

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

Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 6:00pm

Meeting Location:

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Meeting Attendees:

David Breland
Cindy Upton
Brenda Henson
Mike Meely
Harriette Mathews
Marsha Ercegovic
Nancy Greenleaf
Astrid McIntosh
Canitha Thomas
Darcy Hopkins
Astrid McIntosh

Guest: Caroline Swope

2020 HDA President Brenda Henson 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 minutes from the September meeting were approved with Astrid McIntosh providing the first motion to accept and a second from Canitha Thomas. The approval vote carried unanimously. The minutes will be archived on the HDA website.

The treasury report was next. HDA Treasurer Mike Meely emailed the report to the BOD. The HDA has \$30,857.31 cash on hand. There is a remaining \$15,370.06 obligated budget bookkept for trees. The HDA may revise this obligation after the next round of planned tree plantings this fall. As of this report, there are 91 paid member households. The newsletters will continue to include the membership registration/payment form. The most recent newsletter prompted several people to pay their dues, and the next report will include that data. The motion to accept the October treasury report was made by Cindy Upton, with a second by David Breland. The motion passed with a unanimous positive vote.

The Christmas Tour report was next. Chairperson Harriette Mathews said that she has started working with Ellis Chenault on videotaping the tour homes for this year's virtual tour. This will be done in stages since the outside decorative greenery isn't installed, yet. Harriette said that things were coming together for the swag making activities that will be held the weekend after Thanksgiving. Greenery has been located that can be cut for swags and ribbon is being distributed to the bow makers. She mentioned that the ribbon cost for the swags was much less than planned and so she would not need to spend up to her \$400 budget. She pointed out that the annual dues to the Alabama Mountain Lakes Association were due and asked if the savings could be used to pay that \$150 renewal bill. Brenda

explained that since these annual dues are an already accepted recurring cost that Mike Meely could go ahead and issue a check for that payment. The ribbon savings would just be included in Mike's regular accounting. Harriette said that other Christmas Tour sites were confirmed to include Bank Street Green, which will have a special tree to be decorated with notes in memory of the late John Black, and Delano Park Rose Garden. She was unsure if the Decatur Cemetery would be part of the Tour this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Harriette said that the Decatur Jaycees are helping with the swags this year. Harriette continues to post information on all social media outlets. She mentioned the upcoming holiday Downtown Christmas Events scheduled for Nov. 12 -14.

The Garden Tour Committee is currently dormant, and had nothing to report.

The Tree Committee report was next. Chairperson Marsha Ercegovic reported that she and Astrid had met with Aaron Lang from the Decatur Parks and Recreation Department, to get his approval for the sites for the new trees. 15 trees were approved for installation, but some were eliminated/changed or added. So, Marsha has contacted Cory Brown/Catbird Seat to reserve the rest of our trees. There was a BOD discussion around comments made by Aaron during the site visits. He expressed concern with planting all the trees in the city right of way, instead of within the homeowner's yard. The BOD agreed that we did not want to provide trees for installation on any homeowner's personal property, since that defeats the purpose of providing the tree canopy and beauty for the neighborhoods overall. Astrid suggested that we oversee the pruning of the planted trees while they are young so that we can influence the shape of the tree once it's much larger with the hope that someday the City does not make severe cuts to it.

The most recent newsletter was successful in both generating interest in ordering greenery and especially in prompting neighbors to mail in their dues checks – some for multiple years.

Brenda had mentioned in the previous meeting that since the signage project was completed, the BOD should give some thought on the next project to benefit our neighborhoods. Since we won't have Christmas Tour ticket sales to increase our budget, we should consider smaller projects this year. Brenda had taken a trip over to Florence and admired the lighting that had been installed in the homeowner's yards in the historic section. She talked with some of the residents and learned that these yard lights were purchased and installed by each homeowner. Since several people installed these lights, there was a very nice effect on the whole street. Brenda was given some contact information in order to research this further, but wanted the BOD to consider this as a possible project where each resident could participate by directly funding their light purchase and installation. She said that in the next newsletter that she would ask for indication of interest from the HDA neighbors.

The Social Committee had nothing to report.

Brenda said she had reviewed the HDA Bylaws and was unclear about the way that BOD terms were described as being staggered. Cindy was on the HDA BOD at the time that the Bylaws were implemented and explained that the intention was to allow people to join the BOD without an automatic 3 year commitment, and could be appointed 1, 2 or 3 years. Since the changes were made to add additional BOD members, the staggered plan had not been followed. Also, it is difficult to find BOD

members who are willing to commit their time and so we do not want to be in the position of replacing members every year if we don't need to. In order to simplify the BOD terms, Cindy motioned that the Bylaws be revised to reflect 3 year appointments for each BOD member, with the possibility to renew. Marsha seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Brenda said that she would work to get this change implemented starting in 2021.

Caroline Swope brought up the last discussion topic. She pointed out that there are several houses next to 6th Avenue in Albany that had been abandoned, foreclosed, etc. for many years in some cases. Most of these houses are in bad shape, but are not attractive family homes because of the heavy traffic passing nearby. Caroline had looked into how other municipalities had handled properties such as these and found some cases where there were conditional use allowances so that those houses could be used for businesses such as bakeries, book stores, law offices, etc. She asked if the HDA BOD supported this, and was answered with an enthusiastic favorable response. Caroline is continuing to look into this possibility, with more information to come later.

The HDA BOD normally meets at 6:00pm on the last Tuesday of every month except December. The next meeting of the HDA BOD was scheduled to occur on November 24th. Since that is Thanksgiving week, Astrid suggested moving the meeting up to November 17th, and this earlier date would also allow for coordination of the swag activities. The rest of the BOD agreed. The meeting is planned to be conducted virtually on November 17th at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Upton
Secretary, HDA