focused on facade treatment, visual screening, and mural duration. Board Member Deiuliis requested clarification regarding long-term development timelines affecting the mural. Legal counsel clarified that previously imposed visual condition requirements would remain unless expressly removed. Board generally supported the revised design and viewed it as a significant improvement over prior iterations.

Motion: Member Dawson moved to approve DDRB Application 2021-007 with staff recommendations.

Seconded: Member Jones seconded the motion.

Vote: **Aye: 8** **Nay: 0** **Abstain: 0**

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. VETERANS COMMUNITY CENTER (CITY CAPITAL PROJECT)

City staff and project representatives from Haskell presented the proposed Veterans Community Center as an informational item for Board and public input.

Board discussion centered on the proposed project visibility, community integration, and public benefit. Public comment generally emphasized outreach, accessibility, and veteran services.

No formal action was required.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice Chair Berling adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:27 p.m.

The written minutes for this meeting are only an overview of what was discussed. For verbatim comments for this meeting, a recording or transcript is available upon request. Please contact Van Christiansen at vchristiansen@coj.net to acquire a recording of this meeting.