

Feb. 7, 2017

WPNA Community Meeting Notes:

Volunteers

Social chair was filled by Lorelei Cooper. Still need additional volunteers for zoning, etc.

Treasurer Report

Seegar reviewed current financial report and budget analysis. Motion to approve 2017 proposed budget was approved.

Executive Committee Elections:

Nominees:

President: Scott Moore (approved)

Vice President: Pete Shannin (approved)

Treasurer: Seegar Swanson (approved)

Secretary: Tom DeSimone (approved)

Public Safety Update:

Sgt. Jennifer Ross discussed crime statistics. Crime was mostly down, 2015 reached historically low levels. Went up a little in 2016, closer to historical averages. Thefts went down from 2015 to 2016. Officers devoted some time to discussing when they would engage in a car chase. City of Decatur can only chase for a small number of specific crimes. Officers also talked about some misconceptions about how certain crimes are defined. Robbery is defined as taking something from a person versus a burglary which is a taking property from a home. The difference is a crime against a person versus a crime against property. Sgt. Ross also discussed crime prediction software used by City of Decatur Police. Detective Scott Richards added more detail in relation to vehicle chase criteria. More often than not, suspects fleeing a scene have not committed one of the limited range of crimes where a chase would be permitted. There have been relatively few incidents where police officers engaged in vehicular chases over the past five years. City of Decatur has dense police coverage of the area and can often respond to emergency calls in less than two minutes.

Officers took questions from the attendees. Sgt. Ross provided the City of Decatur Police Department non-emergency dispatch number (404) 373 6551. Enrollment in Smart 911 was then discussed. If you call 911 a profile will appear and the dispatcher will immediately know who you are based on your provided Smart 911 profile. The police department is on the NextDoor app, Twitter, Facebook and it is working to increase its presence on various social media platforms.

United Methodist Children's Home Update and Miscellaneous Updates

Mayor Patti Garrett and Commissioner Brian Smith led the discussion. City of Decatur is on NextDoor and other social media platforms. Mayor Garrett mentioned that there is an Extreme Makeover service through City of Decatur website that will provide up-to-date information in relation to local construction projects, street closings, etc. A new arborist has been hired by the City of Decatur and is interested in working with local groups on tree planting projects.

The City of Decatur Commission is still in discussions with the UMCH, and has received a large number of inquiries regarding the property. There are some very important historical aspects to the UMCH in addition to its current role. If the UMCH is purchased by the commission, it would probably be annexed into City of Decatur shortly afterward. Some citizens have voiced concerns in relation to plans to build high volume housing/apt complexes on the property when it is ultimately sold. The Commission would prefer to purchase the property in order to prevent acquisition by developers so that this would not occur. Only a small sliver of the UMCH property is located in City of Decatur, while the vast bulk of the property lies in unincorporated DeKalb County. It is currently zoned for office and institutional use. Legislation is pending which would allow for purchase and finance of the property. This would be through the creation of a Physical Facilities Authority that would be used to purchase something that either has economic impact, brings jobs or brings money. It is unclear at this time if the property would have to be re-zoned in order for high volume residential homes to be built on the property. At this time there is not much that residents can do in order to assist the Commission in acquiring the property.

There are other projects in progress. The Avondale MARTA station is being redeveloped, including senior housing and a greenway. City is also engaging in an LCI ("Livable Communities Initiative"). The buyer of the UMCH property is not required to disclose what their plans are in relation to the property as a condition of sale, and no public disclosure is required. The idea of subdividing the property was rejected by UMCH ownership at the outset, and the property is being sold as a single parcel.

Commissioner Smith then addressed street safety on Candler Avenue. A crosswalk has been installed on East Davis, and a HAWK signal will be installed, which automatically lights up when a pedestrian is in the vicinity. The Pharr Rd. crosswalk is being striped with new paint and moved slightly north from its current location. It's likely that this crosswalk will eventually resemble the one currently located at the East Davis crossing. School speed limit signals were recently updated in order to coordinate with actual school times.

The City is looking for volunteers to assist with cleaning up S. Candler St. City The Commission recently met with GDOT and noted that some projects took between 7-8 years to gain traction. The City manager now meets monthly with the district engineer, which has been enormously productive. There is a somewhat of a balancing act between balancing the interests of the need for state roads and maintaining the safety of pedestrians within the dense, urban area of City of Decatur.

There are still efforts being made to reduce the speed of traffic along Scott Blvd. The intersection at North McDonough will be going through substantial construction at the railroad track crossing. The project will start within the next 4-6 weeks, which will be a temporary inconvenience, but should lead to

an overall improvement at the intersection. Construction for railroad construction improvements will likely take about a year or more and are largely within the control of CSX.

Door Prize Raffle

We gave away some awesome stuff and people were totally psyched!!!! Crowd got pretty rowdy and had to be restrained.