

**City of Decatur
Planning Commission**

**December 12, 2023 Regular Meeting
MINUTES**

Decatur City Hall
City Commission Room
509 North McDonough Street

Members Present: Harold Buckley, Jr. (Chair), Rachel Cogburn, Jason Friedlander, Joe Greco, John McFarland
Member Absent: Greg Chilik

Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Buckley confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He provided introductions and delivered an overview of the procedural process for the meeting.

Unfinished Business.

Approval of Minutes from October 10, 2023 regularly scheduled meeting. *On a motion by Mr. Friedlander, and seconded by Mr. McFarland, the minutes were approved as presented; Mr. Greco having abstained from the vote.*

New Business. None.

Other Business.

Discussion of Storm Water Master Plan Policy Recommendations. Assistant City Manager of Public Works Cara Scharer and City Project Civil Engineer Jennings Bell presented an overview of the Storm Water Master Plan adopted in December 2020. They stated that the 2004 Storm Water Master Plan was focused on improvements to Downtown Decatur, whereas the 2020 plan recommendations focus on the City's residential neighborhoods. The recommended capital projects stretch across 20 years and rely on storm water utility fees to implement the projects.

Ms. Scharer stated there are policy recommendations that have been implemented, such as updates to the storm water utility fees and development codes related to lot coverage. However, there are a few policy recommendations that are outstanding and are yet to be implemented, such as green infrastructure requirements for new developments and developing a method for acquisition of private infrastructure that serves a public benefit. She stated that currently, if a storm water pipe traverses a city road, a private parcel and then a city parcel, the extent of pipe on private property is privately owned. Therefore, the section of pipe is the responsibility of the private property owner and the City does not have legal access. A change that would create a method of acquisition would also facilitate several capital projects that affect residential neighborhoods irrespective of where the pipe falls.

In response to a question by Mr. McFarland, Mr. Bell stated that the term "Natural undeveloped state" mentioned in Note 1 of Section 9.3.3 – Applicability Table, was not defined in Article 12 but has been interpreted as undeveloped land, unmodified by buildings or earth moving equipment.

In response to a question by Mr. McFarland, Mr. Bell stated that in the development codes prior to the amendment, most all residential projects that disturbed around 4,000 square feet or less and did not

exceed the maximum lot coverage were exempt from storm water improvements. Under the new ordinance, disturbance of 500 square feet or more will be subject to on-site storm water controls per the development table that divides projects based on square feet of disturbance. Therefore, if a project results in 0.55 cfs or greater, the whole storm water ordinance is applicable and all mitigation improvements must be implemented.

In response to a question by Mr. McFarland, Mr. Bell stated that the difference between references to the first one and the first two inches of rainfall is whether a stream buffer is applicable. When a development impacts a stream buffer, the staff recommends that impacts be mitigated through management of the first two inches of rainfall. Mr. Bell stated that under the prior development ordinance mitigation within the stream buffer was for the first one inch of rainfall. However, the new development ordinance requires all applicable development projects to mitigate the first one inch of rainfall. Therefore, the recommendation is for stream buffer-impact projects to capture more water and infiltrate more to be more protective than projects outside the stream buffer. Mitigation measures within the stream buffer is of the purview of the City Manager, per city code.

In response to a question by Mr. McFarland, Mr. Bell stated that a storm water mitigation has not yet been established, as referenced in Section 9.3.5.E - Stream Channel Protection.

In response to a question by Mr. McFarland, Ms. Threadgill stated that the lot coverage table of Section 2.14 and Section 3.3 were developed out the zoning task force more than a decade ago and incorporated into the Unified Development Ordinance. The table accounts for allowable lot coverage for lots less than the standard 9,000 square feet.

Mr. Farland expressed his concern that a smaller lot shouldn't be allowed more absolute lot coverage than a larger lot and suggested changes that would result in no more than 3,600 square feet of lot coverage at the upper limit of each of these Lot Size ranges:

Lot Size	Current	Proposed
6,500 to 6,999 SF	52% max/lot	51% max/lot
7,000 to 7,499 SF	50% max/lot	48% max/lot
7,500 to 7,999 SF	47% max/lot	45% max/lot
8,000 to 8,499 SF	45% max/lot	42% max/lot
8,500 to 8,999 SF	43% max/lot	40% max/lot
9,000 SF or more	40% max/lot	40% max/lot

There being no further discussion on the storm water master plan topic, Mr. Buckley moved to the next agenda item.

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December 12, 2023 Regular Meeting Agenda, cont'd

Approval of 2024 Meeting Schedule. *On a motion by Mr. Greco, seconded by Mr. Friedlander, the Planning Commission approved the 2024 meeting schedule as presented.*

Adjourn. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

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

(draft)

Angela Threadgill
Planning and Economic Development Director
Acting Secretary to the Planning Commission