



**City of Montgomery
Montgomery Economic Development Corporation
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2026**

OPENING AGENDA

1. Call meeting to order.

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of Montgomery Economic Development Corporation was called to order by Jeffry Angelo at 6:00 p.m. on January 20, 2026, at City Hall 101 Old Plantersville Rd., Montgomery, TX and live video streaming.

With the Board Members present a quorum was established.

Present: Jeffry Angelo, President
Arnette Easley, Vice President
Carol Langley, Treasurer
Ryan Londeen, Secretary
Dan Walker, Commission Member
Casey Olson, Commission Member

Absent: Wade Nelson, Commission Member

2. Pledges of Allegiance.

President Angelo led the Pledge of Allegiance and Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas State Flag.

PUBLIC FORUM

Cheryl Fox, 821 Stewart Street, spoke during Item 6.

Adelle Hanson, 315 Caroline, spoke during Item 6.

REGULAR AGENDA

3. Consideration and possible action on the Special Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2025.

Motion: Treasurer Langley made a motion to accept the Special Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2025. Vice President Easley seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

4. Consideration and possible action regarding the update and status of the Wayfinding Sign Program.

Development Services Administrator Tilley addressed the commission and presented an update regarding the City's wayfinding and monument signage program. Ms. Tilley presented progress on the project and reviewed renderings for the proposed signage, including a monument (gateway) sign, entry-point signs, directional wayfinding signs, information/kiosk signs, and park signage. The designs share a unified branding approach using consistent fonts, Texas flag colors, and common visual elements to ensure cohesion throughout the City. Two stylistic options were shown for the monument sign, referred to as Option A and Option B, with discussion focused on placement, visibility, drainage constraints, right-of-way limitations, budget considerations, and consistency with the City's 2020 comprehensive plan.

After discussion, the Board expressed a preference for Option B for the monument sign, noting that it aligns more closely with the overall sign family and original project intent. The primary proposed location for the monument sign is the south lot near the intersection of FM 149 and Eva/Liberty Street, where it would replace the existing electronic message board, which is unsupported, difficult to read, and nearing the end of its useful life. While earlier plans considered placing a monument sign near Pizza Shack on the west side of town, logistical challenges related to drainage, required elevation, and TxDOT right-of-way approvals made that location less feasible at this stage. Board Members emphasized the importance of moving forward with a gateway sign to avoid further delay near the Pizza Shack location.

Entry-point signs were confirmed to replace the existing green “City of Montgomery” population signs at all major entrances to the City, with the new signs being significantly larger, more visible, and placed closer to the roadway where permitted. Directional and wayfinding signs will be installed throughout the City to guide visitors to key destinations such as downtown, parks, and civic facilities, with some signs designed to be double-sided where visibility from both directions is required. Information/kiosk signs, primarily located downtown and at select locations such as Fernland Park and possibly the municipal building, will use an information “I” symbol rather than the star to visually distinguish them from directional signage. Existing park monuments, including the Cedar Brake Park sign, will be retained and retrofitted to match the new branding standards.

Further discussion was held to authorize the City Administrator to execute final sign-offs for each signage element once MEDC approval has been obtained. Staff will return with a comprehensive “full book” package detailing final designs, exact locations, specifications, and costs for all sign types prior to manufacturing. It was suggested that this review take place during a dedicated workshop to allow sufficient time for site-by-site confirmation and any final refinements.

Motion: Commission Member Walker made a motion to authorize the City Administrator to execute final sign-off on each item once MEDC approval has been granted. Vice President Easley seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

5. Discuss proposed improvements to the City-owned “South Lot” including monument signage, landscaping, hardscaping, and circulation enhancements.

City Administrator Walker addressed the Commission regarding proposed improvements to the city-owned south lot, including the monument sign, signage, landscaping, hardscaping, and circulation enhancements. The administrator presented conceptual ideas drawn from the city’s 2020 planning efforts, emphasizing accessibility and placemaking. The intent is to create a welcoming, photo-friendly space where visitors can safely stop, take pictures, and orient themselves downtown. Proposed elements include improved landscaping, hardscaping, American and Texas flagpoles, and the possible planting of a Liberty Tree donated by Mr. Forester. While no formal plans or drawings have been prepared and no funding has been allocated, the administrator requested general feedback on whether to proceed with developing the concept further.

Discussion also addressed how the south lot could support downtown circulation and parking. Concepts include creating parking access from FM 149, reinforcing McCown Street as a one-way route that feeds visitors into downtown, and adding sidewalks to improve pedestrian connectivity. Existing wayfinding signage is already in place, and future improvements could align with the goals identified in the 2020 plan related to walkability, parking, and traffic flow. An engineered concept previously developed for the south lot includes approximately 14–16 parking spaces along one side of the property, coordinated with partial closure of McCown Street near SH-105 to improve safety and traffic flow, while maintaining necessary access for adjacent property owners.

The board discussed coordination with TxDOT, particularly regarding driveway access, turning lanes, and safety concerns related to proximity to the SH-105 traffic signal. Any new ingress, egress, or parking configuration would require TxDOT approval. The proposed parking layout would be designed to naturally

guide vehicles back into downtown, supported by wayfinding signage that reinforces traffic flow and encourages visitors to explore the area.

Considerable discussion focused on the existing digital monument sign. While the sign provides useful communication, its current placement and design limit visibility for passing traffic. Options discussed included redesigning the monument sign, incorporating informational or digital elements into a new monument-style sign that complies with historic district height restrictions, or working with the City's wayfinding sign contractor to develop an improved, integrated solution. Height limitations along SH-105 were acknowledged, but it was noted that allowable heights should still permit a more visible and effective design.

Overall, members expressed support for moving forward incrementally, beginning with basic landscaping and monument improvements, which would significantly enhance the appearance of the south lot without substantial cost. It was generally agreed that decisions regarding signage and circulation should remain flexible and coordinated with broader downtown initiatives, including wayfinding, traffic improvements, and potential future development.

No action was taken, and the item remained discussion-only.

6. Discuss proposed improvements to the City-owned "North Lot" including the relocation of the Rabon Fullen House (also known as the Garrett House), office space opportunities, public parking, and pedestrian connectivity.

City Administrator Walker addressed the Board on discussing proposed improvements to the city-owned north lot (and potentially the south lot), including relocation of the Rabon House, also known as the Garrett House, creation of office space opportunities, public parking, and improved pedestrian connectivity to adjacent sidewalks. Mr. Walker noted that any work exceeding \$10,000 would require formal project designation and separate bidding, meaning each component would likely proceed as its own project. Current concepts include extending the existing brick sidewalk to connect seamlessly with McCown Street and the community center, improving landscaping, and evaluating future sidewalk connections along TxDOT right-of-way. Utilities such as water and sewer are readily accessible, and the site is generally flat, with manageable drainage considerations. Preliminary estimates suggest that relocating the Garrett House across the street would cost approximately \$55,000, with an additional \$8,000 for a required slab foundation with piers, plus minor landscaping and tree removal, bringing the total closer to \$65,000. While these figures do not include interior renovations, plumbing, parking, or ADA upgrades, the project is considered feasible and scalable over time as funding becomes available.

Cheryl Fox, 821 Stewart Street, spoke during Item 6 in support of preserving and relocating the Garrett House. She shared the historical background of the structure, noting that it was originally built in the late 1890s and once stood on Houston Street, where Mr. and Mrs. Fullen lived. The house was later purchased by Joe Shockley from the original owner's daughter, Mabel, and moved to its current location. Ms. Fox emphasized the home's deep local history, including its prior use as a tea room operated by Miss Kiasling, and described it as a well-built structure with seven or eight rooms and a bathroom.

Ms. Fox expressed strong support for relocating the Garrett House to the city-owned north lot, stating that it would complement the Davis Cottage and enhance walkability, particularly if a future rear entrance is developed. She suggested the building could serve as office space, a welcome center, or a leased venue for Texas or Montgomery-specific merchandise, noting that comparable downtown rental rates range from \$1,850 to \$3,000 per month. She stated that this could allow the City or EDC to recoup its investment over time. Ms. Fox also indicated that Mr. Cheatham has stated the house would be given to the City and warned that, without action, the structure may be demolished.

She further noted that the house has already been successfully relocated once over a greater distance and expressed confidence it could be moved again with minimal risk. Ms. Fox emphasized the importance of

preserving historic structures, citing the loss of many older homes over the years. She also highlighted safety concerns related to traffic near the Davis Cottage and suggested that relocating activity toward the McCown/Caroline side would improve safety and accessibility. She concluded by encouraging the board to invest in saving the Garrett House as a meaningful preservation effort for the community.

Adele Hanson, 315 Caroline Street, spoke during Item 6 regarding the future of the Garrett House Antique Shop. Ms. Hanson clarified that she owns and operates the business, not the building itself, and stated that three women work together to keep the shop operating. She emphasized that none of them want the business to close. Ms. Hanson explained that she has been searching for alternative locations, but current downtown rental rates, often ranging from \$3,000 to \$3,500 per month, are unaffordable for a small business.

Ms. Hanson provided background on the property, noting that around 2002 Joe Shockley established the buildings as a charming shopping area. After the property was later purchased by Mr. Cheatham, she was initially informed that all buildings would be demolished, which was devastating news for the businesses located there. Although circumstances have since changed, she stated that the uncertainty has been emotionally difficult. She noted that the businesses have now been told they may remain after their leases expire at the same rent until a final decision is made, at which point they would receive 90 days' notice to vacate. While this notice period is appreciated, she emphasized that the larger issue remains unanswered: where and how the businesses can relocate.

Ms. Hanson stated that approximately twelve businesses in the block are facing the same concerns and are asking how they can remain in greater downtown Montgomery. She described the Garrett House Antique Shop's strong customer base, including repeat visitors, Winter Texans, travelers from across the United States, and international visitors. As an example, she shared that five visitors from Scotland recently stopped at the shop as their first destination in Montgomery. She explained that customers are distressed upon learning the business may be forced to move and often ask how they can help, a question to which she currently has no answer.

Ms. Hanson expressed concern that redevelopment of the property could result in a two or three-story, non-historic building, which she believes would undermine the character of the area. She stressed that the loss of small businesses and historic structures would fundamentally change downtown Montgomery, stating that if the historic buildings are gone, the historic district itself effectively disappears. She concluded by asking the board for guidance and assistance, emphasizing that the businesses want to stay downtown, but currently do not see a viable path forward.

Board discussion reflected strong interest in preserving the Garrett House and exploring ways to retain displaced downtown businesses, while acknowledging financial, zoning, ADA, fire code, and setback constraints. Members agreed that time sensitivity exists due to the potential demolition of the Garrett House if action is delayed. While no formal action was taken, there was general consensus to continue pursuing options to save the Garrett House, evaluate relocation or redevelopment strategies for affected businesses, and possibly convene a future workshop or special session to refine plans, costs, and next steps.

7. Consideration and possible action on the review of the Community Center and authorization for the City Administrator to pursue conceptual design and pricing.

Zachary Timms, WGA, addressed the Commission to present an update on the Downtown Improvements Project, including design progress and coordination with future community center planning. Mr. Timms reported that Phase One of the project encompasses streetscape improvements along McCown Street from Caroline Street to the Community Building. Design is progressing following receipt of documents from the prior engineer, though it was noted that no geotechnical report had been completed despite earlier pavement recommendations. A geotechnical investigation will be performed, but it is not expected to impact the current design schedule. Cost efficiencies have already been identified by reducing proposed pavement thickness to better align with anticipated traffic volumes. Landscape architecture services, including

lighting and streetscape enhancements along McCown Street, are underway and scheduled for completion by March, with bid documents anticipated by early April.

Phase One construction is projected to be bid and awarded in June, aligning with the regular MEDC meeting schedule, with construction anticipated to begin in July and conclude within approximately four months, potentially completing by October. The scope includes water line replacement, storm sewer improvements, and pavement reconstruction. Staff emphasized that coordination with downtown property owners will be necessary to minimize disruption to businesses during construction.

Phase Two of the project involves site improvements surrounding the existing Community Building, which are currently on hold pending decisions regarding the building's future. Staff explained that ongoing discussions surrounding the Community Center's condition, utility systems, and structural integrity necessitate alignment between the downtown improvements and long-term plans for the site. To support continued progress, staff recommended reconvening a Downtown Improvements Subcommittee and expanding it to include representatives from City Council, Planning & Zoning, and the Historical Society to ensure broad stakeholder input. The inclusion of individuals with historical knowledge was encouraged to help guide design decisions consistent with the site's significance.

City Administrator Walker addressed the Board to discuss the condition and future of the Community Center building. Mr. Walker summarized findings from engineering evaluations indicating extensive structural, moisture, roofing, and code-compliance issues. While the building is valued by the community, it was noted that meaningful rehabilitation would require significant deconstruction to address structural deficiencies, even if the exterior appearance were ultimately preserved. Several conceptual ideas were discussed, including retaining portions of the original façade, creating an open-air structure for community events, and constructing an attached enclosed space to meet modern code requirements and accommodate year-round use. It was emphasized that no final decisions have been made and that visual concepts would be essential to helping both board members and the public understand potential outcomes.

To advance this effort, City Administrator Walker recommended engaging a local design professional to develop conceptual designs and preliminary pricing. The purpose of this engagement is to facilitate a collaborative design workshop, gather stakeholder input, and produce visual concepts illustrating feasible options for preserving the building's character while addressing structural and code requirements.

City Administrator Walker requested approval to pursue conceptual design and pricing by engaging Design Three Studio, for \$3,750. This authorization would allow the design work to proceed in advance of a scheduled workshop and does not commit the City to a final construction plan.

A workshop would be scheduled in the near future to maintain momentum and ensure alignment between downtown infrastructure improvements and the long-term vision for the Community Center site.

Motion: Commission Member Olson made a motion to approve authorization for the City Administrator to pursue conceptual design and pricing, not to exceed \$4,000, for the Community Center. Treasurer Langley seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

8. Discussion and possible action on the Financial Reports for September, and combined October/November 2025.

Finance Director Carl presented the financial report for September and the combined October/November 2025 period. Director Carl noted that it appeared slightly different from prior reports due to the initiation of the year-end audit process; however, the underlying financial information remained unchanged. No unusual activity or variances were identified, and no questions were raised regarding the September report.

A combined financial report for October and November was then reviewed, again noting that there were no irregularities or items requiring special attention.

The Board discussed current fund balances and cash positioning. Director Carl clarified that the total available balance is approximately \$3.6 million, but emphasized that this figure includes both committed and assigned funds and should not be interpreted as fully unencumbered cash. Of that amount, approximately \$2.9 million is held across four MEDC bank accounts, while an additional \$762,000 is held within the City's general operating pool, but is assigned specifically to the MEDC fund. Sales tax receipts are initially recorded in this pool and later allocated, with expenditures and transfers appropriately credited or debited against the MEDC balance.

Sales tax revenue trends were also discussed. Director Carl explained that October and November receipts reflect prior fiscal year activity, and that current-year sales tax collections began in December, which had not yet closed. Preliminary indications show revenue tracking slightly above projections, with no signs suggesting underperformance. Based on current trends and anticipated commercial growth, staff indicated confidence that revenue projections would be met or modestly exceeded, and that the MEDC is expected to return to pre-split sales tax levels within an estimated two-to-three-year timeframe.

President Angelo expressed optimism regarding the financial outlook while emphasizing the importance of responsible spending as larger capital projects move forward. It was noted that recent and planned investments are intended to yield long-term community benefits, including downtown revitalization, façade improvements, community center redevelopment, and support for new businesses. Maintaining fiscal discipline while leveraging growth and potential grant opportunities was identified as a key priority.

Motion: Commission Member Olson made a motion to approve the Financial Reports for September, and combined October/November 2025. Vice President Easley seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

BOARD INQUIRY

City Administrator Walker suggested brief discussion regarding scheduling an upcoming workshop and raised an additional item concerning temporary office space needs. Mr. Walker explained that, due to current staffing vacancies and space limitations at City Hall, Council had authorized preliminary negotiations to explore leasing office space across the street to accommodate personnel until the larger facility becomes available.

Alternative leasing options were discussed, including available office space owned by Mr. Burns near the Community Center. Mr. Burns addressed the board and noted that he has limited executive-suite style office space on a one-year lease basis, typically renting for approximately \$300–\$400 per month per office, depending on space and amenities. While this option may be cost-competitive compared to other available buildings, City Administrator Walker noted that network security and connectivity requirements, including the need for a secure government VPN, could present logistical challenges depending on location and infrastructure. Further evaluation of technology compatibility and cost comparisons was recommended before moving forward.

The Board generally agreed that additional office space is necessary to support current and anticipated staffing needs and expressed support for staff continuing discussions and bringing a formal recommendation forward at a future meeting or workshop. It was noted that any final action would ultimately require Council approval.

The Board then discussed scheduling a workshop to address multiple ongoing items. By consensus, the workshop was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 17, 2026, pending final confirmation and notice. Members indicated availability for that date.

CLOSING AGENDA

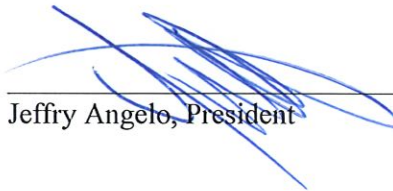
9. Items to consider for placement on future agendas.

Item not discussed.

10. Adjourn.

Motion: Commission Member Olson made a motion to adjourn the Regular Quarterly Meeting of Montgomery Economic Development Corporation at 8:01 p.m. Commission Member Walker seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

APPROVED:


Jeffrey Angelo, President

ATTEST:


Ruby Beaven, City Secretary

