

Minutes - Draft

**PECS-Planning, Economic Development & Community Services
Committee**

Friday, October 1, 2021

10:00 AM

Special Called Meeting

This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available

*(1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage,
(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV*

Meeting Started At: 10:02AM

Attendees: Commissioners Johnson, Davis Johnson, Rader, Patrick, Bradshaw, Terry, Cochran-Johnson

Present 3 - Member Jeff Rader, Chairperson Larry Johnson, and Member Mereda Davis Johnson

I. MINUTES

2021-3119 Commission District(s): ALL
Minutes for the September 16, 2021 Special Called Planning, Economic Development, and Community Services Committee Meeting
MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Mereda Davis Johnson, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

II. STATUS UPDATE

Comprehensive Plan Update

-update on the DeKalb 2050 Unified Plan provided by Director Baker, John Tuley from Kimley-Horn

-Question JR: it was interesting to note that with us toward the end of our first SPLOST program, we're still seeing demand for biking/pedestrian improvements, and needs to maintain our road network. I would be interested to know what recommendations we have that will inform potential extensions in SPLOST. We need to ensure we are doing what the public prioritizes; it would make a lot of sense for this planning effort to contain recommendations for capital mechanisms we have in place.

-Question LJ: the community engagement has been very good, especially with the hybrid virtual/in person process. Are you able to gauge how many people are brand new vs people who have been here for decades, so that we can see the levels of engagement?

J Tuley: for public meetings, we didn't specifically capture that. The surveys we sent out did have demographic data to capture comments from people from different walks of life. It has been more anecdotal; from my interactions there were some usual suspects, but we have seen some new folks as well.

A Baker: we can look at the online survey and run the numbers to provide that data for you Commissioner

-LJ: Mr. Baker please include Congressman Johnson's opinion piece he did on heavy rail on south DeKalb; we should ensure that is reflected in the document for history's sake.

-Question TT: could you share the demographic profiles of participants? Renters/homeowners/business owner participants? Could you also speak to any connection to transit and whether that is connected to high density development, connectivity, and transit being the component to bring it all together? What are we doing to capture the bus riders? Do we have a plan to increase participation in surveys from those who take transportation daily? Lastly, I'm not sure that heavy rail discussion would fit well into the unified plan. John could you report back on these questions?

J Tuley: Regarding renters/homeowners/businesses, we have not tracked that. We did have business interest and those interested in the rental space. Regarding the bike and transit piece, there were several people who said that we can't just do one or the other, we need to think about the bike ped, and go a step further for multi-modal needs, whether or not a car is needed. This is what we've heard from a commentary standpoint. The plan should be pointing toward something that moves in that direction as well.

A Baker: Sylvia Smith is the project manager on this. If commissioners do have questions please pose them to her and we will provide a response on that.

TT: How many community intercepts at MARTA stations were there? How many did we do along the bus route or the bus connection switch-out points?

J Tuley: it was 3-5 MARTA stations that were targeted and heavily traveled; we haven't done specific outreach in that vein yet, but in the future I can see us trying to coordinate on that; additionally there have been community events that we will be continuing in the future.

LJ: the piece was that we'd never done this before; having it in an appendix it would be an illustration for posterity's sake to speak on the issues faced in south DeKalb.

TT: if that is the direction we are going, we should have level-setting on the realities and cost analysis of heavy rail. Perhaps Kimley-Horn could provide some facts on heavy rail throughout the country.

LJ: it's not about argument; it's about stating an opinion whether one agrees or not. This is more to provide the information in the document from the Congressman's piece.

-MDJ: I would like to add that south DeKalb has been pushing for heavy rail for years; we have been paying our share. Regarding the location of heavy rail, it is in DeKalb but not South DeKalb, and efforts haven't been documented that explain what has been done to obtain rail in south DeKalb. It doesn't mean that we will get it or that we have all the funding sources now, but as a matter of history it needs to be documented. We have never pushed for heavy rail in south DeKalb. Documenting this would be a good thing as we move forward.

-Question LJ: when is the deadline for the comprehensive plan to be in?

A Baker: it is mid-summer next year; we have a bit of time.

LJ: that's great, we will have another update in a month or two.

Decide DeKalb IGA

-update provided by President DeBarr, regarding reporting requirements to the Administration and BOC, TAD redevelopment plans objectives and outcome measures in the IGA

-Question LJ: how close are we to getting the document to the committee?

Z Williams: I would say at least 90%. We want to talk it through and ensure we are on one accord

-Question JR: It's time that we view the actual document, and move away from things that the economic development organization is going to do internally from a staff perspective.

-Question MDJ: with those goals it has to be a timeline; you also have to look at other jurisdictions' administrations, budgets, revenues and resources put into their economic development. DeKalb for many years has had things that were not in place that brings us to where we are now. We have no convention center or huge center where a large group of people can attend activities in DeKalb. We're the only metropolitan county that is in the same building that we had 30 years ago. It's also the policies of past administration or lack of vision; but we have done tremendously well with what was given to us, and we have to look to the future. We can't put that on any one particular reason, because there are numerous reasons why we don't have a convention center.

Z Williams: your points are excellent; and what Dorian is about to share brings a significant improvement regarding timelines and outputs

-information of 4 objectives and outputs provided by President DeBarr

-Question JR: please provide the BOC a copy of that document in Word, so that we can make comments on a line-by-line basis. This could have the BOC provide our input in this document, and get it to a form that we can take action on. It would help us give you some granular feedback.

Z Williams: I'm going to email you the document that has the original objectives with the outcomes, so that you can follow along.

JR: we should have as much benefit of the detail that we can.

Z Williams: what Mr. DeBarr just presented were the outcomes, but they are based on a set of objectives

JR: requests full access of the documentation, so that members of the BOC can be privy to the process. I would like to avoid a top-level summary, without access to the dialogue that is going back and forth.

-Question LJ: could you have that document, and come back November 1st PECS with those corrections and suggestions? Then we can get it to the BOC agenda before December and have it passed by the end of the year. Is that enough time?

Z Williams: the only issue I could see is if there are additional objectives, and the potential creation of sub-objectives

LJ: commissioners if you do propose to add a new objective to the document, provide this to Mr. DeBarr and COO Williams within the next 2 weeks. They will come back to PECS with document updates on November 1st.

Planning & Sustainability - Permitting System

-information provided by Director Baker, Keedra Raines, O'Neil Pusey, Aaron Kimble on the progress updates of the permitting system since July 2021

-Question JR: regarding escalations, there are 233 escalations. Is that 80+152? I'm trying to track how soon these are closed out.

A Baker: There is no time frame for how they get closed out. We have to wait for the customer to send it back in. The good thing about this tracking mechanism, we would be able to provide where something is stuck or which department an item is in.

-Question JR: is there a process you take for businesses operating under non-conforming status?

O Pusey: yes, these have to go through a rigorous process before we release the license, as well as double checking with the zoning department.

-Question LJ: is there an industry standard that we should be looking at regarding how we get the permit out to the customer? How can you show that it's the applicant waiting on the information that is holding up the process?

A Baker: in terms of technology, we won't accept the application if it's not done. There is no standard because every jurisdiction has a different permitting process. But our system will inform internal and external partners of correct submissions.

-Question LJ: could you determine how many calls are waiting, as well as dropped calls programmed to go into staff phones? This could be more efficient than a single call system.

A Baker: my technology people are on and listening to your suggestions; we will talk and discuss if that is something we can do.

Z Williams: for future updates, we have a technology committee led by Matelski. At a future update we can present not only how we are modifying our existing system, but we are also reviewing needs assessments to address needs that you just mentioned.

-Question TT: regarding my experience with the gang unit ride along of derelict apartment complexes, I spoke with officers there who asked why we are allowing slum lords to continue to operate and get a business license. Regarding the previous point of interior code compliance ordinance, instead of reviewing them as they come, I would argue that we coordinate with Public Safety, Code Enforcement, Fire, and Police on where they're seeing these highest crime spots in these bandos and proactively ask for an interior code compliance inspection immediately to identify these places where murders are taking place and gangs are happening. It's not everywhere but there are 10-20 spots in the County where crimes are taking place and we need to proactively address this.

LJ: there is a task force that Chief of Police, Fire department, Code Enforcement, Planning departments are on. It's based on if the officer is generating a ticket; if you see issues you've got to submit it. This committee is in charge of looking at these nuisances; before a license is given out, you have to be looking at these issues, and if they don't address them they don't get a license. That's the way it was setup.

Z Williams: Commissioner Terry your frustration is on point. It is one that is shared by us all. We have sought different ways to address these multifamily entities that have dramatically less than desirable living conditions, and in some cases are hotbeds of gang and drug activity. There is a system and we will bring that back to this table. You would think the business license is a showstopper, but there are many entities that operate without a business license. There is a whole process that involves the Courts that gets us to that. We are as aggressive as we can be, but there are logical and legal constraints to actually closing the doors when there are those persons who refuse to abide by the rules. But the business license isn't as much of a motivator as we had all hoped, because there are entities that are comfortable operating without a business license in violation of court orders; until such time that we have the ability to simply go shut the doors for closure and then we have to be able to relocate when that happens.

-Question RP: regarding trade permits, are those easy walk-in walk outs with a fee, or is there something more elaborate to the process?

K Raines: for the most part trade permits are easy to issue; challenges happen when you have larger projects, like apartment complexes.

-RP: Understood, this is moreso like water heater, HVAC system that has to be replaced on an existing home or business. I get that multiple trades on a new construction are totally different. On another note, I'm impressed with your department's checklist. Regarding the non-conforming check posed by Commissioner Rader, I want to confirm that you have a no-change affidavit. Would that get to Commissioner Rader's earlier question that we're verifying that there's no changes to the nonconforming use that's already there?

O Pusey: The no-changes acts as a trigger, depending on how an applicant answers those questions. Depending on how those questions are answered will trigger if the business license needs to be routed back up to Zoning or if it's something that we can modify.

-Question JR: does that mean they are self-certifying?

O Pusey: there are certain businesses that we consider a SLUP-7; those businesses go through a different process than your general businesses. One of the presentation slides goes into the quality review process that is very rigorous.

-Question JR: there must be hundreds of non-conforming businesses like gas stations. Do we visit them one by one?

A Baker: No we do not. Prior to COVID we had site visits with many late-night establishments that were nonconforming. We try to catch all of those using the 45 points and follow-up and inspections. We have a tracking sheet that we report to the department of revenue. It is a comprehensive list of things that we enforce and implement.

Leaf Blower Code Enforcement

-information provided by County Attorney Ernstes regarding takeaways from the commissioner requests during the 8/16/21 special called PECS meeting

-Discussion of exploring the ability of the County to provide financial incentives to replace loud equipment to quieter equipment. The proposal includes the county using ARP funds to utilize in the incentives.

-V Ernstes: We are suggesting a phased-in process with financial incentives. Most jurisdictions that have proposed a ban are relatively new regulations that haven't necessarily been tested in the courts. A phased approach would make this more palatable.

-V Ernstes: I would suggest you consider limiting hours or hours on the weekend. If that is of interest to you, we will put together a draft of the noise ordinance, and changes to the types of noise

-LJ: Commissioner Rader could you talk to the Law department offline? Then you can bring this back to the committee JR: yes

V Ernstes: yes and at that time we can address the critical piece of funding

2021 Revitalization Resolution

-not heard in committee

III. AGENDA ITEM

[2021-3112](#)

Commission District(s): All

Appointment to the DeKalb County Historic Preservation
Commission - Olivia Hallquist

**MOTION was made by Mereda Davis Johnson, seconded by
Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for
approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on
10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis
Johnson**

-interview conducted by the commissioners to Ms. Hallquist

Previously Heard Agenda Items:

2021-2598

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts
DeKalb County No Net Loss of Trees Policy

MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Mereda Davis Johnson, that this agenda item be recommended for deferral to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

-A Baker: We've just received the last version of the no net loss; I would like to coordinate with Mr. Kenna, but I believe we are ready

-Question TT: The last time we spoke on this, we were looking for clarity on the utility easement portion of this policy; are we still excluding utilities? Could you speak on the change that was made?

T Philips: The change includes 2 different sections. Under the scope section, there was specific language added to clarify that we would include, where feasible, trees associated with the permanent county utility easements as well as the county landfills. And then, in the exceptions section, where we reference the arborist and the replacement of trees, similar language was added to expressly note that trees being replaced because of removal from permanent county utility easements and county landfills would be considered there as well. So the express language I understood was requested by Commissioner Rader, it has been added in the 2 places to ensure it is expressly referenced, and I understand the Planning department's looking at that change that was made pursuant to Commissioner Rader's direction in our last discussion.

-A Baker: Planning department is still reviewing. Another 2 weeks is fine

2021-2734

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts
A Resolution Requesting the DeKalb County Administration Review and Consider Supporting an Amendment to the Code of DeKalb County, Georgia Pertaining to Non-Discrimination; to Prohibit Discrimination by Businesses or others Offering a Public Accommodation; and for other Lawful Purposes

MOTION was made by Mereda Davis Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

-Question JR: could law please provide the changes that constitute the substitute?

V Ernstes: I would confirm that; the changes were to remove the statement with contracts to public accommodations

-Motion to approve MDJ

-Question TT: a few months ago I discussed Atlanta being the first city to pass a discrimination ordinance, and have recently included income and housing as a form of protection. As we look toward a more equitable county, this is something that would should add in DeKalb. There tends to be a clustering of section 8 vouchers because many apartment complexes will not rent to section 8. I think this protection is vital if we are serious about equitable and affordable housing

-V Ernstes: I did receive Commissioner Terry's email this morning regarding the addition of the protected class. It could be passed by the Board of Tuesday, so that I can have time to include Commissioner Terry's update

-LJ: let's pass this and if we want to add something later we can add it. That is a good recommendation by the Law Department

-Second JR

Comment JR: I'm not opposed to looking at this; but ultimately it will come back to the BOC for final approval. These other areas can be incorporated at a point in the future; this is ripe for action.

Vote: yes unanimous

2021-2853

Commission District(s): All

A Request to Consider Establishing a Sidewalk Mapping System

This agenda item was no official recommendation

-Question JR: we have at least 2 pictometry databases; one that the tax assessor uses, and one community development has developed; both should be an adequate base. My question is that this is another aspect of a management system database; whether it is road conditions, stormwater intrastate, sidewalks, it seems we have been talking a long time on best practices for asset management systems. I support collecting this data, but am concerned about not building on the comprehensive asset management system that would be more cost effective to maintain under a single data storage structure

D Pelton: it makes sense that if we have the imagery, try to extract as much information of that as we can. If we utilize it for pavement conditions, it would have to be re-run, because typically there's more to it than imagery. If we do sidewalks, we want to look at the entire sidewalk system for ADA compliance and where improvements are needed to bring everything to compliance, especially for older sidewalks.

-Question MDJ: which option would be more effective for the sidewalks, since the costs are not much different?

D Pelton: the second option involving the imagery already collected would be the better option, and provides more flexibility regarding adding more assets on to what we're trying to collect

-Question LJ: Mr. Pelton could you send us the system you are discussing, and what municipalities are using the system you're proposing, so we can have some more background and research on this issue?

-Question RP: something that is comprehensive gets more value out of our dollar. If there's a way that is as comprehensive and effective that we are suggesting, that would be great.

-Question LJ: does our current GIS system have the capacity for this?

S Grear: the best way to capture sidewalk inventory, most jurisdictions use lidar detection. The last time we updated our base mapping system was 2013, and it may be time to update this again. The next time we do our base map update we could explore this.

-Question LJ: Do you have a price we can have that can come back to committee in 2 weeks, and a system we could put in place?

S Grear: yes sir I can get some pricing on that.

-JR: I would like to see a receiver data set for all this information so that it can be maintained on a consistent basis, where it needs to be laid over or related to each other. An example may be stormwater infrastructure and sidewalks. Being able to combine this data in a comprehensive database is important. Where are we on that? This is also a matter of discussion when it comes to a more technical format for evaluating our road surfaces. What I'm hoping is somebody saying that we can invest in that repository of all of this asset management data.

-COO Williams: GL has been working on a comprehensive fixed asset system for the past 3 years. I don't know what infrastructure pieces are included in that; that is something we can re-present in FAB committee because that is where the conversation started. We have had conversations regarding the road system on whether we would do mapping that would capture curb cuts, manhole depths, etc. That's not something that is budgeted. This effort would be the first newly budgeted computerized asset management infrastructure investment outside of Watershed.

J Matelski: we'll work with Mr. Pelton, Mr. Grear, and their teams on this. We do have CityWorks and this will be expanded to include different datasets and review what we can incorporate with CityWorks. I believe we have key systems in place and will coordinate to make sure those systems will be integrated as needed.

-LJ: we'll have something back in 2 weeks to review this new model in committee

-No official recommendation

New Agenda Items:

2021-2945

Commission District(s): ALL

LB - Invitation No. 21-101336 Bunker Renovation Services at Mystery Valley Golf Club (One-Time Buy): for use by Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs (RPCA). Consists of renovating the existing golf course bunkers. Recommend award to the sole bidder who is responsive and responsible: Benson Construction Company, Inc. Amount Not To Exceed: \$243,375.00.

MOTION was made by Mereda Davis Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

-information provided by Director Ellis

-Question JR: I'm interested in the larger budget; I've been trying to get AstroTurf in a heavily used park. I would like to better understand the per user cost of the investment we're making. At some point I'd like to see this back on the agenda. Our golf courses seem to be getting a lot of these resources.

2021-2987

Commission District(s): All

LB - Invitation No. 21-101417 for Asbestos Abatement, Demolition and Debris Removal (Annual Contract with 2 Options to Renew): for use by the Department of Community Development (CD). Consists of providing asbestos abatement, demolition, and debris removal services. Recommend award to the lowest, responsive and responsible bidders: Southern Demolition, LLC, Kissberg Construction, LLC, Domineck Construction Inc., and Diversified Environmental Management, Inc. Total Amount Not To Exceed: \$600,000.00.

MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Mereda Davis Johnson, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

-information provided by Director Mitchell

-Question JR: is this all for in-rem demolition? A Mitchell: that's correct

[2021-2988](#)

Commission District(s): ALL

REN - Infield Mix, Sand, Mulch and Other Ground Materials (Annual Contract - 2nd Renewal of 2 Options to Renew): Contract No.

1184982 for use by Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs (RPCA).

This contract consists of providing infield mix, sand, mulch and other ground materials for various DeKalb County Parks. Awarded to: Green Acres Supplies Inc. Amount Not To Exceed: \$65,000.00.

MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Mereda Davis Johnson, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

-information provided by Director Ellis

[2021-3130](#)

Commission District(s): District 7

A Resolution Requesting the DeKalb County Administration Review and Consider Supporting Amendments to the Code of DeKalb County, Georgia Pertaining to Non-Discrimination; to Prohibit Discrimination Based on Hair Texture; and for Other Lawful Purposes

MOTION was made by Mereda Davis Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

-information provided by County Attorney Ernstes

-Question LJ: we could take both of these items and have the CEO consider it and put it in the overall nondiscrimination resolution?

V Ernstes: that is correct, and it would also include the piece provided by Commissioner Rader

-LCJ: the Crown Act is one piece of a much broader attempt to create a nondiscrimination ordinance. Certain individuals, such as African Americans, are more likely to change their hair; sometimes there is discrimination in the workplace. This says that that is not acceptable business practice, and it is up to the individual to change their hair style.

-Question JR: this does not protect hairstyle and length for anyone other than people of color?

LCJ: No, the legislation itself covers all individuals

-Question JR: is hair length and hair style protected under this?

V Ernstes: yes sir, there is a definition of protected hairstyles that directed references this. Text was provided by County Attorney Ernstes.

-Question JR: I'm looking to protect someone with a pink mohawk. I would suggest you look at this and refine to protect hair style across the board. Texture is the thing I'm keying on.

-LCJ: the issue is discrimination; any of us don't want to see one discriminated against; if we need to amend language to make it broad I'm fine. But as the motion has been presented I am fine with this moving forward.

V Ernstes: I made note of Commissioner Rader's suggestion; this will be coming back to you

-LJ: Commissioner Cochran-Johnson, if you want to keep the amendment as it was that is fine.

MDJ: My motion was the language as written in Commissioner Cochran-Johnson's resolution

2021-3171

Commission District(s): District 2, District 5, and District 6
Adoption of a Resolution to Relocate the Relic Cannon Located on Decatur Square.

MOTION was made by Mereda Davis Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

-information provided by County Attorney Ernstes

MDJ: based on what the County Attorney has stated, I think it's trespassing at the least

Meeting Ended At: 12:50PM

MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Mereda Davis Johnson, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC