

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

**Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 6:00pm**

### **Meeting Location:**

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

### **Meeting Attendees:**

David Breland  
Cindy Upton  
Brenda Henson  
Mike Meely  
Harriette Mathews  
Marsha Ercegovic  
Canitha Thomas  
Kevin Malcolm  
Astrid McIntosh

### **Guests:**

Caroline Swope  
Police Chief Nate Allen  
Captain Chris Jones

2020 HDA President Brenda Henson called the meeting to order. The first agenda item was a conversation with Decatur Police Chief Nate Allen and Captain Chris Jones, who supervises the uniformed patrol officers. Some key takeaways from the discussion included:

- A separate town hall can be scheduled most anytime at a larger venue to allow the neighborhoods to attend. Chief Allen stressed that he was available to speak to our group even after hours.
- The concerns over reverse parking – it's a state law. Reverse parking is considered less safe because the driver has to turn around to go in the right direction, plus there are more possibilities of blocking emergency vehicles. The law is being enforced and no neighborhood is being singled out. Even when signs are not posted, we cannot reverse park.
- Parades – Chief Allen said that he was the decision maker behind the rerouting of the recent Mardi Gras parade. The route was changed so that Gordon Drive wasn't blocked for the whole evening. The new route is backwards and starts at the end of Bank Street and ends at the Farmers Market.
- Neighborhood Watch Groups can be formed whenever there is interest in supporting them. A new watch group is forming for Delano Park. There is a meeting on formation activities coming up TBD date. Barbara Kelly and Sally Smartt are the points of contact. The location is planned to be Decatur Middle School.
- Decatur Police Department (PD) has hired a crime analyst, who pulls data from 911 calls. Chief Allen stressed that if we don't call 911 to report things, they can't respond and they also can't see trend data that could help them protect us.

- Decatur PD has 141 police officers, which Captain Allen said was a good number for this size town. He gave credit to the City Council for allowing hiring to continue when other cities were cutting back, and also for new police vehicles for them to use.

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

Under New Business, David Breland announced that he was the new Vice President of the Alabama Historical Commission. The HDA BOD congratulated David on this important appointment.

Under Correspondence, an invoice for insurance and website domain for the Christmas Tour was received.

The treasury report was next with Mike Meely distributing copies of his reports. The HDA has \$31,083.78 in unobligated funds in the bank. 46 neighbors have paid their 2020 dues, although several neighbors have paid for more than one year. The next newsletter is expected to have the dues form included. The motion to accept the Treasury Report for this month and for last month that voting was skipped was made by Kevin Malcolm, with Marsha Ercegovic providing the second. The approval vote carried unanimously.

Committee reports were the next several discussion topics.

Christmas Tour Committee Chair Harriette said that she expected to start the committee meetings in March. She also read a thank you note from Westminster Presbyterian Church for our stipend provided to them as the Tour Headquarters.

Cindy Upton reported on behalf of the Garden Tour, which is scheduled for Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. Tour preparation activities continue to ramp up, but with the wet and cold weather it is too early to ask neighbors to feature their gardens on the Tour. Cindy has been working with the Master Gardeners and the Extension Agent on programs and activities for the headquarters, which is also scheduled to be held at Westminster Presbyterian.

The Tree Committee report was next. Cindy developed a calling card to leave on the front door of residences where trees may be desired. A copy is planned to go in the next newsletter. Astrid reported on the Tree City USA meeting that she had attended earlier that day, where Decatur is going through the steps to reestablish this designation.

The Social Committee had nothing to report. Brenda asked for someone to volunteer to be the Committee Chair. A possible April timeframe was discussed for the next neighborhood gathering.

The Communications Committee had nothing to report.

Concerning the next Newsletter, Brenda said that she is targeting a March delivery and so needed inputs by March 10th.

Brenda then discussed the latest progress on the new wayfinding signs. There were some remaining questions about sign installation. Caroline Swope took an action to check with the City personnel involved. Brenda communicated with the grant awarding organization to ask for an extension of the deadline to get the signs installed, since there have been unavoidable delays. This grant works as reimbursable funding, so as the BOD funds the purchase of the signs the reimbursed funds can be used to fund additional signs. An extension was given, but no specific amount of extra time was noted. Some of the signs are still connected to the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Gateway project, which is on a totally different planning schedule. Because of this, the BOD voted to instead purchase 2 additional signs for Old Decatur now. Cindy made the motion to accept this, with a second from Canitha Thomas. The vote passed unanimously.

There was no Old Business discussed.

Caroline provided a status of her work with residents and business owners on getting tax credits for historic renovations. She said the process was onerous, but that she continued to make progress. She said that we could help by providing an Economic Impact and Community Support document. Caroline will generate a draft for us to use. Caroline also mentioned that some residents along the south side of Delano Park inquired about incorporation into the Albany Historic District. Caroline invited these residents to the March meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission to learn what is involved in joining the historic district.

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 expected to occur on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The location for our meetings is planned to be the Historic Depot and Railroad Museum.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cindy Upton  
Secretary, HDA