

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

Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 6:00pm

Meeting Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

BOD Meeting Attendees:

David Breland
Cindy Upton
Kelly Hutchings
Canitha Thomas
Darcy Hopkins
Carol Chenault
Kevin Malcolm
Mike Meely
Marsha Ercegovic
Nancy Greenleaf

Guest: Caroline Swope

2021 HDA President Canitha Thomas called the meeting to order. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom rather than in person due to precautions involving the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first meeting topic was the acceptance of the February meeting minutes. First motion of acceptance was made by David Breland, with a second from Kelly Hutchings. The acceptance of the minutes was a positive unanimous BOD vote. The minutes are archived on the HDA website.

Mike Meely provided the treasury report next. The HDA has \$46,272.63 cash in the bank, including \$200 in dues recently collected. The BOD still has \$13,470.21 set aside for trees, leaving a total of \$32,802.42 in unobligated funds. So far this year, there are 44 paid member households. The motion to accept the treasury and membership report was made by Nancy Greenleaf, with a second made by Marsha Ercegovic. The motion passed with a unanimous positive vote.

New Business was next. Nancy Greenleaf discussed postings made on Facebook concerning the ideas presented on adding fountains to Delano Park, as well as the new pocket park on the corner of Moulton Street and 6th Avenue. Nancy noticed that several neighbors had expressed concern that the fountains would not be properly maintained and could eventually become eyesores. It has been noted in past BOD meetings that the Decatur Parks and Recreation Department is understaffed and so therefore would not be expected to provide the needed oversight. The Facebook discussions expressed interest in new street signs as the next project. Nancy volunteered to look into what has already been done to design these signs by past volunteers who worked with design agencies and she also indicated interest in helping with securing grants funding. Darcy Hopkins offered her support for this activity as well. Since the initial work on the street signs was done so long ago, the first steps would need to be to find what had already been done, establish an estimated cost and possible stage implementation. Caroline Swope said that she would look for possible funding sources within state and tourism sources. It was

also noted that the planned One Decatur 6th Avenue gateway project could possibly cover the costs of street signs within Albany and Old Decatur that were on 6th Avenue.

Caroline presented an overview of a project she is working on for a workshop and lecture series on various topics of interest to historic property owners. Examples of topics that could be covered are window repair, gardens, paint colors, and use of alternate materials. The series would allow HDA residents to learn from experts as well as gain ideas from other historic districts. Caroline said that she has secured some grant funding to cover the costs of some of the planned series but asked the HDA to consider partnering with her to cover additional costs that would allow more speakers to participate. The BOD was in favor of the idea and expects to hear more details from Caroline at the April meeting. A BOD point of contact is needed if this project is adopted.

Caroline reported on the Old Decatur and Bank Street area historical site survey progress. The survey is approximately 30-40% completed as of the date of the BOD meeting, with an expected completion in early summer. The certification of the survey is expected to be completed by late summer.

The next discussion topic was the Welcome Wagon re-start. Canitha and Kelly discussed their success with some things they did for some nearby new neighbors. Canitha said that they baked some cookies, and also were able to get some donated toffee from Morgan Price Candy Company. Canitha and Kelly added some potted plants and made baskets to distribute. They said the recipients appreciated the gifts and overall gestures. Canitha and Kelly asked all the BOD members to be on the lookout for new neighbors and to let everyone know so that someone can provide a similar welcome basket. They encouraged the rest of the BOD to welcome new neighbors, including some kind of simple gift along with a newsletter and possibly information on Decatur.

Moving on, the newsletters were discussed next. Canitha said that the next newsletter would be ready for distribution starting on April 18th. Each BOD member would be needed to help distribute the newsletters.

Canitha continued with her meeting agenda to discuss whether we would have a Christmas Tour this year. Since the key people who have recently worked on the Tour were not at this meeting, it was decided that the final decision would be made at the next meeting. 2019 and 2020 Christmas Tour Chairperson Harriette Mathews has indicated several times that the Tour planning needed to start in earnest in the April timeframe, so a final decision will be needed soon. With the increasing availability of the COVID-19 vaccines, a Tour in the December timeframe could be possible if neighbors are willing to open their homes to the ticket buying public. A new Tour chairperson will also need to be appointed for this year's Tour, along with additional support from a committee of volunteers.

Moving on, Kelly continued her planning for re-establishing Block Captains to assist with welcoming new neighbors, distributing newsletters, providing HDA information, etc. Kelly said that at least for now, each BOD member must serve as the Block Captain for the areas near them. Kelly also reminded everyone that the Christmas swags would have to be overseen by each Block Captain as the only way to get those decorations added to their street signs.

Tree Committee chairperson Marsha Ercegovic said that there were two large oak trees recently removed from around the Carnegie Arts Center. She asked for a vote to replace those trees now as opposed to waiting until fall and would assure that they were properly watered over the summer. Marsha made the motion to replace the trees and David Breland provided a second. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

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 scheduled to occur on April 27, 2021. Canitha asked if we could have a blended meeting with those who are comfortable attending in person, and others can remain online. Marsha said that she would ask if the Carnegie would allow our meeting to be held there.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Upton
Secretary, HDA