

MINUTES

DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
March 2, 2009
City Hall: 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Floyd called the Regular Meeting of the Decatur City Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 2, 2009.

PRESENT: Mayor Floyd, Mayor pro tem Baskett, Commissioners Boykin, Cunningham, and Kemp; and, City Manager Merriss.

MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of February 17, 2009 were approved as amended on a motion by Commissioner Kemp, second by Commissioner Boykin and all present voting “aye”.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS.

There were no comments from the public.

BID AWARD – GLENLAKE PARK IMPROVEMENTS.

Deputy City Manager Hugh Saxon recommended establishment of a construction budget and award of a contract for the construction of Glenlake Park Improvements to the low bidder, Sports Turf Company of Whitesburg, in the amount of \$1,493,052. Mr. Saxon stated that the construction was part of the bond projects program and would complete the remainder of the projects included in the first phase of park improvements. Mr. Saxon stated that the recommendation incorporated two alternates including, construction of a pedestrian bridge and trail along the eastern side of the park and reconstruction of the upper ball field off Norris Street. Mr. Saxon stated that the work would include stream restoration, bioretention and storm drainage facilities, new trails through and around the park, a new multiuse upper ball field, improved dog park, improvements to the main drive and additional parking, a new basketball court, benches and litter containers.

Mr. Saxon stated that the recommended scope of work was part of the overall Glenlake Park improvement budget of \$3 million. Mr. Saxon stated that the other major park improvement presently under construction was the new bathhouse with a budget of \$770,000. Mr. Saxon noted that with design fees and miscellaneous expenses, the total park improvement budget was about \$2,850,000.

City Manager Merriss noted that a recommendation would likely be presented later in the year regarding new technology for tennis court surfacing that would significantly improve the courts, alleviating the need to relocate them.

In response to a question from Mayor Floyd, Mr. Saxon stated that he hoped the improvements would be completed by the end of 2009 but that completion of the pool bathhouse was scheduled so that it would be open for use on Memorial Day weekend.

Mr. Saxon noted that during construction, access to the park would be limited to the pool and the tennis center.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Baskett, City Manager Merriss stated that as long as the cost of construction stayed within the established project budget that Mr. Saxon could authorize any changes that needed to be made but at the completion of the project, he would return to the City Commission to seek an amendment to the adopted project budget.

Commissioner Cunningham stated that she was excited to learn more about the new court resurfacing technology.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kemp, Mr. Saxon stated that Church Street would be narrowed from the Decatur Square Condominiums to the midpoint of the 900 block.

Mr. Saxon stated that the City was receiving proposals for striping and traffic calming for Church Street on Friday, March 6, 2009 and that a proposal would be brought to the City Commission for consideration at the March 16, 2009 regular meeting. Mr. Saxon noted that he would be mailing a letter to property owners in the area explaining the changes.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kemp, Mr. Saxon stated in regards to pedestrian safety the existing crosswalks along Church Street would remain and that an alternate route for participants in the Safe Routes to School program would be implemented.

In response to a question from Commissioner Boykin, Mr. Saxon stated that the narrowing of the street was a temporary measure.

City Manager Merriss stated that the long term plan as included in the Community Transportation Plan called for a narrowing of Church Street and that this temporary situation would be a good gauge for how permanent changes could be implemented.

On a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, second by Commissioner Boykin, and all voting "aye", the City Commission approved the construction budget and award of contract to low bidder, Sports Turf Company of Whitesburg, Georgia for construction of Glenlake Park Improvements.

REQUESTS AND PETITIONS.

Mayor Floyd and Commissioner Cunningham recused themselves from the meeting¹. Mayor Floyd relinquished the chair to Mayor pro tem Baskett.

City Manager Merriss recommended that the City Commission authorize the City Manager to negotiate an agreement with LaCour Incorporated for participation in ZiptoGreen.Com. City Manager Merriss stated that ZiptoGreen.com was a web-based service whose purpose would be to assist consumers in reducing their home energy consumption.

Julia Carter, CEO of LaCour Incorporated, stated that her plan was to launch the ZiptoGreen.com website on Earth Day 2009 and that the site would be the first one-stop, comprehensive resource located online for home energy reduction plans that would enable users to create a personal plan and connect them to local and online resources to help them achieve their goals. Ms. Carter stated initial efforts would be focused on engaging cities that had signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. Ms. Carter stated that she would like for the City of Decatur to become ZiptoGreen's "founding city" so as to encourage other governments to promote energy efficiency to their constituents.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kemp, Ms. Carter stated that the website would contain links to products and services but currently the plan did not include having advertisements.

In response to a question from Commissioner Boykin, Ms. Carter stated that with the City's participation, ZiptoGreen would gain a better understanding of how local governments could participate in the project.

Commissioner Boykin expressed concern over ZiptoGreen's use of the Decatur logo and having a direct association from the City to a private services company.

Mayor pro tem Baskett expressed concern about partnering with a for-profit corporation and stated that he would feel more comfortable if the City website did not contain a direct link to ZiptoGreen.com's website.

Commissioner Kemp also indicated she was concerned.

Ralph Avallone, President of the National Green Energy Council, stated that he understood the City Commission's reservations but noted that some of the best public-private partnerships began in small communities.

¹ Mayor Floyd and Commissioner Cunningham declared a conflict of interest in regards to the ZiptoGreen because of personal and financial involvement in the project.

City Manager Merriss stated that if the City Commission was willing to further explore the proposal, that the Commissioners could agree by consensus to authorize the City Manager to continue to negotiate an agreement.

Commissioner Boykin stated that he was always cautious about use of the City's logo but more so in this case since the City Commission did not have a full understanding of all of the potential issues.

By consensus², the City Commission directed the City Manager to pursue further discussion of the proposal and provide an agreement for consideration.

Mayor Floyd and Commissioner Cunningham rejoined the meeting. Mayor Floyd resumed the duties to chair the meeting.

REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.

Mayor Floyd read the Zoning Board of Appeals agenda for March 9, 2009.

Planning Director Amanda Thompson stated that the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) had met and was already hard at work. Ms. Thompson introduced the Board Chair, Gary Garrett.

Mr. Garrett stated that the ESB recommended adoption of a resolution supporting the Atlanta Local Food Initiative's plan for Atlanta's Sustainable Food Future. Mr. Garrett stated that the goals of the plan were to increase the supply of locally grown food, increase the consumption of locally grown food and increase the accessibility of locally grown food. Mr. Garrett recognized that the City had already supported such goals through its support of the Oakhurst Community Garden, by providing garden plots at Scott Park and by providing zoning regulations that allowed backyard gardens.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kemp, Mr. Garrett stated that Atlanta Local Food Initiative was a non-for-profit entity.

Mayor pro tem Baskett thanked Mr. Garrett for offering an update on ESB activities.

Commissioner Kemp noted that she liked the idea of this project.

Mayor Floyd stated that this was a great idea and commended the ESB for their involvement.

Commissioner Boykin requested that the City start using containers made from recyclable content instead of Styrofoam.

² Mayor Floyd and Commissioner Cunningham recused themselves and did not participate in discussion or decision regarding this item.

Commissioner Boykin stated that the Georgia Bicycle Ride to the Capitol would be March 3, 2009 with routes leaving from Decatur and Roswell. Commissioner Boykin noted that several elected officials from around the area would be participating as would a group of Glennwood Academy students.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Baskett, Commissioner Boykin stated that the purpose of the ride was to raise awareness for alternative modes of transportation and was jointly sponsored by the Metropolitan Atlanta Mayors Association and the Georgia Municipal Association.

Commissioner Kemp stated that the residents of Avery Street would be able to voice their concerns about installation of sidewalks at the March 16, 2009 meeting.

Commissioner Kemp noted that the DeKalb Historical Center had honored Mayor Emerita Elizabeth Wilson at a luncheon on February 26, 2009.

Commissioner Cunningham commended Mayor Wilson for her recognition.

Commissioner Cunningham thanked the individuals who selected to interview to serve as a volunteer on the Active Living Advisory Board.

Commissioner Cunningham commended the public safety and public works staff for their quick response to the hazardous weather on Sunday.

Mayor Floyd noted that he gave an address to the graduating class from DeVry University.

Mayor Floyd stated that he and City Manager Merriss had traveled to Washington, D.C. on February 25, 2009 and met with Senator Isakson and staff of Senator Chambliss and representatives Johnson and Lewis to discuss local issues and the City's commitment to complete streets and the Community Transportation Plan.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Peggy Merriss
Acting City Clerk