



**HISTORIC
FRANKLIN
TENNESSEE**

**CITY OF FRANKLIN
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION**

A meeting of the Development Services Advisory Commission was held at Eastern Flank Battlefield Park Event Facility, on Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025, 8:00 am – 9:00 am.

Committee Members

Matt Bryant, Chair	A
Robert Winston, Vice Chair	P
Kate McDonald	A
Nathan Zipper	A
Ben Crenshaw	A
Scotty Bernick	P
Mary McGowan	P
Paige Parham	P
Dana Kose	P
Michael Walters Young	P
Matt Brown	P

Employees Present

Vernon Gerth, Assistant City Administrator
Emily Wright, Director of Planning & Sustainability
Amy Diaz-Barriga, Asst. Director of Planning & Sustainability
Alex Brown, Asst. Director of Building & Neighborhood Services
Jimmy Wiseman, Asst. Director of Engineering
Alex Bearden, Permitting Operations Supervisor
Bill Squires, Assistant City Attorney
Milissa Reiersen, Chief Communications Officer
Dillon Gaster, Management Fellow
Katherine Harelson, Dev. Services Ops. Analyst

The purpose of the regular meeting will be to discuss matters regarding Development Services and will include the following items:

Robert Winston, Vice Chair began the meeting at 8:02 am.

1. Approval of Minutes/Review of Meeting Notes from May 6, 2025, meeting.

- Meeting minutes were approved by acclamation.

2. Discussion on Next Steps from the Development Customer Survey.

- Vernon Gerth started the discussion by introducing Milissa Reiersen, Chief Communications Officer with the City of Franklin. She leads the City's Communications team and runs all the social media operations.
 - Vernon asked Milissa to come as a follow up from the last meeting about how to reach a wider audience in the development community as well as citizens.
- Katherine Harelson recapped the discussion from the last meeting saying that the discussion focused on the internal and external aspects of communication on current development. The internal part of the discussion focused on getting more information readily available to the

development community and allow more real-time opportunities to give feedback to staff. External communication referred to getting the most accurate information about current development to a wider citizen audience. There has been a lot of misinformation lately about development.

- Aldermen Matt Brown added that Communications has done a great job in responding to comments and focusing on education on social media. It has gotten a lot better, but he understands that it is a delicate balance.
- Milissa handed out a document showing how her team responds to social media comments and complaints.
 - The City has added a webpage about how growth is being managed. The page has been very helpful because Communications can point people to that information to help educate.
 - Communications has worked with Building & Neighborhood Services to help share information on the One Stop Review process.
- Aldermen Brown brought up that the biggest concern is traffic, which creates the complaint that there are too many people moving to Franklin. The problem is that a lot of people commute to Franklin from all over Middle Tennessee, which creates the perception that even more people are moving to Franklin than reality.
 - Second problem is affordability, and a big part of making housing more affordable is creating more housing stock.
- Milissa said that when she goes to other cities, she asks what they do to talk about growth. Most of the time, they don't have an answer.
- Jimmy Wiseman said that we can also utilize information at the top. One example is to use destination trip data to show how many people are traveling into Franklin from other cities.
 - Aldermen Brown also pointed out that large developments in the county or other cities in the area will have an impact on Franklin roads, and those developments don't pay Franklin impact fees.
- Scotty Bernick shifted the conversation to the development community. He suggested that the group really define the audience. He likes the idea of the QR code throughout the process, especially if it can be sent through IDT.
 - Vernon added that the survey should be very simple, so it's not too cumbersome to fill out.
- Amy Diaz-Barriga pointed out that the QR code could be tailored to be sent out to projects that get kicked back. That way, projects that go through the process smoothly won't be bothered to fill out the survey.
 - Milissa did point out that you want a way for people to leave positive feedback.
- Jimmy brought up that there could be a way to automate staff schedules which would make it easier for a development teams to schedule meetings with staff.
 - Vernon agreed and proposed staff setting aside a certain amount of the time during the review process for design teams to meet and talk with staff.
- Mary McGowan said that her team has begun prepping clients for complicated projects to submit at pre-application and to wait for initial submittal. It helps make things run smoother because staff and her team have more time.

- Amy agreed and said that staff could help by leaving a comment on the pre-application suggesting that the plan wait and not be submitted at the first initial submittal date.
- Vernon also offered that the City could search for third party plan reviewers for site plans. That way, staff can have more time to review larger and more complicated projects.
- Alex Bearden said that third party plan reviews on the building side has been very helpful. Staff still does quality checks on all plans before building permits are issued.
- Amy said it could work for very technical reviews, but there might be a problem when it comes to reviewing plans against Envision Franklin. That is more about the City's goals and values in which staff are the experts.
- Paige Parham said that the best cities to work in have open office hours for development professionals to call and get their questions answered. It is rare, but it does happen. She also added that professionals should also put the topic they want addressed in the office hour request.
- Milissa said that a way to do some rumor control is creating a webpage similar to the capital projects page but for developments in the entitlement process. That way, Communications can point citizens to that information easily when they have questions.
- Vernon said that staff will regroup and come back in July and continue this discussion. Staff's goal is to have at least a QR code survey to show the group.
- **Next meeting – Tuesday, July 1st, 2025**

3. Adjourn.