

**DRUID HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**Board Meeting**

**Wed., September 21, 2016 @ 7:30 p.m.**

**Hosted by: Cathy Vandenberg**

**Location: St. John's Lutheran Church**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Officers: A Wallace, P Moise, H Handley, T McGuigan, K Gibson

Past Presidents: C Vandenberg, D Shuey, B MacGregor

Board Members: J Heerin, L Van Gelderen, S Baker, J Critz, S Kruse, Y Weatherly, R Vicevich, M St. Louis, P Lee, R Nelson, S Thornton, R Foust, V Biesel, S Misner

2016: A Howell, J Markham, A Orkin, A Silverman, D Winston.

2017: R Benfield, K Eisterhold, C Liggett.

2018: A Ballard, B Evans, L Teunis, C Waterbury.

Guests: Davis Fox, Scott Storbeck, Steven Mathias, Martha Porter Hall, Jane Sams, Rocky Atkins, David Moore, Lynn Ganin, Lynda Moser, Mary Truman.

Alex Beasley, NeighborWoods Manager for Trees Atlanta, spoke about the neighborhood tree planting in districts 1 & 4 on October 22. The DHCA is subsidizing members for \$50 of the \$100 cost for 50 plantings. Alex distributed fliers and planting guides as well as a list of canopy trees appropriate for the neighborhood. Trees Atlanta will plant and help take care of the trees for 2 years.

Senator Elena Parent and guests from the Medlock Area Neighborhood Association (MANA) and the Clairmont Heights Civic Association (CHCA) were present to hear news of Emory University's decision to become annexed to the City of Atlanta.

Mike Mandl, former Emory VP for Business Administration and David Payne, Emory's Senior Director of Operations for Business and Administration, reviewed the history leading up to the decision for annexation. When adjacent neighborhoods were pursuing cityhood, Emory started thinking about annexation but consciously decided not to take a position on cityhood and stayed neutral. Emory, now ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in National Universities, shares Atlanta's goal of pursuing high profile global recognition. Another factor is their pursuit of long-term local improvements such as more efficient transportation along MARTA's Lindbergh route.

Children's Healthcare and the CDC are in agreement and Emory is willing to have adjacent communities join them but they are not advocating for these changes. Emory will continue to be a part of DeKalb County and is exploring how public services such as the Clifton Firehouse will be affected. An agreement between the City and the County is required and Emory expects the transition to go into effect within a year from December.

Some concerns expressed by board members include differences between the senior tax exemption in Atlanta and unincorporated DeKalb County, uncertainties of schooling for residents of Emory Point, possible changes in leverage on the part of unincorporated residents in determining MARTA transportation solutions, the Emory owned houses along North Decatur Rd, and changes in regulating historic landmarks such as the Hardman-Powell cemetery on the Emory Clairmont campus and the antebellum house near Haygood. The Briarcliff Mansion and Briarcliff Campus are not a part of the current annexation plans.

David Payne reminded residents that the next Community Outreach program will be on October 5 and announced a meeting informing residents of new Briarcliff Campus plans on Wednesday, September 28 in the 1599 Building on Clifton.

At 8:18 pm the regular Board of Directors meeting was called to order and the August Minutes were approved. Members are reminded to bring canned goods for the St. John's Food Drive to the November meeting.

Amy Howell, Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that selection of the 2017 Slate of Officers/Board of Directors is underway. Openings to be filled include

- 1) A Communications VP
- 2) A DHCA representative to the Freedom Park
- 3) A LDPC Chair with a professional background in architecture or planning to replace Dan Frymire who is moving to Alabama. This is a very important position.

### **New Business**

A request for a \$5K donation to the Fernbank Elementary School was requested. The school has many new students including many with special needs such as ESOL, but a lack of funds and resources is creating great needs. The SPARK playground donation set a precedent for such a donation for new facilities in a neighborhood school.

A motion to approve a \$5K donation passed with one abstention.

### **Committee Reports**

Membership Committee: The 2016 Fall Campaign is underway and will have a presence at the Emory Village Open Streets event in October. Thirty yard-signs and a new "Join the DHCA" banner are needed. A design of the signs was distributed and discussed. A suggestion was made to reduce the number of social media links and to replace "the" DHCA with "your" DHCA.

### **Landmark District Preservation Committee**

Alida Silverman reported that the Atlanta Urban Design Commission granted a COA to the Tamas property at 1715 Ponce de Leon Ave for restoration of the roof, exterior walls, doors, windows and cornices, one façade at a time. For the first time in 30 years, work will begin to make this historic house habitable.

On August 26, the LDPC met with the Transportation committee on Ponce and recognized a need to cooperate on issues that involve multiple committees. The following motion addresses this need:

Motion: The DHCA board asks the Transportation and the LDPC and the DeKalb Land Use & Historic Preservation Committees to provide the board with recommendations for addressing the safety issues raised by the recent GADOT road safety audit with the understanding that the goal of the Association is a safe neighborhood circulation system for pedestrians, cyclists and cars within the context of historic plans.

The Motion was approved with one opposed.

### **DeKalb Land Use & Historic Preservation Committee**

Bruce MacGregor reported that the Land Use Committee opposed two applications at the September 19, 2016 HPC meeting.

The HPC approved a lot split at 1181 N Decatur Rd on the corner of Villa Drive in the 1922 Druid Hills Heights subdivision where historic Mediterranean Revival houses exist. The Land Use Committee opposes this subdivision since the HPC did not consider that the subdivided lot is unbuildable without variances. They recommend an appeal to the BOC, which needs to be made within 15 days from the approval.

A motion to approve the recommendation to file an appeal to the BOC passed with 2 opposing and one abstaining.

A proposal for demolition and new house construction at 1774 Vickers Circle in the Chelsea Heights character area was deferred after HPC members, the DHCA, and neighbors all testified that the proposed new house is too large and too tall for the site.

999 Briarcliff Rd. continues to be an important and controversial development. The DHCA took a vote last month to oppose rezoning of the 4 acre property from R-85 to MR-1 in support of the 100 neighbors opposing the Minerva planned development. The application was withdrawn. However, a number of petitioners are reconsidering their opposition if certain conditions are met. The

new conditions preserve mature trees, increase a perimeter landscaping buffer, reduce traffic from current use, and provide owner occupied residential housing of a type lacking in DH. The lot was combined before the creation of the Historic Preservation District and the DHCA still does not support subdivision or assemblage of residential lots or consider this as having precedential value. However, many members are very concerned that conditions for rezoning will not be enforced and will set a precedent.

A motion was made to support a deferral of the rezoning of 999 Briarcliff Rd in order to have re-negotiations with the developers and the neighborhood residents without necessarily agreeing with the new conditions. The motion passed with 18 in agreement and 7 opposed.

Other developments of concern:

-Gables Rock Springs redevelopment: on Markan Dr. and Villa Dr. The potential redevelopment of apartments built in 1988 and 1992. Originally a DeKalb County "Bird Sanctuary."

-DH UMC Pre-school/ 957 Briarcliff Rd. currently located at the Druid Hills United Methodist Church is looking for a suitable new site and reportedly has expressed interest in the 957 Briarcliff home.

-"Fox5" Briarcliff Rd site: Work has begun by Minerva on the recently downzoned 2.5 acre Fox 5 outparcel.

-"Fox 5" Old Briarcliff site: Minerva is purchasing a 2+ acre site adjacent to Fox 5 on Old Briarcliff, with the intention of rezoning to MR-1 to construct housing. The site is currently zoned O-I. Anticipated issues include streambuffer/floodplain protection and tree canopy protection.

-Druid Hills Master Plan. An initial pre-planning meeting was held on Sept 20, to discuss the desirability of preparing a master plan for Druid Hills.

Transportation Committee:

There are two new light rail routes proposed by MARTA:

ALT 6 is an at-grade line down North Decatur and is strongly opposed by the DHCA.

ALT 7 is an expensive, deep bore route, which has the least detrimental impact on the neighborhood and is supported by the DHCA.

However, progress on a CSX route may still be a possibility if CSX considers sharing its ROW in return for infrastructure allowing greater overhead clearances for stacked container cars. The Transportation Committee is meeting with MARTA on September 19.

The board voted on the following resolution regarding the most recent developments of MARTA light-rail:

"The DHCA is supportive of the recently proposed ALT 7 route as it moves the proposed station closer to core employment centers and residents of the Druid Hills neighborhood, provides MARTA the greatest flexibility for service modes and schedules through a segregated right of way, and has the least projected detrimental impact on the historical character and beauty of the nearby historic district of all the routes recently proposed. In the event that ALT 7 proves to be infeasible for any reason, we strongly urge MARTA to find and pursue an alternative route that proceeds East from Andrews Circle without causing substantial and inmitigable adverse effects on the Emory Grove Neighborhood and the larger Druid Hills community; including an alternative of co-location with the CSX corridor adjacent to the historic district.

The DHCA is strongly opposed to ALT 6, the routing proposal of an at-grade line down N. Decatur Road, as it contravenes the guidelines for the DeKalb Local Druid Hills Historic District, and will have a substantial and inmitigable adverse effect on the historical character and beauty of Emory Grove, as well as its viability as a neighborhood, and as an integral part of the larger Druid Hills community."

The motion passed with one opposed and one abstention.

Division chairs will meet tomorrow at 7:30.

A motion to go into executive session was approved. After the Executive session ended, the September 2016 Board Meeting adjourned at 10:01 pm