

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

**Tuesday, July 30, 2019 at 6:00pm**

### **Meeting Location:**

**Historic Depot and Railroad Museum, 701 Railroad St NW**

### **Meeting Attendees:**

David Breland  
Cindy Upton  
Harriette Mathews  
Brenda Henson  
Kevin Malcolm  
Canitha Thomas  
Chad Hopkins  
Mike Meely  
Astrid McIntosh  
Tyler Davis  
Craig Baker  
Lynn Schuppert

### **Guests:**

Barbara Kelly  
Sally Smartt  
DeAnn Meely  
Cory Brown

2019 HDA President Brenda Henson called the meeting to order. New BOD member Tyler Davis was welcomed.

HDA Treasurer Mike Meely provided the treasurer's report. The HDA has \$61,528.90 in the bank. There were expenditures included in this report for the Christmas in July event and membership mailers. Brenda and Mike also confirmed the amount spent to date on trees, with a balance of \$16,150 left. After the successful efforts of Rodger Henson, who mailed letters to each non-member household encouraging HDA membership, Mike reported that we now have 122 paid member households. This is still fewer members than last year, but a big improvement over just last month. Rodger recommends waiting until after the first of the calendar year to send out any more membership letters, since some people may not understand that they are not paying for a full year at this point (late in the year).

Guest Cory Brown of the Catbird Seat Garden Center was the next speaker. Cory has over 25 years in the horticulture industry and is an Auburn graduate with a degree in horticulture. He also served as the arborist for the City of Madison and has consulted with Mooresville. Cory met with several HDA members earlier in the month to survey Old Decatur and also prior to this BOD meeting to walk through Albany. He indicated which trees were doing well, and which are showing signs of distress or disease, as

well as made recommendations of types and placement of additional trees. Prior to the meeting, Cory provided a list of trees to consider for a variety of planting scenarios and locations. That list is attached to the end of this report.

Cory was highly complimentary of the beautiful Old Decatur and Albany neighborhoods, noting that we had many beautiful and thriving trees which give shade canopies as well as general enhancements to our area. For the places where trees had been removed, Cory discussed specific ideas for some of the areas and noted that the next steps lie with the BOD to contact the homeowners and to narrow down tree selections. Although Cory grows many of the trees on the list at his farm, he may not have enough of any one kind depending on our selections and would check his sources and also start growing trees himself. He also recommended a staggered planting plan over a few years, which could start in the fall and go all the way to next early spring for each phase so that the new trees had time to establish before the summer heat. We discussed the need for tree maintenance – specifically watering and correct pruning – as the trees are placed. Nothing was settled on for a plan, so the BOD would still need to see what options are available, starting with city services. The BOD should also ask whether city services could be used for planting trees. Cory said that the trees on his list represented varieties which are known to be tough, durable, with environmental impact resistance and “strong against weed eaters and lawn mowers”. He also considered the “neatness” of the tree since things like dropped large acorns may not be desirable. He added that for those homeowners willing to do more to maintain their tree(s) that the list opens up to more possibilities. Buy-in from the homeowners on the trees placed in front of their property was key to future success. In addition, he noted that buy-in from the Decatur City and Utilities is important so that improper pruning in the future didn’t ruin the tree’s appearance and possibly health.

Cory said that although we have a lush canopy still in some areas, every 10-15 years is a good timeframe to look at possibly adding in smaller trees so that as the older ones die large holes aren’t left. Cory used the phrase “borrow the scenery” to indicate the vistas we all expect to see when we look at landmarks all over the world – and even in the yard next door. His point was that the landscaping is part of the frame that we look through from many different angles.

We also discussed the possibility of a Decatur Daily article on trees which are – in general – good for the home landscape so that we could share our information.

The next topic was from DeAnn Meely, who represented the newly formed Bank Street merchants group. Since Bank Street has a different makeup than the rest of downtown, they are being proactive in marketing services and goods that they offer. DeAnn discussed the possibility of including an insert in the next newsletter with ads and business cards. She also asked about adding business membership to the HDA. Her plan revolves around a low upfront cost for the newsletter ads/business cards, and in turn she is working with the merchants to offer discounts to HDA members under a TBD announced program. The benefits would extend from providing the HDA with some cost reimbursement to cover the printing charges and also potentially increasing membership for those who want to take advantage of the discounts. Since DeAnn has many skills in the graphics area, she also volunteered to help with the layout of the ads/business cards in the newsletters. Since there were so many agenda items discussed

at this meeting, Brenda suggested further discussion later, but in time to add the new information to the next newsletter planned for early October.

The minutes from the June meeting were approved with Kevin Malcolm providing the first motion to accept and Harriette Mathews seconding. The approval vote carried unanimously. The minutes will be archived on the HDA website.

The Garden Tour committee is “dormant” for now.

The Christmas Tour was the next topic. 2019 Chair Harriette Mathews reported on a very successful Christmas in July event that was held on July 18th. She and her Committee had arranged 21 door prizes, all of which were desirable items or experiences. While she didn't have an exact number of attendees, she thought approximately 100 people attended the event. Harriette reported that the Committee was still seeking Tour homes. As of this BOD meeting, there were 3 houses each in Albany and Old Decatur and 4 Tour sites committed. DeAnn is providing the artwork for the Tour again this year. DeAnn plans to incorporate some of her past Decatur themed paintings into art card sets. She is handling the set-up and initial costs, so there would be no initial cost to the HDA. Pre-orders could be taken soon, and the card sets could potentially be sold at the Christmas Tour. Harriette asked that a BOD vote be delayed until she could meet with her Committee on the details and get their concurrence.

The Newsletter Committee report was next. Brenda reported that the next newsletter was expected to be distributed on October 1st. She asked for ideas and help with articles.

The Social Committee and Communications Committee had nothing to report.

Barbara Kelly brought up a new issue with a new sewage substation being installed near the corner of Gordon Drive and near Delano Park. She and others had inquired to City officials and were told that the substation could not be prevented or moved. She said that the best idea left was to enclose the substation in a stone walled area to mimic the stone structures around Delano Park, so that it at least blended with the neighborhood. A current substation behind the People's Bank (“the round bank”) on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue was pointed out for the BOD to see for context. That substation is walled off by a dark brown painted wooden privacy fence, although some of the equipment could still be seen above the fence.

Progress in the new historic neighborhood marker signage was discussed next. Brenda had made tremendous progress on getting the signage project moving by meeting with the original designer, Joel McWhorter, and preparing a presentation and application for the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC). She is on their meeting agenda for August 8<sup>th</sup>. All of the BOD is invited, along with our city council representatives and others. Brenda's plan is to split the implementation of the new signs into at least 2 or 3 phases which may be a few years apart, with full implementation of the major signs within 3-5 years depending on funding. With a positive endorsement from the HPC and Decatur City officials, some signs could be ordered and installed soon. The locations of the signs are still to be determined. The phasing takes into account the priority of signs that are in major traffic areas being installed first, and then the stop signs/street markers within the neighborhoods themselves.

Under Old Business, Brenda reminded the BOD about the bank card that was determined to be needed for paying for things such as online payments of the website. Mike met with CB&S bank, and they require a great deal of information for credit cards that Brenda and Mike considered excessive given that the HDA is run by volunteers. As for getting a debit card, the issue is that a business debit card only allows 24 hours to dispute a fraudulent claim. Personal bank card users have 60 days to dispute charges. Again, since Mike is volunteering his time to support the HDA as treasurer, he cannot be expected to constantly monitor our account for possible fraud. The conclusion reached by these HDA officers was that we should not get a bank card of any description. The current method for procuring needed items is that someone makes the purchase on their personal card, and are quickly reimbursed by a HDA issued check. The HDA will stay with this practice for the time being.

Brenda discussed some information she had received from some of our neighbors, both explaining their reluctance to join the HDA and offering enthusiasm to become involved. Brenda will reach out to the people providing the feedback and relay it to us at a future meeting. Her take away from the communications received was that it vitally important for us to show progress and for the HDA BOD to reach out to our neighbors to identify ourselves – especially at HDA events.

The last topic concerned a request from Dodie Hall for reimbursement of the maintenance of the Albany website, which was in use prior to the formation of the HDA. Brenda asked Dodie why the old website was needed, and Dodie replied that this site contained a great deal of information on the history and makeup of the Albany neighborhood. Dodie emphasized that there was a link to the HDA website included. The reimbursement cost requested was \$75. The BOD discussed this matter, and determined that Dodie should be reimbursed to assure that the Albany website information is not be lost. However, since the HDA website is meant to cover both Albany and Old Decatur, the BOD recommends that the Albany information be transferred to the HDA website and that the Albany website be eventually shut down. It is important that this transfer be done correctly so that those looking for Albany or Old Decatur specific information and may not know to search through the HDA will be redirected to the HDA website. With the stipulation that the Albany website will be shut down and the information consolidated to the HDA website before another bill is presented for upkeep, Canitha Thomas motioned to reimburse Dodie for the \$75 spent. Kevin seconded and the vote carried with a unanimous consent.

The BOD also discussed the issue with presenting a bill for reimbursement without prior approval, which is against the HDA Bylaws.

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 August 27, 2019. The location is planned to be the Historic Depot and Railroad Museum.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cindy Upton  
Secretary, HDA

## **Attachment: Information on trees from Cory Brown**

### **List of Street Trees Suggested for Consideration in Decatur**

Small Trees-Generally to 20', larger in the long term indicated by (L)

Japanese Snowbell, Tarpley's Pink Weeping Snowbell

Ivory Silk Tree Lilac

Crepemyrtles-Sioux, Velma's Royal Delight, Tonto, Appalachee, Catawba, Pink Velour, Dynamite(L), Natchez(L)

Vitex Trees- ( Blue Crepemyrtle)

Deciduous Magnolias-Ann, Jane, Betty, Butterfly(L), Galaxy(L), Dr. Merrill(L)

American Holly and hybrids, Foster's #2, Savannah, East Palatka

Yaupon Holly- Shadow's Female, Scarlet's Peak, Weeping

Oriental Cherry- Autumnalis, Kwanzan, Yoshino, Higan Weeping, Snow Goose

Southern Magnolias- Little Gem, Teddy Bear(L)

Japanese Maples

Medium Trees- Up to 40 or 50 feet long term, need adequate setback from street

Chinese Fringetree

Chinese Pistache

European Hornbeam- Fastigiata, Franz Fontaine

Large trees-

Generally larger than 50 foot at maturity, need adequate setback from street

Willow oak

Laurel oak

Cherrybark Oak

Blue Atlas Cedar, Deodar Cedar, Cedar of Lebanon

Blue Ice Cypress, Limelight Cypress

Southern Magnolia- DD Blanchard, Claudia Wannamaker, Green Giant

American Red Maple-Red Sunset, October Glory, Brandywine, Sun Valley

Tulip Poplar

Pecan-Jackson, Choctaw, Kanza, Gafford, Excel, Pawnee (Df)

Black Gum- Wildfire, Green Gables

Another possibility are patio trees or single trunk specimens of large shrubs that would fit tight growing areas of 5 or 6' width.

Patio Trees- Tree Form Rose of Sharon, TF Crepemyrtle, TF Hydrangeas

Signed buy in from adjoining landowners for maintenance and upkeep at a low or high level. Co-ordinate with Decatur Utilities. Affiliate with an ISA Arborist.