



## Decatur City Commission Retreat 2009

Smithgall Woods  
February 8-9, 2009

The retreat focused on strategies to deal with the current economic downturn.

The early part of the session dealt with an adaptation of a 360 analysis of both the commission and the staff. In essence, the group identified the following takeaways:

- Assessment of self, even group-self, is harsher than assessment of others.
- Team assessments of the staff were exceptionally high.
- Team agreement that the City Commission appoint residents to Boards with a clear understanding of the mission of the City. There was general agreement that the City Commission consider a process to re-evaluate and re-orient the missions and charges for current appointed boards.
- Decisiveness in a public setting is difficult to assess. The public process is “messier” than in other settings, but a necessary part of local government.
- Give the City Commission sufficient time to think through policy decisions, i.e., avoid scheduling work sessions and then agenda items immediately following.

During the second part of the retreat, the group focused on the following questions:

1. What are the short-term and long-term implications of the economic downturn?

General response to this question indicated that the City of Decatur is well positioned to weather the economic storm. Overall financial planning and good, conservative financial decisions have put the City in a place where drastic actions appear unnecessary.

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2. What areas of government are most affected?

Currently, the school system has felt most of the effects, primarily due to actions of the State of Georgia. The Mayor and Mayor pro tem Baskett will continue to dialogue with members of the school board.

The City's greatest areas of economic impact include: accounting for OPEB on the balance sheet and Police and Fire Services.

Goals and Projects for 2009

- Multiple budget scenarios to facilitate decision-making if economy continues to worsen
- Avondale LCI area public amenities- walking trails, park, storm water facilities, etc.
- Re-working land development plan and all facets related to that (9 months to a year)
- Redevelopment of Callaway Square.
- Public Works facility to include improved street presence.
- Urban farm project—conceptual plan

Other goals for the next year and beyond

- A new strategic plan with community involvement (Link this with the comprehensive plan update)

Put together a financial report that shows how revenues and or funding was enhanced as a result of the strategic plan (Show the value of the strategic plan).

- Annexation tabled until 2011 (with the exception of limited annexation requests)
- Residential units in Avondale LCI Master Plan.
- Sidewalk planning criteria: Connectivity is a primary decision point. Resident support is important.
- Explore the question: What is the future of the conference center? The hotel/motel tax is a source of income for the general fund and a source of funding for maintenance of the conference center.