

**MINUTES  
DECATUR CITY COMMISSION**

Regular Meeting  
December 4, 2023  
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 December 4, 2023.

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

MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of November 27, 2023 will be considered at the December 18 meeting.

PRESENTATION.

Mayor Garrett recognized and awarded the Decatur High School Ivy League with an appreciation award from the City Commission. She thanked them for all their work in and around the City.

PROCLAMATION.

Mayor Garrett read a proclamation recognizing December 9, 2023 as the City of Decatur's Bicentennial. She stated there would be celebrations all weekend to honor Decatur's birthday.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ACTION ITEMS.

Mayor Garrett opened the meeting for public comment.

Hearing none, the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

LEGACY PARK TRACK AND FIELD IMPROVEMENTS.

Capital Projects Manager Hugh Saxon presented various recommendations to the City Commission regarding the Decatur Legacy Park track and field project. He recommended approval of amendments to the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that increased the contribution from the City and the City Schools of Decatur from \$3 million each to \$3.5 million each for design, construction and installation of track and field facilities at Legacy Park; approval of a \$7 million project budget; approval of an agreement with Sports Turf Company of Whitesburg, Georgia, the low bidder, in the amount of \$6,081,053 for construction and installation of track and field facilities; approval of an agreement with Musco Sports Lighting in the amount of \$308,000 for athletic facilities lighting; approval of an agreement with Breedlove Land Planning in the amount of \$60,000 for construction administration; and, approval of an agreement with the Georgia Power Company in the amount of \$50,000 for utility relocation. Mr. Saxon shared samples of the materials to be installed.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Mr. Saxon stated that while a natural grass field would be preferred, the amount of use the facility would receive warranted the installation of artificial turf.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Saxon stated no pesticides or fertilizer would be used for an artificial turf field as was commonly used on grass fields.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Saxon stated the manufacturer of the turf types for the Ebster Field project and Decatur Legacy Park track and field project were different but the materials to be installed would be similar. He added the natural materials to be placed under the turf surface would cause the field to be cooler. He stated that it was not to his knowledge that the wood material would emit any chemicals.

Mayor Garrett stated that she was glad the plan included a pad under the turf since female athletes were more prone to joint injuries on hard surfaces.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Saxon stated the future replacement would be expensive but not as much as natural turf. He added there was a storm water plan that would actually reduce the amount of runoff experienced in the area.

Commissioner Walsh stated it was nice to see the proposed materials as well as learn about accessibility.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Saxon stated the lighting would be stadium lighting that was dark-sky qualified in order to minimize the light pollution at the park.

City Manager Arnold stated the funding for the City's portion of the project came from the American Rescue Plan Act.

On a motion by Commissioner Walsh; second by Mayor pro tem Powers; and, all voting "aye," the intergovernmental agreement was amended to increase the financial commitment of both parties as recommended.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting "aye," the project budget of \$7,000,000 was approved as recommended.

On a motion by Commissioner Walsh; second by Commissioner Dusenbury; and all voting "aye," the agreement with Sports Turf Company in the amount of \$6,081,053 was authorized as recommended.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting "aye," the agreement with Musco Sports Lighting in the amount of \$308,000 was authorized as recommended.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Dusenbury; and, all voting "aye," the agreement with Breedlove Plan Planning in the amount of \$60,000 was authorized as recommended.

On a motion by Commissioner Dusenbury; second by Mayor pro tem Powers; and, all voting "aye," the agreement with Georgia Power Company in the amount of \$50,000 was authorized as recommended.

#### ADAIR STREET TRAFFIC CALMING INITIATIVE.

Mr. Saxon recommended traffic calming measures for Adair Street between West Ponce de Leon Avenue and West Howard Avenue. He stated the Adair Street traffic calming initiative

was a recommendation from the planning process for the Atlanta Avenue Railroad Crossing Improvements project. He noted the recommendation did not include an extension of the sidewalk on the west side of the 300 block of Adair Street as it needed further study before a recommendation could be made to the City Commission.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Mr. Saxon stated the area was considered a school zone due to the proximity of St. Thomas More and was also a pedestrian zone.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Saxon stated the sidewalk would be in the right-of-way but would need easements for construction.

Commissioner Dusenbury stated that a sidewalk in that part of the block should be encouraged and requested further study be conducted.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Saxon stated speed tables would be installed to slow drivers down.

Commissioner Walsh stated the importance of looking into a complete sidewalk for better pedestrian safety in the area. She added there was a need for parking on the east side of the street.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Mr. Saxon stated there would be room for 10-12 parking spots.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Saxon stated there was not room for bump-outs on both sides of the street but they would be diagonally opposite to each other.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Mr. Saxon stated the parking would be on the east side of the street between Ponce de Leon Avenue and Cottonwood Place.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Mr. Saxon stated there would be signage for the parking area on Hibernia Avenue.

Mayor Garrett stated there was a need for better signage regarding where the permissible on-street parking ended. She added that continuation of sidewalks needed to be looked into.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Mr. Saxon stated DeKalb County should be done with all watershed projects before the completion of the project but there was no guarantee.

Commissioner Dusenbury expressed his appreciation for the street lighting to enhance pedestrian safety.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Walsh; and, all voting "aye," the traffic calming measures were approved as recommended.

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 AMENDED BUDGET.

Chief of Staff Meredith Roark recommended adoption of Resolution R-23-26 amending the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget. Ms. Roark stated the amendment included the General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, SPLOST Fund, Cemetery Capital Improvement Fund, 2013 URA Bond Fund, Public Facilities Authority Fund, Children & Youth Services Fund, E911 Telephone System Fund, Hotel/Motel Tax Fund and Tree Bank Fund budgets for fiscal year 2022-2023 to reflect changes in expenditures since the revised budget was adopted on June 20, 2023. She added this process formalized the cleanup of fiscal year-end budgets in a manner consistent with State law.

City Manager Arnold stated the Georgia Accounting Standards Board (GASB) encouraged updates due to their principles but most bottom line amounts remained the same.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Ms. Roark stated that a full explanation of the changes to the 2013 URA Bond Fund would be shared at a later date but it related to debt service. She noted that the proposed resolution was included on the evening's agenda so that in the instance that the changes did not satisfy the expectations of the auditors, staff would return on December 18 with a new resolution to amend the budget.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, City Manager Arnold stated the change in capital outlay amounts was likely due to the timing of the capital purchase.

On a motion by Commissioner Dusenbury; second by Mayor pro tem Powers; and, all voting "aye," Resolution R-23-26 was approved as recommended.

#### REQUESTS AND PETITIONS.

There were no requests or petitions.

#### REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.

Mayor Garrett read the December 12, 2023 Planning Commission agenda.

Mayor Garrett read the December 11, 2023 Zoning Board of Appeals agenda.

City Manager Arnold read the list of proposed appointments to resident Boards and Commissions.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, City Manager Arnold stated it was not required for joint representation on the Public Facilities authority and Legacy Decatur but it would be beneficial.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting "aye," the following appointments were made:

#### **Zoning Board of Appeals**

Andrew Rutledge      Re-appoint through 12/31/2026

#### **Better Together Advisory Board**

Jenn Ballentine      Appoint through 12/31/2026

Amy L. Lewis      Appoint through 12/31/2026

Yves-Rose Porcena      Re-appoint through 12/31/2026

Syreeta Campbell Re-appoint through 12/31/2024

**Planning Commission**

Marc Brambrut Appoint through 12/31/2026

Jenny Lipana Stein Appoint through 12/31/2026

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

Casimira Pittman Appoint through 12/31/2026

Charlie Slater Appoint through 12/31/2026

Abbey Griffith Re-appoint through 12/31/2026

**Lifelong Community Advisory Board**

Melinda Mobley Appoint through 12/31/2026

Arlene Schler Appoint through 12/31/2026

Rev. Marti Keller Re-appoint through 12/31/2026

Tim Hatton Re-appoint through 12/31/2026

**Public Facilities Authority**

Laurie Schwartz Appoint through 12/31/2026

**Environmental Sustainability Board**

Jane Lomas Appoint through 12/31/2026

Cynthia Curry Appoint through 12/31/2026

Juno Rogers Appoint through 12/31/2025

Payton Sobon Appoint through 12/31/2025

**Historic Preservation Commission**

Ashley McClure Appoint through 12/31/2026

Gabrielle Dean Re-appoint through 12/31/2026

**Legacy Decatur**

Laurie Schwartz Appoint through 12/31/2026.

City Manager Arnold presented the recommended 2024 City Commission schedule. City Manager Arnold explained that some dates were moved from Mondays due to federal holidays.

On a motion by Commissioner Walsh; second by Commissioner Dusenbury; and, all voting “aye,” the 2024 meeting schedule was approved as recommended.

Energy and Sustainability Manager David Nifong recommended authorization to file a joint application to intervene in the Georgia Power (GPC/Company) 2023 Interim Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) proceedings before the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC). Mr. Nifong stated on October 27, 2023, Georgia Power filed an interim IRP with the PSC, which requested approval for additional generation and storage capacity beyond the resources approved

by the PSC in the Company's 2022 IRP. He stated in its filing, Georgia Power cited unforeseen growth in anticipated electrical load and the need for immediate action to meet approaching capacity deficits as the reason for the update. He added staff from the cities of Atlanta, Decatur, and Savannah as well as Athens-Clarke and DeKalb Counties began discussing a potential joint intervention in the case as the Georgia Coalition of Local Governments (Coalition). He stated each local government in the Coalition had established ambitious municipal and community-wide clean energy goals, the feasibility of which were heavily influenced by Georgia Power's resource mix and the decisions made by the Georgia Public Service Commission.

In response to a question from Mayor Garrett, Mr. Nifong stated legal expertise was not anticipated in this round of proceedings.

City Manager Arnold stated the City Commission did not need to take action on this recommendation.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Mr. Nifong stated the virtual power plant was an alternative to provide energy and would lower the demand.

Commissioner Mayer stated her excitement for Decatur's bicentennial. She stated though it was a celebration it was good to acknowledge the blemishes on the City's history as it worked to be a more inclusive and equitable place.

Commissioner Dusenbury echoed the sentiments on Decatur's Bicentennial including the blemishes as well as making Decatur more equitable.

Commissioner Dusenbury stated it was great to see all the work for pedestrian safety and improvements to the downtown experience.

Commissioner Dusenbury stated he would like to hear some priorities from the boards and commissions leading into the City Commission retreat in January. He thanked all serving on boards and commissions for volunteering their time.

Commissioner Walsh echoed Commissioner Mayer's sentiments about the Bicentennial. She stated it was great to celebrate and be proud. She highlighted the intent of the work of the City to continue to make it better.

Commissioner Walsh thanked those serving on the boards and commissions for volunteering their time to the City.

Commissioner Walsh expressed her excitement around the progress on the track and field at Decatur Legacy Park.

Mayor pro tem Powers thanked those serving on the City's resident boards and commissions for their work and dedication.

Mayor pro tem Powers announced the City had been recognized as a UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative candidate city.

Mayor pro tem Powers stated the Hometown Heroes would be announced at the Decatur Business Association holiday meeting on December 5.

Mayor Garrett thanked everyone for a great meeting to come together and get the work done.

Mayor Garrett stated she served on a panel for creative affordable housing for the Metro Atlanta Mayors Association.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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Meredith Roark  
City Clerk