

MINUTES

DECATUR CITY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
May 18, 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, May 18, 2009.

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

MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of May 4, 2009 were approved on a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, second by Commissioner Kemp, and all voting “aye”.

PRESENTATION FROM DECATUR ARTS ALLIANCE.

Decatur Arts Alliance Executive Director Angie Macon extended an invitation to the 21st Annual Decatur Arts Festival held during Memorial Day weekend. Ms. Macon thanked the City Commission for its support throughout the years. Ms. Macon stated that the festival poster was created by Decatur artist Judy Lynn and had been unveiled on May 7th. Ms. Macon noted that the fine arts exhibition opened May 19th at 5:00 p.m. and that specific activities geared towards children and teens would be held at the Decatur Recreation Center on Saturday, May 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF THE REVISED 2008-2009 AND ESTIMATED 2009-2010 BUDGET.

City Manager Merriss presented the Revised 2008-2009 and Proposed 2009-2010 budgets to the City Commission. City Manager Merriss reviewed the budget message and announced the public hearing dates on the budget and millage rates. City Manager Merriss acknowledged Assistant City Manager Andrea Arnold, Management Analyst Meredith Roark, the City’s department/division heads and the Accounting staff for their hard work on the budget document. City Manager Merriss stated that City ordinance required at least one public hearing. City Manager Merriss recommended that the City Commission establish two public hearing dates at their regular meetings on June 1, 2009 and June 15, 2009.

In response to a question from Mayor Floyd, City Manager Merriss stated that tonight the City Commission would be requested to adopt tentative millage rates and then consideration of setting the actual millage rates would be scheduled for the June 15, 2009 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ACTION ITEMS.

There were no comments from the public.

ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE 2009 MILLAGE RATES.

City Manager Merriss explained that according to information supplied by the DeKalb County Tax Assessors office, the City's real property digest had increased by approximately 2.8%. City Manager Merriss stated that the approved 2008 combined millage rate for the general fund, bond fund, downtown development authority fund and the capital improvements fund was 13.035 mills. To fund the proposed 2009-2010 budgets, City Manger Merriss recommended that the 2009 millage rates remain the same with the General Fund millage rate at 10.215 mills; the Capital Improvement Fund millage at 1 mill; the Debt Service Fund millage at 1.44 mills; and, the Downtown Development Authority Fund at 0.38 mills, for a total of 13.035 mills.

City Manager Merriss noted that according to the information received from the City Schools of Decatur Superintendent, it had been recommended to the Board of Education to retain the School Fund rate at 19.90 mills.

City Manager Merriss added that in 1999, the Georgia General Assembly enacted what was commonly referred to as "Truth in Taxation" legislation and that the purpose of the legislation was to require local governments to either rollback the millage rate equal to the total value of reassessments on real property or to provide advertisements, notices and public hearings if the local government intended to adopt a millage rate in excess of the "rollback" rate. City Manager Merriss stated that according to the "rollback" computation, the 2009 combined millage rate could be 13.086 mills but the recommended 2009 combined millage rate for general operations, bond indebtedness, the downtown development authority and for capital improvements was 13.035 mills, a rate that was slightly less than the calculated rollback rate. City Manager Merriss explained that because the recommended rate was less than the allowable "rollback" rate, certain public hearings, advertisements and press release were not necessary.

In response to a question from Mayor Floyd, City Manager Merriss stated that the DeKalb County Tax Assessors office had completed its reevaluation of Decatur properties and that City staff were in correspondence with the Tax Assessors office regarding the reevaluations.

In response to a question from Mayor Floyd, City Manager Merriss stated that as long as the adopted real estate property digest was within 3% of the values being used to determine millage rates, the City would not have to go through the process of reestablishing millage rates for 2009.

Mayor pro tem Baskett noted that the millage rates were being tentatively set so that they could be advertised and that the actual adoption of millage rates would be June 15, 2009.

City Manager Merriss added in order to begin the process, the City Commission was required to tentatively adopt ordinances establishing millage rates.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Baskett, second by Commissioner Boykin, and all voting “aye”, the City Commission adopted Ordinance O-09-03 tentatively establishing the General Fund tax rate at 11.215 mills.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Baskett, second by Commissioner Boykin and all voting “aye”, the City Commission adopted Ordinance O-09-04 tentatively establishing the Bond Fund tax rate at 1.44 mills.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Baskett, second by Commissioner Boykin, and all voting “aye”, the City Commission adopted Ordinance O-09-05 tentatively establishing the Downtown Development Authority tax rate at 0.38 mills.

CHANGE ORDER FOR FIRE STATION NUMBER 2.

City Manager Merriss recommended approval of a change order in the amount of \$73,886 for additional work at Fire Station Number 2 and that would increase the total contract amount from \$1,434,000 to \$1,507,886 or an increase of about 5%. City Manager Merriss state that the proposed increases resulted from several factors including site conditions and owner and architect requirements.

City Manager Merriss noted that there was also a request for approval of a change order associated with the streetscape improvements on West Hill Street to increase the contract from \$47, 262 to \$50,186 to cover the cost of additional paving requirements.

City Manager Merriss stated that the grand opening of Fire Station Number 2 was slated for June 1, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Baskett, City Manager Merriss stated that a LEED designation and level would be certified approximately 9 to 12 months after the completion of the fire station.

On a motion by Commissioner Kemp, second by Commissioner Boykin, and all voting “aye”, the City Commission approved the change order for Fire Station Number 2.

On a motion by Commissioner Kemp, second by Commissioner Boykin, and all voting “aye”, the City Commission approved the change order to the West Hill Street streetscape improvements.

CONTRACT WITH GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

Historic Preservation Coordinator Regina Brewer requested that the City Commission authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with the Georgia Department of Nation Resources (DNR) Historic Preservation Division for preparation of a nomination to place downtown Decatur on the National Register listing. Ms. Brewer stated that on January 20, 2009, the City Commission had approved applying for a grant

to prepare the nomination and since that time the City had received the grant and was ready to execute a contract with the State to begin the project. Ms. Brewer stated that the work includes preparing a nomination including the central portion of downtown Decatur to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Brewer stated that the total amount of the project was \$10,000 and that the State would provide \$6,000 with a \$4,000 match from the City.

Ms. Brewer noted that a local historic designation and a National District listing were two different things with a listing being an honorary recognition that did not stipulate the types of changes an owner could make to its property.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kemp, Ms. Brewer stated that the local historic resources survey was a completely different project and that the consultants had completed the photo inventory portion of the project and were working to get the information into a GIS database.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kemp, City Manager Merriss stated that the current request sought approval to enter into a contract to accept the grant because approval to apply for the grant had previously occurred.

On a motion by Commissioner Kemp, second by Commissioner Cunningham, and all voting "aye", the City Commission authorized the City Manager to execute a contract with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division for a grant to prepare national historic district listing nomination.

TEMPORARY OPERATION OF VALET PARKING SERVICE.

Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development Linda Harris requested permission to execute an agreement for services with Eagle Parking for the provision of valet parking service on North McDonough Street for a six-month trial period. Ms. Harris stated that Eagle Parking would provide valet parking service on North McDonough Street on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and that the cost for the service would be \$3. Ms. Harris noted that Eagle Parking would work with area restaurants to offer them the opportunity to validate valet costs for their customers so that the service could be free of charge.

Ms. Harris stated that cars would be parked in the lot on North McDonough that Eagle Parking currently managed and that overflow cars would be parked in the DeKalb County parking deck. Ms. Harris noted that the Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDDA) had entered into a similar arrangement with Eagle Parking last October at the request of Saba but with only a few months to test if before cold weather arrived, the DDDA would like to opportunity to continue to test the concept through the end of December 2009.

Commissioner Kemp stated that the proposed agreement did not seem to specify a \$3 charge for the valet service.

Mayor pro tem Baskett added that it would be better not to specify a rate so that the service could be priced according to demand.

On a motion by Commissioner Boykin, second by Mayor pro tem Baskett and all voting “aye”, the City Commission authorized the DDDA to enter into an agreement for a trial period test for valet parking services.

REQUESTS AND PETITIONS.

There were no requests or petitions.

REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.

Mayor Floyd read the Planning Commission agenda for June 9, 2009.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Baskett, Planning Director Amanda Thompson stated that the planned unit development request was only reviewed by the Planning Commission but that the site plan amendment for Renfroe Middle School would come before the City Commission for final approval.

Police Chief Mike Booker recommended that the City Commission approve an application to receive \$38,359 in funding from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant to purchase an automated license plate reader system. Chief Booker stated that the automated license plate reader captured images of license plates and instantly compared them with millions of records to identify vehicles of interest. Chief Booker stated that the total cost of the equipment was approximately \$40,451 and that the difference of \$2,182 would be paid from the City’s Asset Forfeiture Fund.

Chief Booker noted that Captain David Hipple had drafted the grant request.

In response to a question from Mayor Floyd and Commissioner Boykin, Chief Booker stated that the system would be mounted in one vehicle but that it could be moved to another if necessary.

In response to a question from Commissioner Boykin, Captain Hipple stated that the grant funds covered three years of maintenance and subscription fees but after that the system would cost the City \$1,600 a year.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Baskett, second by Commissioner Cunningham, and all voting “aye”, the City Commission approved application for the 2009 ARRA Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant.

Mayor Floyd commended the Decatur Police Department for the handling of the Decatur High School and Renfroe Middle School lock down situation.

City Manager Merriss stated that Scarlett Ann May was requesting an alcoholic beverage license for the retail sale for consumption on premises of beer, wine and

spirituous liquors for Ruby Tuesday #4076, 158 West Ponce de Leon Avenue, as an amended license for an existing business because a new manager had been hired for that location and that City ordinance required a new license when a new manager came aboard. City Manager Merriss stated that the application had been investigated and all fees paid and that the Police Department recommended issuance.

On a motion by Commissioner Kemp, second by Commissioner Cunningham, and all voting “aye”, the City Commission moved to approve issuance of an alcoholic beverage license for the retail sale for consumption on premises of beer & wine and spirituous liquors to Scarlett Ann May, for Ruby Tuesday #4076, 158 West Ponce de Leon Avenue.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kemp, City Manager Merriss stated that she believed that the property at 416 Oakland Street had been cleaned and cleared but that City staff was still working to secure the rear of the dwelling.

Commissioner Kemp stated that the Winnona Park Neighborhood Association meeting was scheduled for May 19, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Boykin stated that the Decatur Police Department had done a great job with all incidents at the high school in the past week.

Commissioner Cunningham stated that the Decatur Business Association meeting was scheduled for May 19, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. and that the program would be the Arts Festival Fine Arts Exhibition opening.

Commissioner Cunningham stated that she had attended CEO Ellis’ 1st 100 Days briefing event.

Mayor Floyd stated that he had participated in the LINKS trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Peggy Merriss
Acting City Clerk