



**January 9, 2024 Meeting  
MINUTES**

**Decatur City Hall  
City Commission Meeting Room  
509 North McDonough Street**

Members Present: Conor McNally (Chair), Noah Peeters (Vice Chair), David Harry, Tony Leung, Darren Comer, and Linda Curry  
Members Absent: Lisa Turner

**Call to Order.** Mr. McNally called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

**Unfinished Business.**

Approval of Minutes of November 10, 2023, meeting.

*On a motion by Mr. Harry, and seconded by Mr. Peeters, the minutes were approved as presented.*

**Agenda Action Items.**

**111 Church Street Redevelopment.** Ms. Threadgill stated that an application for a conditional use permit was received by the City for the development of a .37-acre site in downtown Decatur at 111 Church Street with a 12-unit townhome project. Ms. Threadgill explained that townhomes in the C-2 zoning district require a conditional use permit. Additionally, the maximum building height for townhomes is 40ft, however the applicant has proposed a building height of 50ft. An increase in building height requires a special exception. She stated that the review process for such applications require that the DDA provide a review and recommendation, which would be forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Commission for consideration during their March hearing schedule. City staff has reviewed the project and recommends support of the applications, which is reflected in the draft resolution included in the agenda packet.

Andrew Rutledge, Principal of Office of Design Decatur, presented the proposal for the construction of 12 townhomes on a property with a total acreage of 0.53, equivalent to 23,071 ft<sup>2</sup>. He stated although there is a math discrepancy on the site plan, the proposed lot coverage of 16,149 ft<sup>2</sup> does not exceed code maximum of 70 percent of lot area. He is also seeking a height variance due to the suitability for roof decks. The maximum height requirement is 40 ft., but the final height is expected to be approximately 46 ft., primarily attributed to the gabled units. The materials for the building will include true hard coat stucco and cementitious siding.

In response to a question by Mr. Harry, Mr. Rutledge stated that two units would be set aside to comply with the inclusionary housing ordinance. Ms. Threadgill added that for a for-sale product, the ordinance requires the sale to be offered to households making no more than 120% of the area median income (AMI). For a rental product, the unit would be made available to households making no more than 80% of the AMI.

Mr. McNally raised concerns about the pricing of the two affordable units, comparing them to the highest pricing point in the cottage court. He pointed out that the 120% AMI threshold would likely mean prices below \$400,000. Mr. McNally stressed the importance of having two affordable units in the proposal.

Mr. Rutledge estimated the cost of the affordable units to be in the high threes and noted the financial challenge for developers due to construction costs.

In response to a question by Mr. McNally, Mr. Rutledge responded that the current plan is for three bedrooms in each unit. He explained that on the first level, there could be either a live-work space or a mother-in-law suite, and on the upper level, there are typically two bedrooms. Due to space constraints, it might end up being a two-bedroom configuration, but they are aiming for a three-bedroom layout.

In response to questions by Mr. Comer, Mr. Rutledge confirmed that units nine and ten on the plan were designated as the inclusionary units. Mr. Rutledge confirmed that the intention was to sell, not rent, each of the units. Mr. Rutledge clarified that the design included fireplaces for the roof deck at the exterior units. Mr. Rutledge further explained that the roof deck has its own roof system to handle water runoff.

Mr. McNally pointed out that the inclusionary units have single-car garages that are 15ft wide and include rooftop decks. The design makes them look like a single unit despite being two separate ones.

In response to a question by Mr. Leung, Mr. Rutledge confirmed that the two end units have an attached garage, with the bottom floor being a garage and the top floor being living space, thus these two units are the largest within the development.

In response to a question by Mr. Comer, Ms. Threadgill stated the vehicular access into the development is considered a driveway, not a street. Mr. McNally confirmed that every unit faces a public street. Mr. Rutledge added that the site design accommodates the 150 hose lay, ensuring that a fire truck wouldn't need to enter the private driveway.

In response to questions by Mr. McNally, Mr. Rutledge stated the greenspace at the rear of the property is a private amenity and satisfies the requirement for open space for residents. He confirmed the development would not be gated.

Mr. McNally stated that the context of nearby buildings suggests the proposed building height would be transitional between the nearby 80 ft. Arlo apartment building and the one- and two-story buildings across Church Street. Mr. McNally noted that, when viewed from College Avenue on the other side, only the top 25 feet would be visible above the grade.

Mr. Comer added that the railroad tracks are approximately 20 feet above their site grade as well.

In response to questions by Mr. McNally, Mr. Rutledge estimated that construction would likely begin at the end of 2024 or early 2025, considering the permitting process. Mr. Rutledge explained that they typically pre-sell one building and start construction on another, selling units as they progress. If units are not sold before completion, there might be a pause before moving on to the next phase. The exact phasing would depend on sales and is yet to be discussed in detail.

In response to a question by Mr. Comer, Mr. Rutledge responded the ceiling heights would be 9 feet 6 inches on the first level, 10 feet 6 inches on the main level (living room, dining room, kitchen), 9 feet 6 inches on the third level, and varied heights under the roof line on the top floor.

Ms. Threadgill stated that the draft resolution includes further considerations by the DDA that relate to the location of the townhomes within downtown Decatur, and that the site is well suited for high-

density residential townhomes. The site is located just south of the core commercial district in an area that is not well-suited for commercial retail due to lack of visibility. The addition of residential units at this location will serve to support the existing retail in the core commercial district and nearby corridors.

*On a motion by Mr. Harry and seconded by Mr. Leung, a resolution was approved that supports a conditional use permit for the development of a .37-acre site in downtown Decatur at 111 Church Street with a 12-unit townhome project and supports a special exception to increase the building height from 40 ft. (maximum) to 50 ft. (proposed).*

## **Reports and Other Business.**

**FY23-24 Q2 Financial Report.** Ms. Threadgill presented the financial report as of December 31st, comparing the income and expenditures.

Mr. McNally acknowledged that they are halfway through the fiscal year and generally on track.

**DDA Annual Retreat is February 9, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. – Noon.** Mr. McNally reminded the board about the upcoming retreat scheduled for next month at Legacy Park. Ms. Threadgill stated that Linda Harris would be the facilitator for the retreat. Ms. Threadgill also added the importance of considering the city commission's annual work plan and the downtown master plan in shaping the DDA's work plan.

**City Commission Work Session is scheduled for March 18 at 6:00 p.m.** Ms. Threadgill added that this is where the DDA will present its accomplishments and work plan for the upcoming year and mentioned that it's an opportunity for dialogue with the City Commission.

## **Adjourn.**

*On a motion by Mr. Peeters, seconded by Mr. Comer, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 a.m.*

Consistent with the requirements of O.C.G.A. §50-14-1(e)(2)(B) these minutes were approved at the next scheduled meeting on March 8, 2024, and made part of the record.

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Angela Threadgill, Executive Director