

Meeting of the Historic Decatur Association (HDA) Board of Directors (BOD)

Tuesday, August 28, 2018 6:00pm

Meeting Location:

Offices of Eyster, Key, Tubb, Roth, Middleton & Adams LLP

402 East Moulton Street, Decatur, AL

Meeting Attendees:

Wade Dinsmore

D Hall

Cindy Upton

Brenda Henson

Chad Hopkins

Mike Meely

Justin Hall

Craig Baker

Julia Roth

Larry Freeman

2018 HDA President Wade Dinsmore called the meeting to order. The first topic on the agenda was the acceptance of the minutes. Cindy Upton sent the updated draft version for review prior to the meeting and there was no further comment or discussion. D Hall moved to accept the minutes as submitted and Larry Freeman seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The final version of the minutes are kept on the HDA website.

The next topic was Larry Freeman's treasury report. As of this meeting, the HDA had \$45,799.07 in the bank. Some dues were collected and expenses included costs related to the Christmas Tour. The motion to accept the treasury report was made by Cindy Upton, with a second from Justin Hall. The motion passed unanimously. Larry continued with the membership report. There are currently 119 paid member households. The motion to accept the membership report was made by Craig Baker, with a second from Mike Meely. The motion passed unanimously.

The next topics were Committee Reports.

The Garden Tour Committee had nothing to report.

The next Committee Report was about the Christmas Tour. Committee Chairman Justin Hall reported that sponsorship funds had begun coming in, with \$800 collected already. The After Tour Party has been set for the Carnegie Visual Arts Center, whose liquor license will allow alcoholic beverages to be served. The HDA will pay the Carnegie a stipend/donation, the amount of which will be decided later. The Carnegie will be allowed to invite the attendees to join the Carnegie as part of their ongoing membership drive. Justin also said that there were four new neighbors whose homes are on the Tour

this year. He said that a point of contact was still needed in Albany to handle the delivery of the live greenery order for that neighborhood.

The Tree Committee was represented by Wade Dinsmore. State Senator Arthur Orr committed \$7500 toward trees for the HDA neighborhoods and requested matching funds. In Wade's discussions with Senator Orr, he stressed the importance of the HDA neighborhoods for local tourism and that the mature tree canopy was one of the definitive features of our historic neighborhoods. The HDA has already spent \$1350 on trees and Wade requested an additional \$8650 to bring our contribution to \$10,000 total. The motion to spend the additional funding on procuring and installing more trees was made by Julia Roth and seconded by Chad Hopkins. The motion passed unanimously. The discussion on tourism led to revisiting the signage plan, where new signs marking the gateways and important features are planned. Past work on the desired signs indicated that approximately \$110K was needed to cover the costs. The HDA continues to work with city and state officials for support for large projects such as signage.

The discussion on trees and signs led the BOD to discuss the need for increased membership households and overall participation. D Hall reminded everyone that membership benefits should be restricted to those who pay dues and that we needed to enforce this. The BOD agreed that only paid HDA members should receive membership benefits. Pointing back to the tree discussion, Craig Baker added that only HDA members should be allowed to get the trees. Quarterly socials and annual events such as the Christmas in July party should only be for paid members. The BOD discussed having a staffed table set up at all events to collect dues. Chad Hopkins volunteered to head the Membership Committee. The benefits of membership were discussed, and Craig Baker volunteered to draft a list of benefits for HDA distribution.

The Newsletter Committee report was next. Wade had collected information from several people to include in the next edition, planned for distribution in the next few months.

Discussion of the Social Committee's activities was next. The next neighborhood social is planned for October 7th at the Cross Eyed Owl from 2-4pm. D asked about having events such as the "Neighbors Night Out" in 2019. The BOD discussed this as an option, since these were usually held on weeknights and participants did not have to bring food to share. After the Oct. 7th event, the next event would be the inaugural meeting for 2019 with the installation of the new officers. This meeting is already planned to be held at the Carnegie. There was a discussion on officers for next year, with some of the BOD members rolling off after completing their staggered terms. Larry Freeman/Treasurer is one of the retiring BOD members. Chad volunteered to shadow Larry and take over the task. Julia indicated that her other obligations prevented her from serving another term as the ad hoc member. Also, a new nominating committee will be needed for the selection process of the 2019 officers.

No new report from the Communications Committee.

No Old Business was discussed.

New Business was discussed: Kevin Malcom asked for the HDA to provide the annual support for the Banks-Caddell Homework Helpers after school program. Last year, the HDA provided \$4,000 to this program. Brenda Henson expressed concern that almost 10% of our entire budget be allocated while we have this downturn in participation. Her reasoning was that as the Christmas Tour is our only fund raiser, decreased participation among the neighbors would negatively affect the ability to make money from the Tour. Until more participation is provided, her recommendation was that less money be allocated for any non-direct benefit to the neighborhood such as this program. Julia moved to provide the full \$4,000 and D seconded. Her rationale for the recommendation was that improving schools improved neighborhoods. There were two dissenting votes: Brenda Henson and Mike Meely. The motion carried with a majority vote.

There was a continued discussion on the decline of participation across both neighborhoods, but in particular it was noted that the Christmas Tour Committee has only one active Albany participant so far. One reason for the formation of the HDA was to allow both neighborhoods to have greater opportunities for growth and improvements by the combined efforts. Julia indicated that she is disappointed with the continuing decrease in Christmas decorations on homes every year. In years past, blocks of homes would work together to decorate and there were more homes involved. Justin said that he also saw decorating as an issue and thought that better communication could help. Cindy added that some people spend several hundreds of dollars every year on outside decorations, and that perceived expectation could be intimidating to others who do not strive for the same level. Brenda added that the ability to continue to support activities such as Banks-Caddell or to install new signs or any implementation of other desired projects depends on more support for the Christmas Tour fundraiser.

The BOD welcomes feedback on what neighbors would like to see in the HDA and what activities are of interest that would make them want to participate. Cindy mentioned that a previous newsletter asked for feedback and perhaps this would be a good time to do that again in this next newsletter. Craig volunteered to add a survey section to his write-up of the HDA benefits for the newsletter.

The HDA BOD normally meets at 6:00pm on the last Tuesday of every month except December. The next meeting of the HDA BOD is planned for September 25th. The location is planned to be at the Offices of Eyster, Key, Tubb, Roth, Middleton & Adams LLP.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Upton
Secretary, HDA