



JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY (LDFA) / LANSING REGIONAL SMARTZONE (LRSZ)

SPECIAL MEETING: SMARTZONE VISION SESSION 2

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 | 3:06 p.m.

East Lansing Technology Innovation Center (TIC)
300 Room | 325 E. Grand River Ave., Suite 300, East Lansing, MI 48823

Attendees: Abigail Tykocki, Traci Riehl, Irene Cahill, Heather Pope, Shay Manawar, Mark Meadows, Dave Washburn

Stakeholders: Lori Mullins, Christopher Mumby, Kris Klein, Gabbi Strom, Anum Mughal, Tim Dempsey

Staff: Harrison Leffel-Jones, Jillian Winn

Facilitators: Colleen Gaffney, Julie Durham

Recorded by: Jillian Winn, Director of the SmartZone

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Tykocki called the Special Meeting of the Lansing Regional SmartZone Joint Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) to order at 3:06 p.m. The meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Director Winn conducted roll call. A quorum was present. Mark Meadows arrived at 3:08 p.m.

Members Present:

1. Irene Cahill (I)
2. Heather Pope (EL)
3. Shay Manawar (L)
4. Mark Meadows (EL)
(arrived 3:08 p.m.)
5. Traci Riehl (VC - L)
6. Abigail Tykocki (C - EL)
7. Dave Washburn (L)

Members Absent:

1. Ben Bakken (LCC)
2. Mark Dobson (ELPS)
3. Charles Hasemann (EL)
4. Jon Laing (LSD)
5. Nicole Millsap (LSD)
6. Christian Palasty (ELPS)

Representation Key:

EL = City of East Lansing
ELPS = East Lansing Public Schools
I = Ingham County
L = City of Lansing
LCC = Lansing Community College
LSD = Lansing School District

LDFA Executive Committee:

C = Chair
VC = Vice Chair
T = Treasurer

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

2. Adoption of Agenda

Motion: Riehl moved to adopt the agenda as presented.

Second: Pope

Vote: Motion Carried (7-0)

3. Session 1 Recap and Finalizing the Vision

Colleen Gaffney (PSC) recapped Session 1, highlighting six key areas identified for the SmartZone's future success:

1. KPIs
2. Reputation
3. Expanded and refined programs
4. Strong operations

5. Growing physical assets
6. Engaging with education

PSC presented a draft vision statement and three guiding principles for board discussion:

- **Vision:** The SmartZone is a unified regional tech hub that empowers innovators at every stage.
- **Guiding Principle 1:** Strengthen Regional Partnerships: Our core advantage is regional collaboration through shared financial resources. The SmartZone is committed to establishing and maintaining strong partnerships across municipalities, regional partners, and schools to build a thriving, interconnected innovation ecosystem.
- **Guiding Principle 2:** Leverage Existing Assets: The SmartZone will leverage and expand resources to ensure tech companies can find a permanent home in the region by building upon regional strengths and intentionally utilizing existing real estate.
- **Guiding Principle 3:** Support All Stages of Business: We nurture the innovator lifecycle by delivering focused entrepreneurial programs across the region, helping people grow their ideas into real products and services, and providing concrete innovation support to retain talent and businesses in the region.

The group discussed the draft vision and guiding principles. Feedback included a desire to add a fourth guiding principle focused on internal partnerships.

Discussion also touched on the SmartZone name, with interest in reconsidering it given the regional scope beyond Lansing. No names were proposed at this meeting. Riehl requested that names of other SmartZones across the state be shared for reference.

4. Identifying Strategies for Achieving the Vision

Julie Durham (PSC) facilitated a discussion on barriers and strategies for achieving the SmartZone vision, with focused conversation on tax capture mechanics, revenue sharing, and governance.

Discussion on revenue and financial contributions included the following points:

- The 2025 tax capture data showed there is no cost to the City of East Lansing or East Lansing Public Schools, as the state reimburses municipalities for SmartZone capture.
- Manawar noted that given this reimbursement structure, the City of East Lansing is not contributing financially in a traditional sense, which makes it even more important that SmartZone programming and investments benefit the broader region.

- Meadows acknowledged that while East Lansing may be reimbursed by the state, there would be no tax capture without East Lansing and its constituents, who still expect to see tangible benefits from the SmartZone.
- Pope referenced another city program where funds are allocated outside of East Lansing to support programming that benefits East Lansing residents, as an example of how regional investment can still serve local interests.

Additional discussion themes included:

- A desire to reduce friction for entrepreneurs seeking to access SmartZone programs, services, and opportunities.
- Meadows noted that with more people working virtually, the SmartZone may need to rethink how it defines access to programming.
- Interest in identifying the different resources and contributions each municipality can bring to the SmartZone beyond financial capture.
- Defining and formalizing the SmartZone's relationship with K-12 and post-secondary education partners was identified as a key area of focus, including how to engage partners to grow the region's talent pipeline.
- The process for engaging new municipalities, including board makeup and value proposition, was identified as another barrier to be addressed in future sessions.

5. Public Comment

Chair Tykocki invited public comment. No public comments were received.

6. Next Steps

- Session 3 is scheduled for June 8, 2026.

7. Adjournment

Motion: Riehl moved to adjourn.

Second: Pope

Vote: Motion Carried (7-0)

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY: Jillian Winn, Director of the SmartZone

STATUS: APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON JUNE 17, 2026