

Sparta Downtown Development Authority
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 17, 2026
SPARTA MUNICIPAL COMPLEX

Meeting called to order at 7:49 am by Cheslek

Members present:, Cheslek, Freeland, Potes, Scarffe, Lamb, Whalen, Shangle, Gray, Benham, Stoner

Members Excused: Baker, Driscoll

Members Absent: None

Chamber Board Members Present:

Bob Shangle, Tom Cheslek, Priscilla Cazier

Events Board Members:

Scott Grossmeyer, Kendra Afton, Tom Cheslek, Brenda Braybrook

Also Present: Elizabeth Morse, DDA Director; Jim Lower, Village Manager,

Public Comment – None

Unfinished Business - None

- 1) None.

New Business

- 1) 2025 Annual Report of Sparta Chamber, Sparta DDA, Sparta Events Presentation (attached)
- 2) Staff Updates included Beth Baltruczak, Events Coordinator updates.
- 3) Sparta Town Square updates and construction timeline updates provided. The project will finish this spring with landscaping finishing up when weather allows.

Public Comment - None.

DDA Business Director Report – verbal update.

- A) The date for the joint DDA/Chamber/Events Board meeting is Tuesday March 17 at 7:45 am.

Village Manager Report

Public Comment – None.

Meeting adjourned by executive privilege at 8:33 am.



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2025 Sparta TODAY

DDA + Chamber + Events Organizations



Sparta Bucks

Angela's Italian Restaurant - Auto Care Excellence - Bayes Water Treatment
 Blondie Blossom Boutique - Checker Pop Candy Shop - Creekside Clover - Creekside Kids Boutique
 Downtown Trini's & Margarita Joe's - Envision Nutrition - Flo's Sports Bar - Flo's Wood Fired Pizzeria
 Freeland Chiropractic Center - Liz's Dog Grooming - MI Vinyl World - Nail Tex Salon
 Northwest Optometry - Palermo Pizza of Sparta - Sassy Farms - Scarffe Chiropractic
 Sparta Lanes - The Garden Patch - Sparta Hot Spot - Sparta Feed & Seed - Sparta Today
 Stoney Ridge Vineyard - Sundaes at the Park - The Sassy Chicken
 Tom's Hometown Bakery - Wing World of Sparta

THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF THE SPARTA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION!



The Sparta Community Foundation has been benefiting the Sparta area since the 1940's! The Foundation evaluates local needs and opportunities and looks to fund projects that address the areas of art and culture, community development, education, environment, health, or social needs.

29 Local businesses
accepting Sparta
Bucks

\$5,800 Shop Local
Campaign "prizes" of
Sparta Bucks awarded
through Shop Local
Promotions

Over \$205,000 total
Sparta Bucks have
circulated through our
system!



Sip & Shop Event

This is a reinigorated **shop local campaign Event** designed to encourage traffic for downtown businesses. This year, we hosted three seasonally-themed events: The Downtown Cider Stroll, Doe Days, and Hometown Christmas. We offered Sparta Bucks giveaways, brought in local vendors, and advertised area deals and specials for the event. The result was a simple, but effective program that boosted engagement and sales in downtown shops, restaurants, and boutiques!



Shop Local Winter Campaign - Yeti on the Loose



Always weigh out if these programs are "worth the squeeze", but response from the business owners include positive stories of "new customers/visitors who walked in specifically because of this program" and specific people who either remembered a business existed or visited a business specifically because of this program.

It is also a "hands on" option to get foot traffic "into" businesses vs a "billboard" style marketing that can shout aloud "go shop local!", this program rewards/excites people for seeking out local options.



Yeti on the Loose
February 1-28

Come in and look for a hidden yeti!

Two Ways to Win!

To get entered for \$100 in Sparta Bucks:

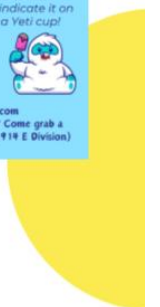
1. Find Our Yeti
2. Scan the QR Code Near the Yeti
3. Fill Out the Form & Get Entered to Win

*Bonus Prize! Make a purchase, indicate it on the form, and get entered to win a Yeti cup!

Two Drawings will be held:
2/14 & 2/28

Two Winners per Drawing will be randomly selected.

Spartachamber.com
Can't scan the QR Code? Come grab a check list from our office (914 E Division)





5 Ribbon Cuttings!

Abra Autobody of America, SpARTa Works, Surf Internet, Blondie Blossom Boutique, and Elements Movement Yoga Studio.



x
x
x

Volunteers



Volunteer Round Up

Thanks to Downtown Trini's & Margarita Joe's for hosting our free volunteer round up night, where we wine and dine our volunteers, hand out our signature sponsors shirts, and sign up our volunteers for the yearly events!

✔ Addressing Sparta TODAY Primary Weakness: **BUILDING THE VOLUNTEER BASE / SOLICITING THE COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT.**

✔ Addressing Sparta TODAY Foundational: **Initiative to continue: Volunteer cultivation & Management**



Accomplishments

60+ Businesses donated, volunteered, or engaged in the community events!

600+ Hours clocked to help make great things happen in Sparta!

Events have become our calling card - lean into that and target growth.

Strategic Objective Strength 2025



- Quality over quantity
- Planning for legacy
- Capacity building (knowing our limit based on space/parking/etc.)
- Bringing in more turn key options to reduce pressure on staff
- Continue to evaluate business feedback after every event for impact



2026 Staff Priorities



DDA

- Development Plan (Legal Document)
- Continue to find engagement opportunities for public to connect to downtown



Events

- Calendar Live connected to DPW
- Develop new On The Square Event series for new Town Square



Chamber

- Connecting to new businesses (new partnerships)
- Build Sparta Bucks program

Together / Sparta TODAY

- Better define staff roles / job descriptions / cross training
- Create calendars for inner team communication and deadlines
- Social media strategy / online presence telling the story of "who we are" per Strategic Objectives
- Clean / condense /eliminate stored items no longer need in storage

Goal this year is to "Rise Above the Noise": to encourage our staff to Stay Positive and Productive, Keep Our Energy Where It Belongs, Choose the High Road, and Stay Positive.



Engagement is Important!

SPARTA SHAMROCKS & SHOP LOCAL BINGO!

Byers Water Treatment	Ace Hardware	Palermo Pizzeria	Standle Blaesom	Creakside Kids Boutique
Sparta's Chiropractic	SPARTA Works Gallery	Auto Care Excellence	Johnson Pro Shop	All Vinyl World
Studio 345	Sparta Feed & Seed	 Crookside Clover	Checker Pop Candy Shop	Envision Nutrition
Sparta BIGGER	O'Reilly Auto Parts	Crookside Clover	Sparta Limes & Garden Patch	Sparta Library
Sassy Chicken & The Book Place	Tom's Hometown Bakery	Sparta Chamber	Kuffler Haus	Family Form & Home

Make a purchase & mark an extra space stamp which equals a BINGO!

Go to Businesses and play BINGO in Sparta from March 1-31, 2025

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