**Dec. 15, 2023 Decatur ESB Meeting Minutes**

Meeting began at 9:07 AM.

**Attendance**

* **City of Decatur:** Allison Ericson (Urban Naturalist), Cara Scharer (Assistant City Manager for Public Works)
* **Board Members (6):** Michael Black (chair), Steve Blackburn, Annie Archbold, Mike Barcik, Andrew Hardin, Alex Stewart
* **Others in Attendance**
  + Peter Lindsey, Decatur resident

1. **Board Management**
   1. **Approval of Minutes:** Mike Barcik moved to approve the meeting minutes from the November meeting. Annie seconded. Approved unanimously.
   2. **Staff Updates**
      1. **Green Stormwater Infrastructure & Watershed Improvement Plans (WIPs) (Cara Scharer)** 
         1. For the project at Heron & Champlain, there may be an opportunity for a GPD 319 H Grant.
         2. EPD hasn’t forgotten about Cara’s requested project grants, but EPD and EPA are experiencing administrative challenges, which means we won’t have an answer for 6-12 months.
         3. The grant is for a 60-40 match, but the risk is we wait and not get it.
         4. In 2024,EPD is removing the $400k limit.
         5. Cara began working more closely with Joy Hinkle at EPD, and has expressed to Joy in a pre-application meeting that we’re interested in applying for this grant if there’s a realistic opportunity to receive the funds, but have not officially applied.
         6. At the last Decatur city commission meeting, Commissioner Dusenbury mentioned wanting to hear from different boards regarding budget initiatives. So we should make sure this is expressed in our letter.
         7. Cara recommended picking a priority between the Clean Energy Plan and a Watershed Improvement Plan. The Board discussed requesting both because it’s important for the commissioners to know what the Board’s concerns are, but that we will prioritize the Clean Energy Plan higher.
         8. Regarding a WIP, Cara believes the strategy should be to focus on Peavine because Shoal is undergoing DeKalb Sanitary Improvements. With the additional disturbance, the data collected during a WIP will not be accurate to its typical conditions. Visit DWM (DeKalb Watershed Management) website for timelines. Plans are at 90% - R2T is the consultant.
         9. Steve believes now is the time to apply for GPD and also the South River Watershed Alliance grant program. Peavine Creek and Tanyard Creek Community Garden is in Parks & Rec. Master Plan. Hidden Cove Park is not.
         10. A typical WIP includes 9 points (per Steve), but we may also want funding for community education for when the creek is on private property.
         11. Cara will continue working with Joy and the EPD on grant funding. Meanwhile, the ESB plans to request funding from the city for WIPs.
   3. **Board Updates**
      1. **Heat Mapping:** The Board is concerned that the data analysis is not moving fast enough, and concerns that we don’t have expert input on planning for the best solution following the data analysis. Needs to be discussed with David Nifong.
2. **Board Business**
   1. **FY 2024-25 Budget Priorities**
      1. The Board spent time working on a [**letter**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18c0xD2EEfZQlpq0ATtdCl1LrPwO3MuuiuupXuh_QZHE/edit?usp=sharing) to send to the City, outlining the Board’s budget priorities.
      2. **Legacy Park Environmental Center**
         1. Michael mentioned that The Amphibian Foundation is interested in a space at Legacy and has people who could care for animals there. Mark Mandica would be the contact for that.
         2. Allison has a new idea for the proposed Environmental Center. Her proposed project idea is that the dock at Legacy should be fully-accessible and that the park become a truly inclusive outdoor recreation area and a center for accessible outdoor activities not only in Decatur, but in Atlanta.
         3. The board discussed the service project at Sweetwater Creek State Park to make trails accessible by all-terrain wheelchairs and that it’s not that challenging to make the trails accessible for those wheelchairs. It could be done at Legacy as well. There is potential for funding from corporate sponsors to be involved in the project.
         4. Mike discussed how there is a trail, boardwalk, and wetlands for the blind along the Chattahoochee. That could serve as additional guidance for this project.
         5. With this change in project scope, there is a potential to use the larger Laundry Building instead.
         6. Allison will reach out to Keri Powell to get her involved in helping.
      3. **Renovize/Community Energy Fund:** With David out sick from the meeting, Michael will meet with Mike and David Nifong to finish the final budget request for the Community Energy Fund.
      4. **Vote:** Annie moves and Mike seconds to send the budget requests letter (once completed) to the city. It is approved unanimously.
   2. **2024 Projects**: remaining projects discussion postponed due to time
   3. **Education and Outreach Budget**: finalized as $10,000 in the board’s letter to the city
   4. **ESB Work Session**
      1. The Board needs to prepare for a work session with the city commission in January.
      2. Michael will meet with Alex and Annie on Jan 2. To plan for the work session, with the focus on Climate Action.
   5. **New Member Onboarding and 2024 Meeting Schedule**
      1. After reviewing a scheduling poll, considering the available time windows of the new youth members, and discussion of the Board’s availability, Annie moved and Mike seconded to move the regular meeting times to the fourth Monday of each month, 4-6 PM. The goal will be to remain in the Rec. Center. The motion was approved unanimously.
      2. The first meeting of 2024 will be Monday, January 22, 4-6pm.
      3. Since Michael will be rolling off the board after this meeting, the board voted on a new Chair. Alex was elected the new Chair. A new position, Co-Chair, was created in the event that the Chair is unable to fulfill their duties. Annie was elected Co-Chair.
3. **Public Comment:** 
   1. Noise Ordinance
      1. Peter Lindsay is concerned about leaf blowers providing 3 types of pollution: air, noise, environmental degradation.
      2. GA Law prevents ban on leaf blowers, so the approach should be on noise pollution.
      3. Leaf blowers operate at 85-110 decibels and hearing loss occurs at 70. He cannot work from home because of the noise.
      4. Currently there is no noise limit from 7 AM - 10 PM in SFH and multi-family zoned areas.
      5. 70% of Decatur voters support a noise ordinance.
      6. Peter suggests 75 db max.
      7. Peter can’t be at the next meeting. He’s going to work with Mike on a proposal to put in front of ESB.
4. **Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.**