

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

Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 6:00pm

Meeting Location: In person at the Carnegie Visual Art Center and via Zoom Virtual Meeting

BOD Meeting Attendees:

David Breland
Cindy Upton
Kelly Hutchings
Canitha Thomas
Darcy Hopkins
Astrid McIntosh
Harriette Mathews
Brenda Henson
Marsha Ercegovic
Nancy Greenleaf
Carol Chenault

Guest: Caroline Swope

2021 HDA President Canitha Thomas called the meeting to order. The first meeting topic was the acceptance of the April meeting minutes. The first motion of acceptance was made by Carol Chenault, with a second from Brenda Henson. The acceptance of the minutes was with a positive unanimous BOD vote. The minutes are archived on the HDA website.

HDA Treasurer Mike Meely was working out of town and unable to attend the meeting. He provided the treasury report in an email to the BOD. Mike wrote: "The good news is that the newsletter generated an increase in dues being paid and a few donations as well. Total 2021 income is up to \$1,700.00, but total expenses are at \$5,118.80. There were some rollover Christmas expenses that make that number high for this year. Total cash on hand is now at \$46,982.39 with total not obligated stands at \$33,512.18. Membership is now up to 84 paid. That is still down from last year's 149, so we still need to continue to beat the bushes." Since the treasury report was sent to the BOD after the meeting, there was no formal acceptance vote.

There was no New Business discussed.

Canitha reported on the ongoing efforts on the new street sign project. She said that Joel McWhorter is still working on estimated costs. There was some discussion on where the first signs would go, since they will be purchased in phases. The actual number of signs needed hasn't been established, and there is still an assumption that the City will pay for the signs that are on 6th Ave as part of the beautification efforts. Canitha asked Caroline Swope about available grants and Caroline said that Senator Orr would be a good resource that she would check.

With lack of income due to the cancellation of the ticketed Christmas Tour last year, Carol Chenault asked about the HDA expanding into other fund-raising events such as a golf tournament or a

running/bike ride type event. One concern expressed was whether the new event sponsor support needed would impact the Christmas Tour's sponsorship. Nancy Greenleaf pointed out that a different event could possibly involve different or new sponsors.

Caroline provided updates on her many ongoing projects of interest to the HDA. She is still working on the window workshop tentatively planned for this August. She added that she met with the City Zoning, Planning and Legal department representatives on special use permits for houses such as the 2 on the corners of Jackson Street and 6th Ave. She projects a 6 – 12 month timeframe for working something out. She also added that there are grants available for commercial use properties that would not be available for residences. Caroline told the group about her research into replacement materials suitable for historic homes. While it is known that the modern wood products are not as robust as the older growth trees and hardwood used in the past, there has not been alternate materials available that would be appropriate and provide long wear over time. Also, any modern material would not be useful as a patch next to existing wood. This is particularly an issue on porches. Caroline's research took her to study the Oak Alley Plantation in Louisiana, as well as other historically significant structures that are well maintained. She learned that the Oak Alley management used a product called Aeratis for some of the porch materials, with good results. The Aeratis product is supposed to last for at least 20 years. Samples were provided and Decatur's Historic Preservation Commission is studying this material as a possible wood substitute for applications such as porch floors.

Caroline brought everyone a copy of the "Designing Decatur" activity book, which has been very popular and enthusiastically used for teaching school age children about some of the various architectural highlights around town.

Back on the window workshop, Caroline said that she is still working through some of the state grant steps, so she asked that the HDA not yet commit to the \$1200 contribution discussed at the last meeting. She still expects to request this support.

Moving onto the next topic, Kelly Hutchings indicated that there had been no new interest shown in volunteers for street captains.

The next discussion topic was on the Christmas Tour. While this event is our main fund raiser, a Tour this year is getting a late start due to the pandemic and there is no identified Tour chairperson. There was a discussion on what homes could possibly be on the Tour. The group asked Harriette Mathews for a list of activities that need to be accomplished in order to have the Tour. Sponsors would need to be contacted for contributions, as well. The discussions will be continued at the next BOD meeting.

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 June 29, 2021. A blended meeting is planned with in-person meeting at the Carnegie and others online via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Upton, HDA Secretary