

**DRUID HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Wed., March 15, 2017 @ 7:30 pm**  
**Hosted by: Alida Silverman & Steven Mathias**  
**Location: Frazer Center**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Officers: A Wallace, L Van Gelderen, H Handley, Fran Putney, T McGuigan, K Gibson  
Past Presidents & Ex-Officio: C Vandenberg, B MacGregor, S Baker, J Richardson, R Graham  
Div Chairs: S Day, Y Weatherly, M St. Louis, P Lee, R Wilson, S Thornton, S Mathias,  
R Foust, V Biesel, S Misner

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

2018: B Evans, W Heaps, R Hughes, A Keenan, H Maitre, L Teunis, M Walters, C Waterbury

2019: R Atkins, H Lane, E Riley, A Silverman, D Winston

Guests: Clark and Betsy Marvin, Phil Cuthbertson (Olmsted Plein Air Invitational)

7:30 pm: Phil Cuthbertson, Event Organizer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Olmsted Plein Air Invitational, gave a preview of the art activities that take place April 2 through April 9. Thirty nationally known artists will paint landscapes all around Atlanta and Decatur during the week. Events start in Piedmont Park and end in the Dellwood section of the Olmsted Linear Park and at the DH Golf Club.

Invited artists will be housed with host families in the neighborhood. The many activities are listed at the website [www.olmstedpleinair.com](http://www.olmstedpleinair.com).

President Anne Wallace called the March Board meeting to order and the February Minutes were approved.

**LDPC Recommendation and Report**

Darren Summerville, the new owner of 1226 Ponce De Leon ("Green Gables"), and his counsel, Doug Dillard, reviewed their application for a special use permit for a law office with the Urban Design Commission which signed off on a CoA. Darren lives in Lake Claire and currently has an office in Midtown with little internal traffic since the office takes on appellate court cases. He wants a more residential/neighborhood environment for his workplace and his lawyers who live locally. He has studied the formal history of the building, which is often described as the most significant Arts and Crafts residence in Atlanta. However, Green Gables has not been maintained and needs a new roof and several \$100K improvements including replacing the electric & plumbing infrastructures. There will be no changes to the exterior and no expansion to parking.

Landmark District Preservation Committee Coordinator Alida Silverman presented the Committee's recommendation, which is attached as an addendum. The board voted to follow their recommendation Not To Oppose. A second vote of City residents only was taken per DHCA by-laws tracking NPU-N by-laws and approved the recommendation unanimously. NPU-N takes up the application at its meeting next week.

Jennie Richardson reported that Mr. Philip Clark has purchased 1609 South Ponce and wants to convert the home into two condos and add eight more condos behind the home on the two-acre lot. He is also in negotiation to purchase the Pine Bloom mansion and the Jackson Hill Baptist Church, which is still owned by the Baptist Convention. The remaining church members are considering whether to [stay in the Pine Bloom house for their services or to move to a church built for them on the](#)

property by Mr. Clark. Zoning exists to allow for 42 condos and news of developer interest in the property is spreading quickly.

### **Treasurer Report**

DH Youth Sports, a 501C that has hosted local youth teams in Medford Park for decades, has requested a \$500 donation with a banner on the Medlock Fields.

A Motion to approve a \$500 donation passed unanimously.

### **Committee Reports**

New Annexation Study Committee: Renee Nelson & Chris Liggett reported that the committee, which met on Thursday, February 23, will be a community resource to share information but will not advocate for or against annexation proposals.

A 100 home neighborhood on University Dr. has successfully petitioned for annexation into the City of Atlanta meeting the required 60% of the registered voters, 60% of land area owners, 1/8 of the boundary adjacent to City of Atlanta and a Public hearing. However, DeKalb County Schools has filed a lawsuit against the City of Atlanta but Atlanta is trying to dismiss the suit.

The Emory University annexation Application has not been filed yet, and this will proposal is a 100% application that does not require public hearing or a 1/8 shared boundary.

Vista Grove is a new DeKalb County Cityhood initiative that includes parts of the defeated Lavista Hills initiative just south of Spaghetti Junction. However, no feasibility study has been undertaken yet.

2017 Tour Committee Chair Ryan Graham reminded everyone to staff docent shifts. Two house co-managers are still needed and 60 signs will be placed in yards. For the first time, tickets for the Gala itself will be sold.

Next year's 2018 Tour is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the tour and also demarcates the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DHCA. There are two projects underway: 1) A Druid Hills History Documentary film will Premiere during the 2018 Tour using the talents of David Winston. We are seeking stories of DH to be preserved.

2) Emory University's Rose Library has agreed to host an Archives Exhibit and we need volunteers to help with this. Philip Lee commented that he has 20 boxes of Emory Grove history to be preserved.

DeKalb Land Use and Historic Preservation Committee: Kit Eisterhold reported that Ian Bogost is looking into the sale of the Cobbs house at 845 Clifton. The Fernbank Museum is subdividing the large lot to allow access to the Fernbank Forest from the museum and selling the remaining land with the historic house. The following motion passed unanimously:

"The DHCA supports returning the property at 845 Clifton Rd. to single family residential use. We also support redrawing the lot line in a way that respects the historic lot layout, with fidelity to the physical framework of the district and the area of influence.

While reversion to the original, historic lot may not be possible due to the trail which runs through Fernbank Forest, and which we believe now traverses that lot, we would like to see as much of the original lot retained as is practical, while leaving the trail within the borders of Fernbank forest, along with a 20' buffer between it and 845 Clifton."

Bruce MacGregor reported that many issues were addressed at Monday's DeKalb County HPC meeting. Locally, tree removal at 463-467 Burlington Road took place without permission. Based partly on staff recommendation, The HPC over-ruled an agreement between the DHCA Land Use Cmte and the 1907-11 Ridgewood Dr. homebuilder regarding the builder's agreement to plant 10 street trees as recompense for the specimen trees to be removed for the new home.

Robert Hughes was commended for his efforts in the historic preservation project to renovate the Glencastle prison farm near Grant Park. Also known as the Atlanta Stockade, the facility dates back to the late 1800's.

## **Division Reports**

Division 2: Yvette Weatherly reported that there is a meeting at her house tomorrow to discuss the CSX Overpass on Ponce. The overpass needs renovation and is not being maintained. OLPA had persuaded the GDOT to cut vines exposing the "Druid Hills" markings, but graffiti, overgrowth and grey overpainting is still present. Interested neighbors will share ideas about what can be done with this historic gateway to Druid Hills and will continue to communicate with CSX, GDOT, DeKalb County, and Decatur.

## **Adjourn to Executive Session**

A Motion to go into Executive Session passed without opposition, and the March Board Meeting adjourned at the end of the Executive Session at 9:20.

Addendum:

Landmark District Preservation Committee Recommendation concerning:  
1226 Ponce de Leon Avenue (GREEN GABLES)

**Recommendation:** The Landmark District Preservation Committee recommends that the DHCA board vote **Not To Oppose** the special use permit application by owner Darren Summerville with one Condition (if needed).

### **Basis for Recommendation.**

1226 Ponce de Leon has been a unique lot in the Druid Hills Landmark District: truncated by subdivision of the house from its carriage house around 1980 and situated between a church and school - initially The Howard School, then Springdale Park Elementary School.

Since designation of the Druid Hills Landmark District in 1982, the house has been residential. A professional design couple lived and worked there for more than a decade. The subsequent owner, a real estate investor, lived there until his difficulties during the Great Recession led to his putting the property up for sale or lease. In January 2011, the Civic Association supported a special use permit for a live/work situation for the owners of Southeast Janitorial who entered into a 5 year rent to own arrangement that did not last. Once again the owner put the property up for sale or lease. Given disclosure rules for realtors, the Committee has to assume that prospective buyers of Green Gables were informed of the Druid Hills Landmark District regulations and the current status of the property.

As of Fall 2016 the Druid Hills Methodist Church property is approved for redevelopment as a residential multi-family complex per the Landmark District regulations. Minerva Corporation approached the Green Gables owner in an effort to restore the lot as part of this redevelopment but the asking price did not work for their project and the owner evidently did not budge.

While the preference of the Landmark District Preservation Committee is residential use for Green Gables, the Committee recognizes the factors at play. The Ponce regulations give preference to residential use but also provide some flexibility in the interest of preserving the historic structures, recognizing the difference between Ponce and the adjacent streets Fairview, Springdale, Oakdale and Lullwater Roads/ Lullwater Parkway. There was a trade-off at the time of development of the ordinance between allowing flexibility on Ponce and maintaining single-family use only on the adjacent streets.

The current owner/applicant has made a commitment to restoring this extraordinary house, which has not been adequately taken care of for a long time. Rather than continuing a course of 'demolition by neglect' the Committee understands the benefit of preserving the structure. Factors such as density control that is built into the ordinance and the obligation the applicant has to satisfy the required stipulations for granting of a special use permit by the Council also contribute to the Committee's decision Not To Oppose the special use permit. ***That said, we must note that absent the required financial/marketing evidence it appears in this case that a purchase price can work against the goal of a preservation ordinance.***

### **Condition**

It is our understanding that special use permits do not go with a property when the ownership changes. If this is not correct, we would request the following condition: **The special use permit for 1226 Ponce de Leon, if granted by the Council, shall be in effect for only the current owner/applicant.**

