

MINUTES

DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
June 1, 2015
City Hall: 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Baskett called the Regular Meeting of the Decatur City Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, June 1, 2015.

PRESENT: Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and, Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett; and, City Manager Merriss.

MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of May 18, 2015 were approved on a motion by Commissioner Garrett, second by Commissioner Drake and Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and, Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett voting “aye.”

SPECIAL PRESENTATION.

Assistant City Manager David Junger introduced rising 4th grader Tahlia Newton-Norris, Evan Hynes and Spencer King. Mr. Junger stated that Ms. Newton-Norris had reached out to Mayor Baskett regarding painting a mural on the underpass at the intersection of Commerce Drive and East College Avenue. He stated that with the help of Mr. Hynes and Mr. King, Ms. Newton-Norris’ idea of an underwater story has been painted into panels for the community to enjoy.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSES.

City Manager Merriss stated that the Police Department recommended issuance of an alcoholic beverage license for the retail sale for consumption on premises of beer and wine and spirituous liquors to Eric Henderson for Rezagarse Tapas, 105 Sycamore Place, Suite 1. City Manager Merriss stated that all fees had been paid but with the structure still under construction the application had yet to receive the approval of the Building Official and the Fire Marshal so it was recommended that the final license be issued after the certificate of occupancy was issued.

On a motion by Commissioner Boykin, second by Commissioner Drake, and Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett voting “aye,” issuance of the license was approved as recommended.

City Manager Merriss stated that the Police Department recommended issuance of an alcoholic beverage license for the retail sale for consumption on premises of beer and wine and spirituous liquors to Jonathan Hartnett for Las Brasas Peruvian Roasters, 614 Church Street. City Manager Merriss stated that all fees had been paid but with the structure still under construction the application had yet to receive the approval of the Building Official and the Fire Marshal so it was recommended that the final license be issued after the certificate of occupancy was issued.

On a motion by Commissioner Drake, second by Commissioner Garrett, and Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett voting “aye,” issuance of the license was approved as recommended.

City Manager Merriss stated that the Police Department recommended issuance of an alcoholic beverage license for the retail sale for consumption on premises of beer and wine and spirituous liquors to Kevin Gillespie for Revival Decatur, 129 Church Street. City Manager Merriss stated that all fees had been paid but with the structure still under construction the application had yet to receive the approval of the Building Official and the Fire Marshal so it was recommended that the final license be issued after the certificate of occupancy was issued.

On a motion by Commissioner Boykin, second by Commissioner Garrett, and Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett voting “aye,” issuance of the license was approved as recommended.

PUBLIC HEARING – REVISED 2014-2015 BUDGET ESTIMATES, PROPOSED 2015-2016 BUDGET ESTIMATES AND 2015 MILLAGE RATES.

Mayor Baskett opened the meeting for public comment.

Tom Keating, 147 Mockingbird Lane, stated that the budget should allocate funds to study public toilet facilities and add symbols to maps and wayfinding signs that denoted public restroom facilities. Mr. Keating also requested to review the budget line items that included rental fees for portalets.

Mawuli Davis, local attorney, stated that the current structure of the Decatur Municipal Court worked well and that changing the structure as proposed could have unintended consequences for the operation of the Court.

Paul Jones, 229 Second Avenue, stated that he appreciated the proposed one mill decrease. Mr. Jones stated that he would like to gain a better understanding of whether the HOST bill proposed by State Representative Mike Jacobs and approved by the Georgia General Assembly would have a negative impact on the City’s ability to pay debt service on the Beacon Municipal Center.

There were no further comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS.

Mayor Baskett opened the meeting for public comment.

Tom Keating, 147 Mockingbird Lane, requested information on how much of the proposed \$75 million general obligation bond request would be spent on restroom facilities and the types of materials that would be used in constructing the restroom facilities.

Paul Jones, 229 Second Avenue, stated that he desired to know why the City Schools of Decatur needed \$75 million for construction when DeKalb County could construct 30 instructional units for \$15 million.

John Ridley, 205 Adams Street, stated that he was concerned that the City Commission was only acting as a pass through for the general obligation bond debt request instead of acting as a responsible party.

There were no further comments from the public.

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A REFERENDUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION DEBT.

Mayor Baskett recognized School Board members Annie Caiola, Julie Rhame and Bernadette Seals who were in attendance at the meeting.

City Schools of Decatur Superintendent Dr. Phyllis Edwards stated that she was making a request on behalf of the school board to have a \$75 million general obligation bond referendum question placed on the November 3, 2015 ballot. Dr. Edwards stated that the request was based on current needs and enrollment projections; and, it had been discussed by both governing bodies on numerous occasions. Dr. Edwards noted that the City Schools of Decatur was looking at all options but that funds for construction would be needed no matter what options are pursued.

Mayor Baskett stated that the City's charter required that the City Commission authorize the inclusion of the referendum request on the ballot. He stated that the City Commission was not acting as a pass through but was taking action as requested by the Board of Education to place the referendum before the voters to allow the entire community to take part in the discussion and the decision. Mayor Baskett stated that this was a matter for the city's voters to decide.

Commissioner Drake stated that the City Commission had acted as a community sounding board on the issue and that the community was now going to be provided an opportunity to make a decision.

On a motion by Commissioner Garrett, second by Commissioner Drake, and Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett voting "aye," Resolution R-15-21 was adopted.

FLOOR REFINISHING CONTRACT AND PROJECT BUDGET.

Mr. Junger recommended awarding a contract to Concrete Care of Atlanta for concrete floor refinishing at the Decatur Recreation Center and Fire Station #1 in an amount not to exceed \$18,330 and to establish a project budget not to exceed \$21,000. Mr. Junger stated that the floors at the Decatur Recreation Center would be polished and stained in a finish similar to the floors at the Public Works facility. He noted that the existing floor finish had not been durable and was peeling under the intense facility programming use. He added that the proposed new finish was extremely durable and was

capable of being maintained more efficiently and effectively. Mr. Junger stated that in addition to the floors at the Decatur Recreation Center, the proposal included refinishing the floors in the fire truck bays at Fire Station #1 with a very durable epoxy finish designed for automotive use areas similar to the floors in the motor maintenance shop in the Public Works facility. He stated that the epoxy floor coating provided an excellent abrasion, chemical and stains resistant finish.

In response to a question from Commissioner Garrett, Mr. Junger stated that the floor finishes were no longer under warranty.

In response to a question from Commissioner Garrett, Mr. Junger stated that floors at the Ebster Recreation Center were polished concrete with no staining.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Cunningham, Mr. Junger stated that the floors at Fire Station #2 were not having the same issues likely because they were new construction and not a refinishing of existing concrete.

In response to a question from Commissioner Drake, Mr. Junger stated that the work at Fire Station #1 would be in stages.

In response to a question from Commissioner Boykin, Mr. Junger stated that Concrete Care of Atlanta had performed the work at the Beacon Municipal Center.

On a motion by Commissioner Drake, second by Mayor pro tem Cunningham, and Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett voting “aye,” the contract was awarded and the project budget was established as recommended.

RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING CONTRACT.

Mr. Junger recommended award of a contract for residential recycling services to Latham Home Recycling of Loganville. Mr. Junger stated that the request for proposals required firms to quote a price per ton for recyclables collection based on the existing scope of services. He stated that the bid results were representative of the post-consumer recyclable market with weak commodity prices and a housing market that was slowly strengthening in the larger metropolitan Atlanta area. He noted that material recovery facilities in the Atlanta market continue to struggle with handling post-consumer glass as part of a single stream recycling service which had resulted in material recovery facilities charging for materials brought to the facilities for processing that included glass. He stated that the charges currently range from \$12.50 per ton to over \$20.00 per ton. Mr. Junger stated that this continued to drive up the cost per ton of collecting recyclables.

Mr. Junger stated that in spite of the instability and uncertainty in the Atlanta market, the demand for more residential and commercial recycling options continued to increase in the City of Decatur; and, that the Atlanta market continued to feel the impact of the closure of a large material recovery facility, despite the current construction of a new material recovery facility in Conyers, Georgia. He noted that local material recovery

facilities were old and not designed to efficiently process single stream recycling containing glass. He added that was anticipated that the new material recovery facility in Conyers would be completed in the fall of 2015 and that staff had been told the new facility would be able to process single stream recycling that included glass with the recovered glass being clean enough for use by secondary markets.

Mr. Junger stated that Latham Home Sanitation had done an exceptional job in providing excellent service to the citizens of Decatur. He stated that the proposed fee of \$109.46 per ton of collected recyclables was reasonable given market conditions and the availability of material recovery facilities that process single stream material. Mr. Junger stated that in March 2015, the sanitation fee schedule was recommended and approved based on a set of assumptions that included a marginal increase in the cost of providing garbage and recycling services. He stated that the financial impact of the recycling bid recommendation was approximately an additional \$10.00 per household and that this may result in an increase in the single family sanitation fee from \$240 to \$250 per household in 2016.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Cunningham, City Manager Merriss stated that the sanitation fees would be set again in March 2016.

In response to a question from Mayor Baskett, Mr. Junger stated that the contract has used the consumer price index in the past to adjust the rate per ton and that it was the only rate determining clause in the contract. He stated that the contract was a one-year contract with the option to renew each year for additional two years. Mr. Junger noted that renegotiation of the contract could occur on an annual basis.

In response to a question from Mayor Baskett, Mr. Junger stated that the city had not obligated Latham Home Sanitation to take our materials to any particular processor.

In response to a question from Mayor Baskett, City Manager Merriss stated that some assumptions were made in the City's bid proposal that were overly aggressive. She added that staff would have been hesitant to accept similar assumptions from any bidder.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Cunningham, second by Commissioner Drake, and Mayor Baskett; Mayor pro tem Cunningham; and Commissioners Boykin, Drake and Garrett voting "aye," the City Manager was authorized to execute the contract as recommended.

REQUESTS AND PETITIONS.

Jane Royal read a letter from the Decatur Community Coalition.

Chris Billingsley, 146 Norris Street, made remarks about commemorating Memorial Day weekend 2015. Exhibit A of the minutes represents his exact words.

Tom Keating, 147 Mockingbird Lane, requested that the City authorize at least one parking space in the lot behind City Hall for residents to use while on-site for city

business. Mr. Keating also requested a review of the City's graffiti abatement ordinance and that City learn more about DeKalb County's public sanitation ordinance.

Nibs Stroupe, 818 South Candler Street, requested a response to the Decatur Community Coalition's letter.

Erica Wells, 1202 Church Street, requested information on the City's practices to protect senior citizens from predatory outreach from real estate agents and developers.

REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.

Mayor Baskett read the Zoning Board of Appeals agenda for June 8, 2015.

City Manager Merriss stated that the City Commission would be holding two additional public hearings related to the budgets and 2015 millage rates on Monday, June 8th at 6:00 p.m. and Monday, June 15th at 7:30 p.m.

City Manager Merriss distributed a three-page outline provided by the City's bond counsel on the "Do's and Don'ts" of advocating for a referendum.

Commissioner Drake thanked Assistant City Manager Andrea Arnold for presenting the proposed budget during the evening's work session.

Commissioner Drake thanked all of the residents and community members who came out and participated in the meeting.

Commissioner Garrett thanked Ms. Arnold for her presentation and she invited the community to attend the two remaining public hearings.

Commissioner Garrett stated that she had attended Oakhurst Elementary School's 100 year celebration and that she had the honor of proclaiming May 29, 2015 as Oakhurst Elementary Day.

Commissioner Garrett thanked Mr. Billingsley for his efforts in organizing Memorial Day celebrations at the Decatur Cemetery.

Commissioner Garrett thanked the meeting's attendees for coming out and sharing their interests with their elected officials.

Mayor pro tem Cunningham thanked Ms. Arnold and her team for preparing the budget work session presentation.

Mayor pro tem Cunningham thanked the Decatur Community Coalition for sharing its thoughts.

Mayor pro tem Cunningham congratulated Oakhurst Elementary School on its anniversary and for winning Safe Routes to School “School of the Year” honors for a second year.

Mayor pro tem Cunningham stated that the Decatur Housing Authority’s annual awards program would be Tuesday, June 2nd and that the Decatur baseball season opened on Saturday, June 6th.

Mayor Baskett thanked the meeting’s attendees for coming out and sharing their interests with their elected officials.

Mayor Baskett stated that he liked Mr. Billingsley’s idea of naming streets in the Decatur Cemetery after prominent city residents.

Mayor Baskett thanked the Decatur Community Coalition for sharing its thoughts and he noted that the City Commissioners had only received a copy of the letter immediately prior to the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Peggy Merriss
Acting City Clerk