

DRUID HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

Board Meeting

Wed., August 16, 2017 @ 7:30 pm

Hosted by: Chris Liggett

Location: St. John's

IN ATTENDANCE:

Officers: A Wallace, H Handley, Fran Putney, K Gibson

Past Pres./Ex-Officio: D Shuey, B MacGregor, J Critz, R Graham, J Heerin

Div Chairs: Y Weatherly, M St.Louis, R Nelson, S Thornton, S Mathias, R Foust, V Biesel, S Misner

2017: B Aitkenhead, R Benfield, K Eisterhold, C Liggett, P Mitchell, C Tankersly

2018: B Evans, A Keenan, L Teunis, M Walters, C Waterbury

2019: R Atkins, H Lane, P Moise, A Silverman

Guests: Tom Cross, Sue Sullivan, Sue Heerin, Joe & Kelli Lanier, Margaret White.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Anne Wallace called the August meeting to order and welcomed our guests.

Appointments to Governance Committee (formally the Nominating Committee): The By-Laws allow the President to make 3-5 appointments and Anne is appointing Phil Moise, Chris Liggett, and Rocky Atkins to the Governance Committee.

A volunteer is needed to Chair the Annual Yard Sale to be held on Saturday, September 23. This involves communications, collecting fees, and making a map. Cynthia Waterbury has organized the sale before and will help as will Fran Putney. Steven Mathias will help with signs.

Anne Wallace reminded the board about Article XII in our By-Laws

“Members shall have prior approval of the Board or Executive Committee before speaking for the Association.”

It was announced that Atlanta's Park Pride is considering including improvements to the twittens in DH.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Home and Garden Tour (50th anniversary tour and 80th anniversary of the DHCA, April 20-22, 2018)

Volunteers are needed to lead the following positions: Sponsorships, Staffing, Group Recruitment, Revenue Chair, and Publicity Chair.

Steven Mathias, Operations Chair and past Logistics Chair, reminded members that more than one person can share a chairmanship and that written guidelines on what needs to be done for each position are available.

Tom Cross volunteered to help with operations.

Sue Sullivan has a website that features DH history.

Finance Committee: Phil Moise reported on the September 2017-August 2018 Budget which the Executive Committee reviewed last week. The new budget is generally in line with the 2016-17 budget and includes extra expenses for our 80th Anniversary, the Division Chairs budget, Unassigned Donations, and new community activities including the “Picnic in the Park” event and tree plantings.

Memberships are calculated for the Calendar year. Dues paid after November 1, 2017 apply to the 2018 Calendar year.

A motion to approve the 2017-2018 budget was made and passed unanimously.

Transportation Committee: Mike St. Louis reported on the significant increase in automobile accidents at N. Decatur intersections in Division 4 between Lullwater and Springdale. The committee has obtained support for a resolution from over 120 residents in the affected area and proposes the installation of all-way stop signs.

Details are provided in an addendum to the minutes. Concerns were expressed about the density of stops but other options such as Pedestrian Hawk Crossings and timed traffic lights are not possible in unincorporated DeKalb at present due to legal restrictions and budget constraints.

A resolution that the DHCA “Requests that DeKalb County install all-way stop signs within 30 days at the North Decatur Road intersections with both Springdale Road and Oakdale Road, to make these dangerous intersections safer” passed with 27 for and 3 opposed.

Public Safety Committee: Volunteers are needed to work with Bill Aitkenhead for a more effective DH Patrol.

The DHCA is joining with OLPA to hold a “Picnic in the Park” event on Sunday, September 24 from 4 to 7pm. This is an old-fashioned family event with food trucks and entertainment. It was suggested that a \$500 donation request from the DeKalb School of the Arts could include them providing some of the entertainment.

A motion to donate \$500 to the DeKalb School of the Arts was approved unanimously but a suggestion was made to include professional adult performances at the Picnic.. Volunteers are needed. Online Registration for the event is needed but it was requested to clearly communicate that the event is free.

Becky Evans announced that the Fall Emory Village Open Streets event is on October 29 from 2-6.

Membership Committee: Steven Mathias and Larissa Teunis prepared Welcome Bags to be delivered to new residents. This is an effective way to welcome new home owners and increase memberships so Division Chairs will take their bags and delegate delivery to new owners who have moved in from May through July. It is important that there is interaction between members and new residents and Division chairs can supplement the Welcome Bag offerings using their chair budgets. There is an average of 25 new move-ins every month.

Landmark District Preservation (LDPC) Committee: Alida Silverman reported that on August 9, the Atlanta Urban Design Commission granted a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) with 8 conditions to the 1609 South Ponce redevelopment application. Condition #6 was that no new multi-family construction be included in the proposed project, hence the proposed development of 6 new structures with driveways from Clifton Terrace are on hold. Only proposed alterations on the back of the historic Pringle & Smith house and proposed alterations to the existing garage and addition to the garage with some conditions were approved with final plans and requested supporting materials to be reviewed and approved by Staff. The LDPC had asked the Commission to accept the Staff Report, which is what they did. The LDPC commended the applicant's withdrawal of the initial proposal to enclose the porte-cochere and redirect the portion of the historic driveway. Anne Wallace briefed the board on her request to Chris Leeth, former chair of the DeKalb counterpart of the LDPC, to act as a liaison on this project which might help de-escalate potential conflicts.

DeKalb Land Use and HPC: Kit Eisterhold presented a resolution to support DeKalb County’s efforts to mediate concerns about potential impacts on streams, traffic and increased density resulting from Atlanta’s annexation of Emory University. The Historic Preservation Committee is also concerned that large developments on the edge of Emory’s Campus could affect our historic districts and that land owners adjacent to Emory could join Atlanta to avoid limitations to development in DeKalb County. Yesterday Kit Eisterhold, Christopher Liggett, Alida Silverman and Anne Wallace met with Doug Young, Melissa Mullinax, and Jeffrey Haymore at city hall. Arbitration is underway through a five-person panel that will review concerns and make recommendations by Oct. 22. Although the City of Atlanta is easing concerns and appears to be interested in addressing potential impacts, nothing is in writing and many feel we should support our commissioners as much of DH is still a part of unincorporated DeKalb County.

The following resolution was voted on and passed with 25 for, 3 opposed and 4 abstentions including that of Rocky Atkins who is a City of Atlanta employee:

Resolved, that the DHCA supports and endorses DeKalb County's efforts, as stated in its letter to City of Atlanta dated August 3, 2017, for arbitration between City of Atlanta and DeKalb County regarding the Emory annexation to allow City of Atlanta and DeKalb County to resolve possibly detrimental land-use effects of the annexation on the Druid Hills Historic District.

Financial Assistance Agreement: The Board considered a proposal to provide financial assistance to Bruce MacGregor and Rob Benfield to help with their personal defenses of the Buckler lawsuit. At Anne Wallace's request, Phil Moïse presented the matter to the Board.

Phil reminded the Board that DHCA has recently settled the Buckler lawsuit for the Association and nine individuals, but Bruce MacGregor and Rob Benfield were not included in that settlement. During the settlement negotiations, the Board had discussed whether to provide financial assistance to Bruce and Rob but had determined to wait to deal with Bruce and Rob's situation until after DHCA finalized its settlement. The Executive Committee addressed the issue at its meeting earlier this month, and developed a proposal to assist Bruce and Rob as much as possible while maintaining the financial stability of DHCA. Under the Executive Committee's proposal DHCA would provide \$60,000 each to Bruce and Rob. However, after the Executive Committee meeting Bruce concluded he had insurance to cover himself, and he asked that his portion be allocated to Rob.

Therefore, it has been recommended that DHCA provide up to \$120,000 to Rob Benfield to assist him in his defense and resolution of the Buckler lawsuit, to be used for attorney's fees, legal expenses, settlement payments and judgments. In return, Rob and Bruce will release DHCA from any and all claims by them related the Clifton Ridge controversy, the Clifton Ridge litigation and the Buckler lawsuit. The terms of this proposal were incorporated into a Financial Assistance Agreement.

A draft of the agreement was handed out to everyone at the meeting together with a summary, and everyone was given the opportunity to review the summary and the agreement. A general discussion followed during which every director had an opportunity to ask questions and to voice views on the proposal. After this discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board adopted the following resolutions:

The Board hereby (i) approves the Financial Assistance Agreement between DHCA, on one hand, and Bruce McGregor and Rob Benfield, on the other hand, presented to the Board at this meeting; (ii) authorizes Anne Wallace, as President of DHCA, or another person designated by her, to execute and deliver the Agreement on behalf of DHCA; (iii) directs the proper officers of DHCA to have DHCA perform the Agreement in accordance with its terms; and (iv) if Benfield requests that a payment be made under Section 1(b) of the Agreement in connection with a settlement, specifically authorizes DHCA to honor that request and make a payment to Rob Benfield if the request is accompanied by a true copy of the settlement agreement which clearly shows the amount of money Rob Benfield has agreed to pay to Robert Buckler.

The vote was unanimous except for one dissent and the meeting adjourned.

ADDENDUM: Background information from the Transportation Committee addressing traffic concerns on North Decatur Rd:

DeKalb County has recorded a marked increase in crashes at the intersections of North Decatur Road with Springdale Road, Oxford Road, and Oakdale Road, including that: at the intersection of Oakdale Road and North Decatur, crashes in 2017 have increased more than 600% compared to 2015; and excessive speeds, highly distracted and aggressive driving, and drivers ignoring pedestrian crossing markers on these pedestrian-laden streets are visible to even the casual observer. Residents on N. Decatur Rd and in the immediate residential neighborhood, who will be the most highly impacted of all drivers through this section of N Decatur Rd, overwhelmingly support this resolution. Currently, 169 residents on or right near N Decatur Rd and these intersections have signed a petition supporting this request, while we are aware of approximately 6 residents against it. Of 49 households on this stretch of N Decatur Rd, 37 (76%) have been reached to record an opinion: 33 (89%) of 37 signed the petition, 3 (8%) were against the petition, and 1 was undecided. There is one and only one easily-implemented intervention that does not require substantial financial resources, does not require variances for DeKalb County roadway regulations, does not impact utility infrastructure, and does not require taking of private land.

Therefore, the DHCA should request that DeKalb County install all-way stop signs within 30 days at the North Decatur Road intersections with both Springdale Road and Oakdale Road, to make these dangerous intersections safer.