

MINUTES
DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
April 18, 2022
City Hall: 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Garrett called the Regular Meeting of the Decatur City Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 18, 2022.

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

MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of April 4, 2022 were approved on a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Dusenbury; and all voting “aye.”

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH PROCLAMATION.

Mayor Garrett presented a proclamation to members of the Decatur Prevention Initiative in recognition of Alcohol Awareness Month.

GEORGIA CITIES WEEK PROCLAMATION.

Mayor Garrett presented a proclamation in recognition of Georgia Cities Week from April 24, 2022 to April 30, 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ACTION ITEMS.

Mayor Garrett opened the meeting for public comment.

Lynn Gathercole, 1003 Katie Kerr Drive, expressed her concerns about the Legacy South Housing Village project.

Richelle Patton, 124 Avery Street, spoke in support of the Legacy South Housing Village project.

Hearing no further comments, the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

APPOINTMENT OF POLICE CHIEF.

City Manager Arnold recommended confirmation of the appointment of William “Scott” Richards as Police Chief for the City of Decatur Police Department. She stated that Mr. Richards was a 28-year veteran of the City’s Police Department and that he started in 1994 as a Police Officer. She added that he had served as the Deputy Police Chief since 2016 and he became the Interim Police Chief upon the retirement of former Police Chief Mike Booker in 2021.

City Manager Arnold stated that Mr. Richards graduated from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and received a Master of Public Safety Administration from Columbus State University. She added that with his education, work experience, technical skills and proven leadership abilities, she was confident that Mr. Richards would provide outstanding leadership to the department and the community.

Mayor Garrett recognized members of Mr. Richard’s family and the Decatur Police Department who were in attendance at the meeting.

Mr. Richards thanked the City Manager, City Commission and city staff for their support.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Walsh; and, all voting “aye,” Scott Richards was confirmed as Police Chief for the City of Decatur Police Department.

LEGACY SOUTH HOUSING VILLAGE.

City Manager Arnold recommended adoption of Resolution R-22-11 that would make certain assurances related to the proposed affordable housing development at Decatur Legacy Park. She noted that items referenced in the resolution included the City’s financial commitment for infrastructure improvements, approval of the design and development plan components of the project and a commitment to ensure the long-term affordability of the housing. City Manager Arnold stated that in November 2021, the City entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) for the development of affordable housing on the southern portion of the Decatur Legacy Park.

City Manager Arnold stated that in addition to the design approval, the City’s financial commitment to the development was needed for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) application to be submitted by DHA to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA.) She stated that under the IGA the City agreed to pay the reasonable cost of the non-utility infrastructure improvements. It was recommended that the City commit to a total amount of \$3,741,251 for both construction phases with the understanding the DHA would finance the difference. City Manager Arnold also recommended that the City commit State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) from the approximately \$9.6 million that the City had been allotted through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Decatur Housing Authority Executive Director Doug Faust presented the proposed design and development plan components in detail. Mr. Faust was joined by Principal Architect David Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton stated that over the past five months, city staff and DHA staff had worked to create a community of varied building styles within the project area and community input was gathered through an open house on February 28, 2022 in addition to an online survey. He also explained the project description which would include the construction of 132 affordable units in two phases. He also shared the budget, market concerns and pricing issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Mr. Faust clarified that bond funds would not be used to finance the project.

City Manager Arnold concurred with Mr. Faust and added that no local tax revenue from the City was being committed towards the project. She stated that federal tax revenue through ARPA would be allotted to the project, if approved.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, City Manager Arnold explained the conditions associated with the usage of ARPA funds.

Commissioner Dusenbury thanked City Manager Arnold and Mr. Faust for the detailed explanation.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, City Manager Arnold stated that the City would retain the ownership of the property and will enter into a ground lease with the DHA for the development.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Mr. Faust stated that outside of the DHA's housing inventory there were a few residential communities that could ensure long-term affordability such as certain senior housing communities and recognized that LIHTCs are some of the best resources for ensuring long-term housing affordability. Mr. Faust stated that after this development is complete, the DHA may be looking to revitalize existing properties.

Commissioner Mayer commended the DHA staff for the excellent presentation and work session. She also lauded the design team for the number of three bedroom apartments that were included in the project design as they could support more families.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mayer, Mr. Faust stated that natural color options for exterior painting that would blend in with ease were more popular among the community members that had provided feedback on the project.

Mayor Garrett commended the design team for the quick turnaround with the project updates.

Mayor Garrett recognized DHA Board Chair Melissa Heffner, Commissioner Cinque Axam and DHA Attorney Scotty Candler who were in attendance at the meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Mayer; second by Mayor pro tem Powers; and, all voting "aye," Resolution R-22-11 was adopted.

POLICE-MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATION AGREEMENT.

Police Captain Jennifer Ross and Local Government Management Fellow Charlene Marsh recommended authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with View Point Health for the creation of a Police-Mental Health Collaboration (PMHC) and approving an annual budget in an amount not to exceed \$84,000. Captain Ross stated that the Police-Mental Health Collaboration (PMHC) would create a co-responder program which would include the assignment of a full-time licensed behavioral health clinician to the Decatur Police Department to provide mental health services.

Ms. Marsh explained that through the PMHC co-responder program, View Point Health would provide the Decatur Police Department with a full-time fully licensed or associate licensed clinician to conduct behavioral health evaluations, crisis intervention, linkage to community resources and case management and other "as needed" behavioral health services for individuals identified by the Decatur 911 Communications Center, Decatur Police Department officers and other city staff. She stated that the clinician would assist the department with data collection and assessment, training and education for officers, other city staff and community members and other duties as needed with the goal of limiting the need for police officer responses to individuals experiencing mental health crises.

Captain Ross added that city staff had conducted extensive research on co-response programs across the nation and had received overwhelmingly positive feedback from agencies in the metro-Atlanta region that had implemented PMHCs with View Point Health, including the City of Conyers

Police Department, the City of Chamblee Police Department, the City of Norcross Police Department, the City of Lawrenceville Police Department and the Gwinnett County Police Department.

Commissioner Mayer commended staff for considering a partnership with View Point Health.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mayer, Ms. Marsh stated that she would share the list of services offered by View Point Health.

Mayor pro tem Powers concurred with Commissioner Mayer and stated that he was excited about the potential partnership.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Captain Ross explained the difference between a full-time fully licensed and associate licensed clinician.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Captain Ross explained that the services offered by the clinician would be citywide, so unhoused individuals, city staff, school staff, or anyone else with a need could be supported by the clinician.

Commissioner Walsh commended Captain Ross for her work and stated that she would be a great individual to work with the clinician due to her work experience.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Ms. Marsh explained the data collection and data assessment components of the partnership with View Point.

Mayor Garrett lauded Ms. Marsh for her diligence and hard work towards the project. She also thanked Captain Ross for her involvement in the project.

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

EASEMENT FOR UNDERGROUND CABLE AT MCKOY PARK.

Deputy City Manager Hugh Saxon recommended approval of an easement to allow the Georgia Power Company to install underground cable in McKoy Park. He stated that underground power was installed during the original redevelopment of McKoy Park in the early 1970s and was provided by an underground distribution line from the College Heights Early Learning Center at 917 South McDonough Street. He added that the line would be installed using directional boring to minimize disturbance of the park facilities.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Mr. Saxon stated that the new cable would create a loop system improving distribution of power to the park and was part of Georgia Power’s GRID improvements in the East Lake and South Decatur area.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Walsh; and, all voting “aye,” the easement was granted.

OAKHURST RECREATION CENTER.

Assistant City Manager David Junger recommended establishment of a project budget in the

amount of \$43,000 and award of a contract in the amount of \$41,732.19 to Mohawk Carpet Distribution, Inc. for the Oakhurst Recreation Center flooring. He stated that the flooring selections and design were prepared by Jo Rabaut Design Associates in coordination with staff. He stated that Mohawk Carpet Distribution was an approved Sourcewell Georgia State Contract vendor and that they had completed similar work for DeKalb County Schools, Grady Memorial Hospital and several other public agencies in Georgia. He stated that the project would be funded using funds remaining from the issuance of the Urban Redevelopment Agency 2020 bonds.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Children and Youth Services Assistant Director Nancy Brune stated that additional programming options could be added at the facility.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Mr. Junger stated that asbestos abatement would not be needed as the new flooring would go on top of the existing flooring.

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

Mr. Junger recommended establishment of a project budget of \$62,000 and award of a contract in the amount of \$55,775.73 with Atlanta Office Furniture for furniture at the Oakhurst Recreation Center. He stated that Rabaut Design Associates developed a project design including furniture, flooring and painting and the recommended furniture was included on the Georgia State Contract vendor list. He stated that the proposal included furniture for three offices, lobby and meeting spaces and the contract would include delivery and installation of all furniture. He stated that the furniture was intended to outfit the Oakhurst Recreation Center by creating a uniform appearance and professional work environment resulting in a welcoming experience for both patrons and staff. He added that this project would be funded using funds remaining from the issuance of the Urban Redevelopment Agency 2020 bonds.

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

REQUESTS AND PETITIONS.

Ms. Gathercole voiced her concerns about the Decatur Legacy South Housing Village project.

REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.

Mayor Garrett read the Zoning Board of Appeals Agenda for May 9, 2022.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting “aye,” Miles Moorfield and Robert Nobles were appointed to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee as the representatives from the Decatur Youth Council.

City Manager Arnold reminded everyone that the 2022 National Community Survey would be open until May 9, 2022. She stated that 2,400 households were randomly selected to participate and could do so by either completing the paper copy sent through the mail or online with the link listed on the notification postcard. She stated that if a household was not selected but still wanted to participate, an open version of the survey would become available on April 25, 2022 and that

information about the open participation survey would be shared via the social channels. She recognized City Clerk Meredith Roark for her hard work on the initiative.

City Manager Arnold recognized Ms. Marsh for serving the City as the Local Government Management Fellow at the end of her fellowship program. She commended her for the incredible quality of work delivered by Ms. Marsh during her tenure with the City.

Commissioner Mayer thanked the members of the Decatur Prevention Initiative and Decatur Youth Council for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Mayer stated that it was her opinion that every penny allocated towards the Legacy South Housing Village project was worth it because of the value it would add to the community. She also stated that adding more affordable housing units would be important to increase the level of diversity in the community.

Commissioner Mayer congratulated Chief Richards on his confirmation as the Police Chief.

Commissioner Dusenbury congratulated Mr. Moorfield and Mr. Nobles on their appointment to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee.

Commissioner Dusenbury invited everyone to the Decatur Parks and Recreation Master Plan public kickoff meeting on May 11, 2022 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Ebster Recreation Center, 105 Electric Avenue.

Commissioner Dusenbury concurred with Commissioner Mayer about the Legacy South Housing Village project and spoke in support of the decision made by the City Commission.

Commissioner Dusenbury congratulated Chief Richards on his appointment.

Commissioner Dusenbury commended the members of the Decatur Prevention Initiative Youth Action Team for their active involvement in the mission of the organization.

Commissioner Walsh also congratulated Mr. Moorfield and Mr. Nobles on their appointment to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee.

Commissioner Walsh thanked the members of the Decatur Prevention Initiative Youth Action Team for their leadership in the community.

Commissioner Walsh congratulated Chief Richards on his appointment and thanked City Manager Arnold for following a rigorous recruitment process.

Commissioner Walsh thanked City and DHA staff for all the research and informative presentations regarding the South Housing Village at Decatur Legacy Park.

Mayor pro tem Powers shared his appreciation for the extensive work done by the City Commission and design team that worked on the Legacy South Housing Village project in a limited amount of time.

Mayor pro tem Powers congratulated Chief Richards on his appointment.

Mayor pro tem Powers thanked Congressman Hank Johnson and Congresswoman Nikema Williams as well as their staffs for being attentive to the needs of the City and for securing funds for the City.

Mayor Garrett thanked Mr. Faust and his team for the work on the Legacy South Housing Village project. She added that the City Commission was proud of the work done to offer affordable housing solutions that were much needed.

Mayor Garrett congratulated Chief Richards on his appointment.

Mayor Garrett reminded everyone about the Oakhurst Jazz Nights spring concert series on April 28, 2022 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at The Solarium.

Mayor Garrett invited everyone to the Amplify Music Festival on April 23, 2022.

Mayor Garrett invited everyone to the Decatur Business Association meeting celebrating volunteers on April 26, 2022 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the community bandstand on the Decatur Square.

The City Commission wished Mr. Junger a happy birthday.

The City Commission thanked Ms. Marsh for her service to the City and wished her well on her future endeavors.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Meredith Roark
City Clerk