

DOWNTOWN DECATUR NEIGHBORS MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by President George Dusenberry.

I. July Minutes. Motion was made to approve July minutes as posted on the DDN website. Betty Blondeau gave a brief rundown of those minutes. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

II. Treasurer's Report. DDN has a balance of \$633.77. George noted that DDN made a \$250 donation to support the October 6 West Ponce Stroll.

III. Committee reports.

George welcomed Commissioner Kelly Walsh. She announced the UMCH final master plan would be presented at the Commission meeting on September 17 at 7:30. In addition, she mentioned the Open Office on October 3 when she will be commenting on the intersection of government, schools and community regarding shared spaces. Questions can be addressed to her on line at the COD website.

Greenspace. Betty Blondeau reported that the COD Environmental Sustainability Board, appointed by the commissioners, will be meeting on Friday, September 14 to hear a report from Kay Evanovich, city arborist, on strengthening the tree ordinance. The ESB has submitted their recommendations for that ordinance to Kay, and she will respond to those recommendations at the 9/14 meeting.

Since Peggy Merriss has announced her resignation as City Manager, a search firm has been hired to conduct a nationwide search for the new city manager. Betty urged people to submit their thoughts to the search firm about the qualifications necessary for this position through their website. That information was made available on paper copies left for attendees to take. The feedback can be accessed through the following link: https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/49/forum_home.

Planning. Buddy Harrell reported on his committee meeting with Jim Dietz and Kathie Gannon. Their focus will be on quality of life. Parking for downtown neighbors' guests including grandfathering was discussed. They have narrowed their focus to 12-15 issues and will schedule meetings with city staff to learn more about these issues

Safety. Pete Pfeiffer reported that he has nine people on his committee: Tom Frangos, Kathy Allen, Obie Bryant, Nancy Hall, Barbara Hayworth, Judy Hutton, Ed McBriar, Arnie Nisler. The committee meets regularly two weeks after each DDN membership meeting. The committee members will attend meetings with city staff so that they stay aware of what is happening regarding safety issues.

Website. Jim Dietz continues to work on the website and needs suggestions for content. Calendar presents challenges. Jim needs to know when each committee is meeting and requests that committee chairs inform him of those dates.

Program. George introduced Hugh Saxon, Deputy City Manager Capital Improvements. Hugh distributed flyers about What Drivers Must Know About Pedestrian Safety. These flyers are available from his office when requested. The city works to improve the pedestrian environment and attempts to get people out of cars. Decatur was an early advocate for transit being a leader 40 years ago. The city works to provide for safe walking and biking supporting these for healthy, superior air quality.

Hugh introduced Ed McBrayer, PATH leader. PATH has been a strong partner in all of these efforts through financial support and developing a network of protected bike lanes like the Stone Mountain trail, a multi use trail separate from roads. PATH has built comprehensive pathways like the Stone Mountain Trail, Decatur Path Connectivity Plan, East Decatur Greenway, North McDonough Cycle Track. They are COD partners in the Commerce Drive Cycle Track. This track will provide a protected bike lane separate from motorists starting on West Trinity down to Commerce. Answering community concerns about Commerce Drive, the plan includes 4 vehicle lanes on Commerce. The project goes out to bid on September 13 for 4 weeks. The hope is that a bid will be accepted by October 31. The plan will take one year to complete. Ed indicated that the plan for Commerce will be the first of its kind with bike lanes and sidewalks separate from motorists. This planning has taken a long time with input from and partnerships with developers, COD, and PATH. The City Transportation Plan supports this concept for safer pedestrian and bicycle safety. Questions about the loss of the reversible lanes at CVS were addressed. Information about the plan will be posted on the DDN website. West Howard plan was also discussed. Striping is Phase I of the plan. Reworking the Atlanta Avenue railroad crossing will be the next phase. The Transportation Plan is on the City website. This will be a long term effort as the City forges ahead.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 pm.