

## MINUTES

### Downtown Decatur Neighbors

May 13, 2015

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

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

II Treasurers Report - Jean O'Callaghan

Bank Account Register was shared and is on file. DDN raised \$704 and has \$700 in start up costs paid. PayPal donate button has been placed on our website.

III Presentation – Scott Drake, City Commissioner District 1

Scott grew up in Decatur neighborhoods but also has downtown experience having lived in the Artisan. He commended George Dusenbury's presentation to city commission on downtown parks and green space, noting it was eye opening.

Referred us to Lyn Menne as the point person for downtown development as she sees proposals before anyone. Review DDA Agendas so we can attend and learn how to “steer” development in the right direction.

The 3 big issues he observed while living downtown:

- Crime – even in daytime, in parking areas. Perhaps owners can “give back” somehow to help cover cost for security, lighting, etc. Lyn M. and Police are already looking at camera systems.
- Traffic – a problem generally but construction traffic in particular. Better enforcement is needed and we have to contact staff, commission, and enforcement as often as needed.
- Noise – timing is the problem he sees with early morning deliveries, dumpster collection, etc.

Wrap up:

- We now have a large population so we need a voice and will have to help the city recognize this, enforce the codes, look at new ordinance – whatever is needed. No one at city hall lives downtown. Lyn and Peggy Merris, City Manager should be our contacts.
- Example of one new thing could look at is putting need for security guards into plans for larger developments so at night they can walk the property. Work on ideas together.

Comments/Questions from Committee Chairs and members:

Planning – Committee is starting dialogue with relevant staff and their commissioners. Our issues relate to the lack of planning in C-2, seems like “anything goes” – aesthetic relationship between buildings, the need for a public hearing process for new development and land uses. Basically, a consensus that we need a Plan for downtown.

- Scott noted importance of following DDA, could hear about ideas and meet people long before a plan is submitted to the process.

Codes and Ordinances – Committee has several things they want City to know we will work on including: providing dog bags in downtown, some cross walks needed and they aren't all safe – may need a flashing light at some, the condition of sidewalks **and** city should require approval letter from the HOA before a permit is issued for condo work.

Seniors – Cross walk safety is high on their list, to expand bus loop route for the bus that comes from Oakhurst so it goes to the 3 senior housing buildings. In new development shouldn't put senior units near the children's' playgrounds – they stay up later and its too noisy.

- Scott referred then to Leanne Harvey.

Public Spaces – The idea of repurposing existing spaces, thinking creatively is being discussed i.e., the last part of Clairemont Ave at the Square. 1982 Town Plan is being studied but also need a Plan for downtown with more “meat on its bones” and priorities identified.

Other comments between commissioner and attendees:

- Development of mix use with residential should require dog walks and green spaces.
- Panhandling in the Square is increasing. Police seem to be on it so doesn't become aggressive. If polite it isn't illegal.
- It was noted there is a non-emergency police number if spot things they should know 404-373-6551.
- Several are worried about the land between the hotel and the EU office - an old concept plan for green space was noted.
- City is reactive because zoning is out of date in some downtown areas so it ties their hands- they can't be proactive – need a Plan.
- Does the city streamline permitting process? Some believe that C-2 areas downtown should get more review.

Submitted by Kathie Gannon, Secretary