

**Radford University/Radford City Joint Commission
Minutes**

**The Hub on East Main Street
June 9, 2026 @ 8:45 am**

Attendees: Kellie Artrip, Angela Joyner, Jerry Holdaway, Kim Repass, Todd Meredith, Ben Bondurant, Eric Plummer, Tricia Smith, Bethany Usher, Justin Ward and Lisa Ghidotti. Kelsi Jones, Sarah Turpin, Melissa Skelton and Rob Hoover attended via Zoom.

The meeting agenda is created by the Commission members and designed to create an opportunity to discuss collaborative initiatives, learn about specific topics and/or areas of interest, and develop relevant action plans as needed.

I. Welcome

The meeting was opened by Co-chairs, Angela Joyner and Kellie Artrip, who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

II. Retail Strategy Study update

Decision

Angela Joyner stated that Retail Strategies through the regional commission would be engaged in the retail strategy study. The engagement will formally kick off during the first week of July 2026.

Timeline and Deliverables

The engagement is expected to run approximately nine to twelve months. The principal deliverable is a five-year strategic retail and downtown action plan accompanied by implementation recommendations. Consultant support for plan execution will continue through years two and three of the engagement.

Scope of Work

The scope was outlined across several interconnected areas. Business retention and attraction will focus on strategies to sustain existing enterprises while actively recruiting new businesses to the downtown and regional market. Design work will address physical and aesthetic improvements to the built environment. Tourism and promotion will integrate the retail strategy with the visitor economy. Business readiness programming will be calibrated to distinguish startup-stage businesses from those in growth or scaling phases, ensuring appropriately tailored support. The potential role of a Small Business Development Center within the strategy will be evaluated. The study will also identify necessary policy and administrative supports—

regulatory changes, permitting adjustments, or procedural reforms—that would enable effective implementation.

Research and Engagement Methods

- III.** The Retail Strategies team will conduct interviews with local businesses and community stakeholders. University students and faculty will be engaged as part of the process. The study will build on prior work, including the 2018 DHCD report and existing regional revitalization research, to avoid duplication and ensure continuity.

IV. Community Fest Update

Community Fest planning is confirmed and all major logistics are in place for the August 22nd event. Entertainment has been contracted and two performance stages will be operational. Vendor capacity has been expanded to 110 booths, up from 90 booths in the prior year. Food truck participation is fully booked. A two-month advertising campaign is already underway.

Branding and Promotions

A new community-designed brand identity, 'Heart Hands,' will be publicly revealed in the coming days, accompanied by a coordinated social media campaign. Partners were asked to assist with distributing promotional materials across their networks and to promote volunteer sign-up opportunities. Volunteers who participate will receive complimentary event shirts as a token of appreciation.

ACTION ITEMS: Distribute Community Fest promotional materials and volunteer sign-up links to all partner networks

V. AdventureWorks update

An Adventure Summit is planned for September 8th and 9th. The program will open with a kickoff networking event at SELU Conservancy on the first day. The full agenda includes four curated panel sessions on outdoor recreation and regional tourism themes, supplemented by breakout sessions for deeper stakeholder engagement. A restaurant crawl or food-truck rodeo is being planned to activate local dining establishments and drive community spending during the summit. Partner outreach is underway and event logistics are under active development.

VI. Member updates:

City Representatives

- Kellie Artrip – Radford City Council Member
 - New River Day – June 27th @ 10 am; paddle at 10:30 am; food @ 11:30 am – 1 pm then to Longway Brewing
 - Ben Bondurant elected to Economic Development Authority Board

- Fourth of July Celebration is being held July 3rd – 4 pm – Bisset Park
 - City Council meeting June 8th – next meeting July 13th
- Todd Meredith – City Manager
- Jerry Holdaway – Radford City Chief of Police
 - Near full staffing levels, with two academy graduates completing training imminently
 - Department received Lexipol Elite Award in recognition of excellence in policy compliance and officer training.
- Sarah Turpin – Executive Director, Radford Chamber of Commerce
- Kim Repass – Director of Economic Development & Director of Tourism
 - July 3rd Fourth of July celebration at Bisset Park – 4 pm – 250-year celebration
 - Foundry date is December 31st and concrete has been removed and laying soil and seed within next month or two – project at Tier 4
 - Signed letter of intent received on Wells Fargo building
- Melissa Skelton – Director of Planning and Zoning
 - Next City Council meeting will be held July 13 on zoning ordinance
- Ben Bondurant - Real Estate Rep and Developer
- Kelsi Jones – Owner of BT's Restaurant

University Representatives

- Tricia Smith – Interim Vice President for Student Affairs
 - National Trails Day at SELU had 130 people – 74% of which were not Radford University people
- Angela Joyner – Vice President for Economic Development and Corporate Education
 - Highlander Festival – October 10th
 - Launched division newsletter “The Exchange” in May. Next newsletter will be in August
 - Economic Luncheon will be September 10th
- Bethany Usher – Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
 - Enrollment is approaching 7500 students, reflecting a net year-over-year increase of 120 students. Freshman enrollment numbers remain steady. The university has launched a Center for Rural Health, and the RU CARES mobile clinic is operational and reporting high community demand.
- Rob Hoover – Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Eric Plummer – Chief of Police for Radford University
 - Hired three new officers coming out of academy – now fully staffed with 25 officers
- Lisa Ghidotti – Assistant Vice President for Government Relations and Strategic Initiatives
 - Economic Development luncheon – September 10th
 - Launched Center for Rural Health and have mobile health clinic

- King grant received
 - Outreach for mental health
- Nichole Hair – Director of Economic Development and Community Engagement
- Justin Ward on behalf of David Perryman – Associate Vice President for Strategic Communications

Calendar updates

- Fourth of July holiday – Offices closed July 3rd
- Radford City Council meeting – July 13th
- Next Joint Commission meeting – July 14th @ 8:45 am
- Radford Community Fest – August 22nd
- Labor Day holiday – Offices closed September 7th
- AdventureWorks – September 8th and 9th
- Highlanders Festival – October 10th