

MINUTES

Downtown Decatur Neighbors

February 11, 2015

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

I January Minutes - Motion was made to approve as emailed, properly seconded and approved unanimously.

II Treasurer's Report - Jean O'Callaghan

Discussed need for funding to cover start-up fees for website, incorporation, PO Box. We do not want to initiate membership fees at this time. It is recommended by the board that we ask the larger condo's to make a one-time contribution of \$150 to cover the expenses. The liaisons would make the request and officers can attend the HOA meetings as desired.

III Presentation – Amanda Thompson, Planning Director and Zoning Administrator, AICP certification and resident of Swanton Hills.

A Powerpoint presentation was used to discuss Decatur's planning history since the 1980's, its relationship to the budget process and transportation funding. Key historical points:

- Decision to build MARTA made in '60's but not built until '80's
- First Plan, Town Center in 1980, under Lyn Menne. Trees and streetscape were focus to improve walkability.
- 1996 Olympics provided for transportation funding.
- State roads were delisted to city streets to allow for road diets and streetscapes.
- Per Plan, parking lot surfaces designated for future development. Town Square became first condo development.
- Downtown Development Authority negotiated the purchase of some properties, attached conditions for future development.
- 2nd Plan a 10 year Strategic Plan in 2000 to provide guiding policy and was updated in 2010.
- Transportation goals and the look of downtown development were focuses.
- In response to questions it was noted that Parks generally not brought up by community participants; few downtown residents at that time. There are no plans for how much can be built downtown but can figure out maximums based on the zoning. City doesn't zone for desired development. Downtown is all commercial zoning. It doesn't require retail on ground level it is up to the developer to do retail or residential.

- Capital Improvement Projects included streetscapes, bike lanes. 12 acres of greenspace, fire station, Beacon Rec development. Bonds and federal transportation grants provide most CIP funding.

Quick budget lesson: 1 mil tax brings in \$1.3million. Millage rate for downtown residential is 13 mils without the school portion. .38 goes to the DDA; 1.42 debt on Bonds; 1 mil to Capital Projects and 10.2 to the General Fund for City services.

Only sources of funding for projects, greenspace, and other non-services are to raise millage rate i.e., raise taxes; borrow/Bonds; Grants; Donations or create a tax allocation district (TAD). Downtown does not have a CID (Community Improvement District).

We are invited to attend Planning Commission meetings. The Calloway site is due in about 6 weeks, some 200+ apartments.

IV Committee Chairs - Introduced themselves. Spoke about their initial interests and asked for volunteers to help develop committee objectives.

COMMUNICATION: Judy Knight
Twitter, Facebook and website up and running. Fortunately they have enough volunteers at this time, but will look for future help to organize some social events for downtown neighbors.

CODES & ORDINANCES: Peter Pfeiffer
We walk the streets so can see where improvements are needed; early morning noise issues.

PUBLIC SPACES: Nikki Economou
A park in the downtown boundary

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT: Buddy Harrell
We should learn the process; how to help city avoid problems with poor development as experienced in some of the condo developments; update downtown plan.

SENIORS: Phyllis Bright
Lifelong Living working with Leanne Harvey.

More on committees at next meeting.

Submitted by Kathie Gannon, Secretary