MINUTES
DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

Mayor Garrett called the Regular Meeting of the Decatur City Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, 2020.

PRESENT: Mayor Garrett, Mayor pro tem Powers; and Commissioners Dusenbury, Mayer and Walsh; and, City Manager Arnold.

MINUTES of the Organizational Meeting of January 6, 2020 were approved on a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers, second by Commissioner Walsh; and, all voting “aye.”

SPECIAL EVENT ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSES.
Downtown Program Manager Shirley Baylis recommended issuance of temporary special event alcoholic beverage licenses for the retail sale of beer and wine for seven annual events sponsored by Decatur non-profit organizations to include the Mead Road Mardi Gras; Amplify Music Festival; Decatur Arts Festival; Decatur Beach Party; BBQ, Blues, and Bluegrass Festival; AJC Decatur Book Festival and Decatur Wine Festival. Ms. Baylis noted that licenses for two additional special events would be considered at a later date.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers, second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting “aye,” the temporary special event beer and wine licenses were approved as recommended.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ACTION ITEMS.
Mayor Garrett opened the public hearing.

Hearing none, Mayor Garrett closed the public hearing.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT FOR EHOST PROCEEDS.
City Manager Arnold stated that in a November 2017 referendum, voters approved the Equalized Homestead Option Sales and Use Tax (EHOST) which applied 100% of its proceeds to homestead exemptions from DeKalb County property taxes for maintenance and operations and the hospital authority on owner-occupied, single family residences. She stated that the EHOST was applied uniformly to properties in unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County. City Manager Arnold stated that the Georgia Department of Revenue requested that DeKalb County and the cities within the County enter into an intergovernmental agreement for the distribution of EHOST proceeds, including any remaining EHOST proceeds. She noted that remaining EHOST proceeds were those EHOST proceeds left over after taxes for the County General and Hospital funds were rolled back and eliminated.

City Manager Arnold stated that the County and cities within the County had reviewed the applicable law and developed an intergovernmental agreement. She stated that it consistent with
O.C.G.A. 48-8-109.5 which described the use and administration of proceeds. City Manager Arnold noted that it there were remaining proceeds after County General and Hospital fund taxes were eliminated for homestead properties, those remaining proceeds would be disbursed to the County and cities based on each jurisdiction’s homestead property values as a percentage of the total assessed value of all qualified homestead property located in the County. She added that to date, there had been no remaining proceeds to be distributed from EHOST though there could be funds available in the future. City Manager Arnold recommended that she be authorized to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with DeKalb County substantially similar to the version provided in the agenda materials.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, City Manager Arnold stated that the County Budget Director had mentioned that the difference between revenues and expenditures was continuing to diminish each year so the gap between the two could be fully covered in the near future.

Mayor Garrett stated that this agreement was to be signed by all impacted parties and that it could last for as long as 50 years so being on the same page made sense.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, City Manager Arnold stated that the formula for distribution was based on each jurisdiction’s assessed homestead property values, not its population as had previously been utilized.

On a motion by Commissioner Dusenbury, second by Mayor pro tem Powers; and, all voting “aye,” the agreement was authorized as recommended.

STATEWIDE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT.

City Clerk Meredith Roark acting in her role as the City’s Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness recommended that the City Manager be authorized to enter into an agreement with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) to provide the framework to support mutual assistance in managing an emergency or disaster as well as to identify the persons who are authorized to act on behalf of the City of Decatur in requesting or responding to mutual aid assistance. She stated that pre-existing agreements for mutual aid assistance in emergencies help to ensure the timely provision of mutual aid assistance and the reimbursement of costs incurred by those parties who render such assistance. Ms. Roark noted that if authorized, this mutual aid agreement was entered pursuant to authorities contained in Articles I through III, Chapter 3, Title 38, Official Code of Georgia Annotated; and, it would be submitted to the DeKalb County Emergency Management Agency for submission to the State.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Ms. Roark stated that the City did not have utilize any provisions of a mutual aid agreement for the clean-up of Tropical Storm Irma in September 2017 as staff was able to handle all needs in-house.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Ms. Roark stated that while the City had not had a signed mutual aid agreement for statewide assistance in the past, the Fire and Police Departments had separate and active agreements with other agencies in the region as well as the
state in the event aid was required. She added that the current recommendation codified current practice and would be in effect through 2024 if authorized.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers, second by Commissioner Walsh; and, all voting “aye,” the agreement was authorized as recommended.

**AUTHORIZATION TO INITIATE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.**

Planning & Economic Development Director Angela Threadgill requested that the City Commission approve the initiation of the Comprehensive Plan update as part of the 2020 Strategic Plan process as well grant the appointment of an elected member of the City Commission to the Engagement Squad. She noted that these actions were a technical requirement and were necessary to begin the plan update process. Ms. Threadgill stated that the City was required to update its Comprehensive Plan every five years to retain its local qualified government status, which enabled the City to obtain state and federal assistance funds. She noted that at the same time as this update, staff was preparing an update to the City’s Strategic Plan to chart the future of the city for the next decade through 2030 and an update to the citywide Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study. She stated that the City would have one big visioning process that would inform each of the three related plans. She noted that in doing so, the City would be using resources more efficiently and ensuring three key city plans have consistent outcomes.

Ms. Threadgill stated that the process would kick-off with a major community event on January 23, 2020 at the Decatur Conference Center and that the process would likely last twelve months. She presented the myriad of ways that the community could be involved in the process as well as the methods of communication that would be utilized to get the word out.

Mayor Garrett stated that she would like to be the City Commission liaison to the Engagement Squad.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Ms. Threadgill stated that staff and representatives from the consulting team had met with the Department of Community Affairs to obtain guidance about how best to proceed with the presentation of the three plans and that the group had received positive feedback around the option of combining the process and documentation into one deliverable.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Ms. Threadgill explained the difference between a strategic plan, a comprehensive plan and a livable centers initiative plan.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Ms. Threadgill stated that to her knowledge, the City of Decatur was the only city in the Metro Atlanta region to have its entirety considered an LCI area.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Ms. Threadgill stated that the last LCI plan focused an entire chapter on the downtown area so if with the update, the City Commission felt a desire to pull the area out and create a separate plan, it could direct staff to do so. She noted that it was highly likely that downtown specific tasks and goals would be present in the 2020 Strategic Plan as they had been in the 2010 Strategic Plan.
Commissioner Walsh noted that she liked the idea of creating a synergy around combining the planning processes for the three plans into one process.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers, second by Commissioner Walsh; and, all voting “aye,” the approval to initiate the Comprehensive Plan Update was granted and Mayor Garrett was appointed to the Engagement Squad.

**LEGACY PARK ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING.**

Children & Youth Services Director Claire Miller recommended establishment of a project budget of $43,928.10 and approval of four quotes for furniture for the first floor lobby, auditorium, conference room and breakroom of the Decatur Legacy Park Administrative Building. Ms. Miller stated that the furniture vendor, Atlanta Office Furniture, was identified by Rabaut Design Associates; and that Atlanta Office Furniture would provide furnishings for the first floor lobby (couches, reception desk, area rug, table) and breakroom (tables, chairs), as well as chairs and tables for the first floor auditorium and chairs, a conference table and credenza for the conference room. She noted that currently the Administrative Building lobby lacked any furnishings so the project also included purchase of a reception desk and workstation for a front desk function at the Legacy Park administrative building. Ms. Miller stated that Atlanta Office Furniture matched state contract list prices for all items. She noted that funding was included in the approved FY19-20 Children & Youth Services fund budget for this project.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Ms. Miller stated that the vendor was in line with all prices on the state contract.

In response to a question from City Manager Arnold, Ms. Miller stated that the old furniture would be stored in on the property in Williams Cottage in the event it was needed by future tenants of other facilities on the property.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Ms. Miller stated that if approved, the project would begin in the first quarter of 2020 with installation to occur 8-12 weeks from order placement.

On a motion by Commissioner Mayer, second by Mayor pro tem Powers; and, all voting “aye,” the project budget and contract were approved as recommended.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY.**

Planner Aileen de la Torre recommended approval of Resolution R-20-02 authorizing city staff to submit an application to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division (HPD) for the purpose of securing a grant from their Certified Local Government Survey & Planning Grant program. Ms. de la Torre stated that staff had submitted an application for this grant in 2019 and after an unsuccessful attempt at obtaining funding, revised the application to include a smaller area. She stated that if received the grant would fund an update to the Downtown Decatur and South Candler-Agnes Scott Historic Resources Surveys conducted in 2009.
Ms. de la Torre stated that the preservation of Decatur’s historic buildings, structures, and places was essential to retaining its identity as the community grows. She noted that Principal A of the 2010 Strategic Plan set a specific goal to protect and encourage the creative reuse of historic buildings and she added the City had experienced significant growth through annexations and had observed transformations within all neighborhoods. She stated that an update to the historic resources survey would help us better understand how the City could achieve this goal and inform on how to plan for historic resources in the 2020 Strategic Plan.

Ms. de la Torre that the total project cost for the survey update was estimated to be $25,000; and, that if awarded, the grant would pay 60% of the cost with a required local match of 40%. She stated that under this formula the City of Decatur’s anticipated share would be approximately $10,000. She noted that the FY19-20 budget had set aside $40,000 for the survey update should costs exceed the estimated amount.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Ms. de la Torre stated that the majority of the grant funding would be spent to hire a consulting firm to conduct the survey.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mayer, Ms. de la Torre stated that the residents of South Candler Street had expressed an interest in receiving a local historic district designation and that the Downtown Decatur area was in need of an update.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Ms. de le Torre explained the benefits to designating an area a local historic district.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Ms. de la Torre stated that One Map, the City’s online GIS tool, showed the current historic districts.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers, second by Commissioner Walsh; and all voting “aye,” Resolution R-20-02 was adopted.

**DOWNTOWN TREE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM.**

Deputy City Manager Hugh Saxon recommend approval of an agreement with Arborguard Tree Specialists to provide maintenance services for street trees planted in downtown Decatur. He stated that the services include selective pruning, fertilization and pest control for about 300 street trees in the downtown area; and, that the fee for these services was $20,500. Mr. Saxon stated that Arborguard was a local tree service which specialized in tree maintenance and preservation. He noted that it has maintained the downtown trees since the initial streetscape program was implemented in 1996 and continued to provide excellent service at a reasonable cost.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, City Manager Arnold stated that even if this request was part of a multi-year agreement, the funds would still be expended on an annual basis.

On a motion by Commissioner Dusenbury, second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting “aye,” the agreement was approved as recommended.

**REQUESTS AND PETITIONS.**

There were no requests or petitions.
REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.

Upon nomination by Commissioner Walsh, second by Commissioner Dusenbury; and, all voting “aye,” Mayor pro tem Powers was appointed as the Decatur Youth Council liaison.

City Manager Arnold stated that the Decatur Youth Council had volunteered their time at the City’s sponsored house during the MLK, Jr. Service weekend.

City Manager Arnold stated that the City’s Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census had met for the first time last week and that the volunteers and staff were preparing to assist the City in achieving a 90% participation rate.

City Manager Arnold noted that the Leadership DeKalb Class of 2020 had recently participated in the program’s Government Day and she thanked staff for sharing what the City is doing in the realms of budgeting, sustainability and community & economic development.

Commissioner Mayer stated that she was delighted to see many of her neighbors participating in acts of service during the MLK, Jr. holiday weekend.

Commissioner Dusenbury stated that the City’s MLK., Jr service project was a well-run and enjoyable event.

Commissioner Dusenbury stated that he and Commissioner Walsh had recently met with the Climate Reality group.

Commissioner Dusenbury stated that he was looking forward to the 2020 Strategic Plan kick-off.

Commissioner Dusenbury commended DeKalb Commissioner Kathie Gannon on her years of service to the community upon her announcement that she would not seek reelection in 2020.

Commissioner Walsh thanked Finance Director Russ Madison and his team for their good work in preparing the annual audit.

Commissioner Walsh registered her excitement at the kick-off of the 2020 Strategic Planning process on Thursday, January 23rd.

Commissioner Walsh stated that the Decatur Bulldog Boosters annual Run with the Dogs 5K would be held on Saturday, January 25th.

Commissioner Walsh stated that she would be attending the Georgia Municipal Association’s Cities United Summit over the upcoming weekend.

Mayor pro tem Powers invited the community to two city sponsored events in the coming days: the 2020 Strategic Plan kick-off on Thursday, January 23rd at the Decatur Conference Center, as well as the State of the City Address on Tuesday, January 28th.
Mayor pro tem Powers noted that the Decatur Education Foundation was hosting the Joe’s Fund Benefit on Friday, January 31st to raise awareness and funds for the organizations’ behavioral health fund.

Mayor pro tem Powers stated that he had recently addressed the Decatur High School honor roll recipients at the school’s annual event.

Mayor pro tem Powers thanked all of the volunteers who participated in the MLK, Jr. Service project weekend.

Mayor pro tem Powers congratulated DeKalb Commissioners Steve Bradshaw and Lorraine Cochran-Johnson on their selections as the 2020 Chair and Vice Chair of the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners.

Mayor Garrett shared her appreciation for all of the hard work performed by volunteers during the MLK, Jr service project weekend.

Mayor Garrett promised that the 2020 Strategic Plan kick-off event would be both fun and informative.

Mayor Garrett stated that School Board Chair Lewis Jones would be joining her on the program for the City’s annual State of the City event on Tuesday, January 28th at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Garrett thanked Mayor pro tem Powers for his willingness to work with the Decatur Youth Council.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Meredith Roark
City Clerk