

DRUID HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
Board Meeting
Wed., May, 20, 2015; 7:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church, 1420 Ponce De Leon Ave., Atlanta

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IN ATTENDANCE

Officers: C Vandenberg, J Critz, K Taylor, K Gibson
B MacGregor, D Shuey, J Heerin, R Graham
Chairs: A Wallace, R Vicevich, M St. Louis, V Biesel, S Misner
2015: S Montgomery, E Riley
2016: J Boone, J Markham, P Moise, K Oglesby
2017: R Benfield, K Eisterhold, C Liggett, J Morawetz, S Silverman
Guests: Charles Paine (Save Briarcliff/Candler mansion), A Silverman, J Bragg (Dyson Dr.), J Wilson

Minutes

The April 15, 2015 board minutes were approved.

New Business

Charlie Paine, who graduated from Woodward Academy, presented his research on the Briarcliff/Candler Mansion and summarized his independent efforts to save the vacant structure. Charles Fraser built the mansion for Asa (Buddie) Candler, Jr. in 1920 on the Northeast corner of what is now the Emory West campus. The mansion was renovated and expanded in 1925 by Henry Hornbostle who also designed the Callanwolde mansion. The property held the Candler's private zoo as well as a community swimming pool, but was deeded to the government in 1945. Emory University obtained the property in 1998 but it is now vacant and susceptible to vandalism and decay. Charlie stated that Emory has said it will cost \$35M to restore the structure but some architects claim \$7M. The mansion is on the National Register of Historic Places (#14991). Charlie Paine may be contacted at crpaine15@sr.woodward.edu and on the Facebook page: "Save Briarcliff/Candler Mansion." His efforts are featured in the April 29, 2015 Creative Loafing article "The Jewel on Briarcliff."

Home & Garden

Ryan Graham has agreed to continue leading the Tour for two more years, which will include the 50th Anniversary Tour. He reported that 1300 attended the tour and revenue from Sponsors and Friends & Patrons totaled \$25K and \$12K. The tour successfully added village concerts and the artists market and received positive feedback from Emory Village business owners.

Board Memberships

Lee Barnes (class of 2015) is resigning due to travel
Jenifer Garret (class of 2017) is also resigning
Please let Mike St. Louis know of prospective board members interested in actively participating in the DHCA.

A motion to go into Executive Session passed.
The regular Board meeting resumed with Committee Reports:

Land Use

1. The Board of Commissioners (BoC) voted to defer the Zoning Code Update to July 16. There is uncertainty if the final draft is completed and there remain concerns about re-zoning conditions, allowance of administrative variances, and standing to appeal procedures. The Citizens Task Force continues to study the evolving code proposals and has asked the Planning Department to list all major items that will change as well as those that are not changing.
2. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) voted unanimously to deny a four-lot subdivision of 1907-1911 Ridgewood Dr. and a two-lot subdivision on 1849-1847 North Decatur Rd. The Staff report also recommended denial. Four neighbors spoke against the proposal and others had written emails against it pointing out environmental issues including flooding, a major drainage systems through the property, topography, and the 60 hardwood trees which include 18 specimen trees.
3. The owner of 1680 East Clifton Rd. received a last minute deferral from the HPC for a proposed accessory building since the BoC had reversed an earlier Certificate of Appropriateness on May 12. The owner stated he would submit plans for a new primary structure at the June HPC hearing.
4. The owner of 1722 Hummingbird Lane requested and received a COA deferral by the HPC. The HPC Staff cited 19 potential HP violations and recommended denial. Neighbors spoke against the COA citing numerous code violations of actions already taken including paving the front yard and an illegal conversion to a duplex.
5. The Zoning Board of Appeals continues to deadlock over variances needed for the 1352-1360 Harvard Rd. development. The BOC had granted a COA for the lot re-creation but the lots are nonconforming and require variances.
6. The Land Use Committee believes the creation of a lot at 1900-1904 Ridgewood Dr. was improperly de-merged, and it also lies within the county's storm-water drainage system. It appears the County Planning Staff has decided not to take any action due to a lack of "malicious intent" by the owner, but has not answered questions posed by the HP Planner.

Ad Hoc Governance and Revision of the Bylaws

Dick Shuey stressed the importance of communicating the reasons behind any proposed changes in the bylaws. Phil Moise pointed out that as we take a new look at the bylaws, we need to give board members control over decision making while delegating enough decision making power to get routine business done efficiently.

Communications

Cathy Vandenberg reported that Jennie Richardson received many positive comments from residents about the new Druid Hills News. Photos and articles are welcome from all! Send to jjrichar@bellsouth.net

Transportation

The Transportation Committee is growing to deal with local transportation issues: Fifteen members expressed interest in participating in the committee. The committee will be meeting with Betty Willis, Emory's Senior Associate VP of Community Affairs, in June. The committee is taking the initiative to make sure "No Trucks" signage exists on all non-through streets.

Membership

Memberships are still coming in from last year's mailed letter as well as from the current website.

It was not productive to ask for memberships during the house tour, but perhaps the neighborhood Driving Tour would be a better venue for recruitment. A better system for identifying new residents and contacting them needs to be put in place and DHCA brochures need to be distributed to realtor offices. These are opportunities to communicate the difference between the DeKalb County HPC and the DHCA DeKalb Historic Preservation Sub-Committee.

If your street is missing an Historic DH street sign topper, extras are available from Chris Hamilton.

Community Wildlife Habitat designation

Chris Liggett reported on progress in pursuing the National Wildlife Foundation's Community Wildlife Habitat designation and is in contact with national organizers. Divisions 2, 9, and 4 expressed strong interest and Divisions 6 and 7 also expressed interest. We need to decide if we are to start with a core area or pursue designation for the total Druid Hills area, which includes 15,000 individuals. Individual volunteers are needed and should contact Chris.

Cityhood

We will continue to face important Annexation and Cityhood issues in the future as well as Decatur's plans to annex local businesses. Residents need to be attentive and vigilant.

Division Reports

Division 1: Code enforcement was notified of youth hanging out at the vacant 817 Lullwater property on April 9. A citation and notice to the owner to appear in court was delivered.

Lullwater garden bridge handrails that were vandalized have been repaired and bridge is safe again.

Division 4: Mike St. Louis will contact the county code enforcement concerning a derelict house at the corner of Briardale and Briarcliff.

Division 5: Contact Elise Riley to participate in the fall tree plantings with Trees Atlanta.

Division 8: Contact Frances Finegan to participating in the fall tree plantings with Trees Atlanta.

Division 9: Steve Misner will follow developments at 1722 Hummingbird Lane.

Mike St. Louis reported that the Olmsted Parks' Plein Air event was successful and future participation should be encouraged.

Also, we should communicate the positive reasons behind the Historic Preservation Commissions' existence since residents continue to challenge their rules and attribute them to the DHCA.

Nationwide, property values increase in historic districts and, locally, we are preserving our tree canopy. The DHCA should be seen as a source of assistance for residents needing a COA.

The May DHCA Board meeting **adjourned** at 9:00pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: 7:30 pm, Wednesday, June 17 at St. John's Lutheran Church. NOTE: New Board Member Training, part II at 6:45!

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