

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

Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 6:00pm

Meeting Location: Carnegie Visual Art Center

BOD Meeting Attendees:

Cindy Upton
Canitha Thomas
Brenda Henson
Marsha Ercegovic
Nancy Greenleaf
Carol Chenault
Mike Meely
Kevin Malcolm
David Breland

2021 HDA President Canitha Thomas called the meeting to order. This meeting was intended to be the one for August but was delayed a week. The first meeting topic was the acceptance of the July meeting minutes. The first motion of acceptance was made by Canitha, with a second provided by Marsha Ercegovic. The acceptance of the minutes was with a positive unanimous BOD vote. The minutes are archived on the HDA website.

HDA Treasurer Mike Meely emailed the treasury report to the BOD. He said that the HDA currently has 113 paid member households. We have \$49,444.44 cash on hand, with a remaining set aside \$13,470.21 for trees that may be reallocated later. This leaves \$35,974.23 unobligated. Canitha made a motion to accept the report, with a second from Cindy Upton. The acceptance of the report passed with a unanimous positive vote.

The next topic was New Business. Kevin Malcolm suggested an alternate fund raiser project since we are not expecting to be able to have a 2021 Christmas Tour (due to continuing COVID concerns). His idea was to develop a calendar with pictures of distinctive doors from both neighborhoods. Nancy Greenleaf said that a similar "Doors of Distinction" calendar was done several years ago with doors from all over North Alabama, with the proceeds benefitting a local museum. Questions on whether we had time to put together a calendar and get it out for sale this year were discussed. Carol Chenault said that she would ask her husband Ellis, who is a professional photographer, about the best approach to doing this project.

Carol then brought up the next discussion topic. She was approached about concerns over someone on Walnut Street not adhering to the Historic Preservation Commission's (HPC's) repeated stop work orders over some new brick structures being added to the home. The person who reached out to Carol asked that the HDA BOD become involved, possibly by encouraging the City Council to force adherence to the HPC's directives. After some discussion over the HDA's overall role and limitations, it was determined that this matter was not part of the HDA's authority and that we should not crossover into the HPC's scope. It was pointed out that as private citizens we could feel free to express our concerns, but these types of compliance matters are not part of the HDA's charter, and no official action would be taken.

The next topic was the 2021 Christmas Tour. Canitha said that two houses had been removed from the Tour by the homeowners over COVID concerns. No additional homeowners indicated interest in being on this year's Tour. A vote was taken to cancel this year's Christmas Tour in light of ongoing COVID concerns. The motion to cancel the 2021 Christmas Tour was made by Kevin, with a second by Cindy. The acceptance of the motion passed with a unanimous positive vote.

In further discussions, it was also noted that there would still be a greenery order placed for individual purchases, with details coming later. There would not be a neighborhood swag making activity for the street signs this year, due to the lack of volunteers in the past and the cost of supplies. Since we are cancelling our main fundraiser, we must curtail costs wherever possible.

There also will not be judging on the home decorations since the judges could not adhere to social distancing as they rode through the neighborhoods.

Since some money from sponsors had already been collected, there was some discussion on what to do. The BOD determined the best approach would be to offer to return the money to the sponsor, or if the sponsor was more interested in tax related donations to count the money collected as a contribution to the HDA. The BOD could provide a charity donation tax receipt. Kevin provided the motion to handle the funds with these two options, and Cindy provided the second. The acceptance of the motion passed with a unanimous positive vote.

Mike Meely suggested that since we are not having the Christmas Tour this year that we should charge an entry fee for the Garden Tour. Garden Tour Chairperson Cindy Upton indicated that if we were going to ever start charging, that doing so after being cancelled the last 2 years would be a good time to implement that. However, she cautioned that the lack of volunteers was an ongoing problem and even with a simplified ticketing approach (cash only, paper tickets, etc.), it would still require more volunteers than are ever available to support the Tour. There was some discussion on how this new plan could be carried out.

Moving on to the next discussion topic, Tree Committee Chairperson Marsha Ercegovic said that there are 5 people in Old Decatur who would like a HDA provided tree. She also discussed a request for the HDA to contribute toward a homeowner's intention to purchase a very large tree. There is a plan to ask the neighborhoods for tree requests in the next 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 scheduled to occur on September 28, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Upton, HDA Secretary