**November 17, 2023 Decatur ESB Meeting Minutes**

Meeting began at 9:05am.

**Attendance**

* **City of Decatur:** David Nifong (Energy and Sustainability Manager), Cara Scharer (Assistant City Manager for Public Works), Allison Ericson (Urban Naturalist)
* **Board Members (#):** Michael Black (chair), Annie Archbold, Mike Barcik, Allison Ericson, Andrew Hardin, Alex Stewart
* **Others in Attendance**
  + **Organization**: Mariah Lopez, Decatur Farmers Market Manager with Community Farmers Markets

1. **Board Management**
   1. **Approval of Minutes:** Mike Barcik moved to approve the meeting minutes from the October meeting. Michael Black seconded. Approved unanimously.
   2. **Staff Updates (David Nifong)**
      1. Last Thursday, David submitted to Energy Futures Grant with other cities and GT. We will hear back Jan/Feb and start this summer. Decatur would receive the majority of the award to hire consultants for plans. Sub-awards for community engagement, printing, admin costs, and to prepare for the 2025 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).
      2. GA Power filed an interim IRP requesting additional natural gas capacity. Meet on Nov. 27 to determine if cities will intervene in proceedings.
      3. Started process of receiving Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program award.
      4. Community Energy Fellows will be coming onboard. 1 year term for fellow from Oak Ridge National Lab.
      5. Submitted application to Georgia Tech for public-facing resilience dashboard for city, school. Part of the Partnership for Inclusive Innovation.
      6. Working towards climate reduction grant, a coalition of cities trying to get electric emergency vehicles.
      7. Stormwater Masterplan Updates and Watershed Improvement Planning (Cara Scharer)
         1. Three ongoing Stormwater Masterplan projects. Projects are running in parallel and experiencing similar problems: budget requested was just for stormwater pipes, but not residual costs like road repair. So the budget is much lower than the actual cost.
         2. The City is starting on the fourth project on N. Decatur road. It’s a high priority project and requires collaboration with DeKalb County. The city has held five community engagement meetings. The city will soon begin proceeding with design and construction.
         3. For these projects, the city needs to obtain a right-of-way temporary easement construction permit, which takes more time than anticipated.
         4. All projects incorporate green infrastructure when possible.
         5. The Derrydown sidewalk project just had a community engagement meeting. The city is implementing pervious sidewalks and green infrastructure.
         6. South Columbia project Phase 1 construction is done, phase 2 is in design.
         7. There is an opportunity to use leftover GA EPD 319 funds for green infrastructure projects. Cara reached out to Joy Hinkle at the EPD several months ago, but hasn't received an update. Michael Black is going to see if he can help get a response.
         8. In terms of funding, Cara has identified a number of projects (PATH plans, WIPs, other projects), and is now working to identify opportunities for funding.
         9. 319H funding capped at $400k. Stream restoration projects are millions, so need grant is stacking. Watershed Improvement Plant (WIP) is focused on water quality, so the city will work with ARC.
         10. In the 70s, stormwater was undersized, adding to water quality issues. If WIP only focused on water quality, it may not address all the issues, so any plan needs to be all-encompassing.
         11. Mike B. brought up concerns about stormwater capture under Legacy Park track. Cara’s response is that it has been worked on. The infiltration rate is very poor so stormwater detention and release under track may not work as well. Curve started at 98. Down to 80 with current designs.
         12. Annie requested the city look at Glenn Creek Nature Preserve.
         13. WIP is not a bad idea but only focusing on water-quality may not get the whole picture.
         14. Cara suggested the possibility of capturing BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities Program) funding from GEMA (GA Emergency Management Agency). She is setting up meetings with GEMA contacts for potentially a larger project opportunity to coordinate WIP, 319, GEMA funds, etc. She needs 6 weeks to do more research and make a recommendation.
         15. Michael mentioned that there are lots of federal funds potentially available and asked if we can utilize them for these WIP projects. Cara said there’s a potential to do so, but we need to look beyond just a WIP and think about the bigger picture, including bank erosion, volume, plant species, etc.
         16. Cara wants to do a comprehensive study for all of Decatur. David N. expressed support for starting with just one watershed first, then using that as a roadmap for the other.
         17. The challenge with working on Shoal is that DeKalb is upsizing the sewer lines, which will reduce Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs). So we might as well wait until they’re done to start there. Peavine receives downtown SSOs.
   3. **Board Updates - None**
2. **Board Business**
   1. **FY 2024-2025 Budget Priorities**
      1. Alex began drafting [a letter to the commissioners](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18c0xD2EEfZQlpq0ATtdCl1LrPwO3MuuiuupXuh_QZHE/edit?usp=sharing) on behalf of the board, justifying the board’s budget requests.
      2. EV Charging Stations
         1. David meeting this afternoon with a vendor to work on pricing and scope
         2. 2025 charging stations will need to collect data so the electricity can be taxed.
         3. Likely moving ahead buying fewer, more expensive chargers.
         4. David is getting a quote soon so we will be better informed on the budget ask.
         5. Last year, $120k was approved for EV charging stations.
         6. The big picture: The city has 220 fleet vehicles, including heavy-duty vehicles. The Clean Energy Plan recommends one charger per vehicle. David is focusing on light to medium vehicles, so we would need 30-40, not including emergency vehicles.
         7. The technology has been slow so there are not many city vehicle models available as electric. Next year it will be more feasible to get more electric vehicles.
      3. Public Education and Earth Day - $10k total
      4. Nature Center
         1. Rename the project Education Center.
         2. Alison: The need for this building is healing injured animals, educate students. So all that’s needed is a presentation area and a back area to build out animal homes and wash stations. It would also serve as an opportunity to showcase green infrastructure. The main education center for Legacy.
         3. The city residents said the highest priority in Legacy is natural walking trails, so this could also be the place to grab a trail map.
         4. Annie recommends naming the building in honor of someone who contributed to sustainability in Decatur: Peggy Marist.
         5. Alison and David will talk to Cara about the budget for the feasibility study.
      5. Renovize
         1. Mike requested $150k to begin projects
         2. Beacon Hill was not selected for the GA Draw Down Grant
         3. David says the EECBG includes $100k for a campaign administrator
         4. David is requesting 2 staff support positions.
         5. David says once federal rebates start flowing from the state, then we will be able to utilize that funding.
         6. David thinks getting the Community Energy Fund established is the priority for next year. He believes the $100k plus another $290k that has been allocated for a pilot (total $390k) is sufficient to get Renovize started.
      6. David has $50k allocated for heat mapping.
      7. Timing: The city submits budget numbers in Feb. In the next meeting, David feels we should focus on project planning for 2024 instead of hard budget numbers.
   2. **2024 Projects**
      1. The Parks Dep will present at the ESB meeting in January
      2. Other projects discussion tabled for time
   3. **Education and Outreach Budget** - discussed during budget priorities section
   4. **Decatur Farmers Market**
      1. After a discussion between Alex and the Community Farmers Market group, Mariah came to the ESB meeting to discuss in more detail with the rest of the board.
      2. The initial meeting was to address the [Downtown Master Plan](https://issuu.com/mksk/docs/decatur_town_center_plan) comments requested access to a farmer’s market downtown.
      3. Challenges with the current Decatur Farmers Market location at the baptist church:
         1. Community Farmers Markets accepts food stamps at the market. However, you don’t get as many EBT customers that you might if you held it downtown.
         2. Safety concerns with traffic, especially because of ongoing construction of roads near church.
         3. Annie: very few vendors and lack of quality of vendors at church. No vegetables. Most of them have gone to the Avondale market.
         4. The weekday market instead of a weekend market creates a challenge for some vendors. The business model is that at the end of each year, CFM invites new businesses to apply. Each vendor pays a fee each week they attend.
      4. Alison: since the Oliver House is across from high school, holding the market in the open grass field at West Trinity and Commerce will help access for those folks.
      5. Mike B.: Grant Park market is massive. What are they doing differently?
      6. Mariah: Concerns to address if held in the field are that you need access to bathrooms, electricity, parking lots, cleanliness (dog waste), and vendor offloading area. There are a number of logistical questions that would need to be addressed before it’s moved.
      7. Annie suggested that the city could shuttle people from downtown or the Oliver House to the church.
      8. Alison: Jenna wanted to do a shuttle for the farmers market before.
      9. CFM works with a professor at Emory on data collection. Collecting end of year data right now. How people get there, how many people, vendor sales, etc.
      10. The challenge to retaining farmers who sell produce at the Decatur location is that people don’t buy the produce. That’s why CFM is always looking for programs to increase demand for produce (how to prepare food, eat more fruits and veggies).
      11. Mike B. suggested working out a deal to get temp. Power from CSD or the housing authority next to the field.
      12. Alison suggested moving the date to Sunday. Mariah stated that the challenge with Sunday is that other large markets happen Sundays.
      13. Alison: a black farmer used to park at the housing authority once a week and sell produce. That was a very popular event. Part of Truly Living Well.
      14. Mariah reminded us that their mission is to build community. Of course there is a need to make money to be sustainable, but the mission is to build community.
      15. Mike B. recommended tying it into CSA delivery.
      16. Next steps: Alex is working with Mariah and CFM to develop a survey targeting city residents north of the tracks to ask when and where they would like a farmers market, and what they would buy.
      17. **ESB City Work Session - topic tabled for time**
3. **Public Comment: None**
4. **Meeting adjourned at 11 AM.**