

**CITY OF PINE LAKE
PLANNING RETREAT MEETING**

**CITY OF DECATUR CITY COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
509 NORTH McDONOUGH STREET
DECATUR, GA
September 19, 2021
9:45AM – 3:00 PM**

Call to Order at 9:45 AM by Mayor Melanie Hammet. Present – Mayor Melanie Hammet, Mayor pro tem Jean Bordeaux, and Council members Tracey Brantley, Brandy Hall, and Augusta Woods. Also, present was Acting City Administrator Peggy Merriss. Council member Brandy Beavers was not in attendance.

Discussion

Mayor and Council members began the retreat with a review and general discussion of the July 18, 2021 Retreat Report. There was a review of the North Star Principles (see Attachment A) that were developed in the July retreat.

In anticipation of the Retreat Meeting, Mayor and Council were asked to think about several questions and as part of the retreat they responded, thinking about the 24 months from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023. They discussed what needs to be accomplished that are consistent with, and supported by, the North Star Principles that were agreed to in the July Retreat. In addition, there was discussion of keeping in mind that the Mayor and Council were responsible for the future of the entire City and decisions needed to be made that reinforced the objective of supporting the City from “Ridge to Rockbridge” as discussed in the July 2021 retreat.

Those items included:

- Community, Economic and Arts Development of the Rockbridge Road Corridor
- Annexation of the “gap” property on Rockbridge Road
- Developing and building relationships with Blueprint Church
- Fiscal Responsibility to make sure that the budget reflects support of our values
- Analysis of existing operational functions
- Sustainable communications and information system (i.e., website, Pine Lake news)
- Resiliency Plan for lake and beach infrastructure
- General resiliency plan for climate change effects on Pine Lake
- Build and rebuild civic engagement and infrastructure in a post-COVID environment
- How do we use facilities that Pine Lake owns
- Pine Lake Police Department reflects increased community policing mindset and actions
- Development of the ECO/Arts district around the lake and wetlands area to add elements beyond recreation
- How can the City’s code enforcement ordinances support more of an eco-friendly approach versus an enforcement approach
- Affordable Housing

After further discussion, the list of items was grouped into five primary strategic action areas:

- Rockbridge Road
- Operational Sustainability
- Green Infrastructure
- Community Policing
- Civic Engagement

The Mayor and Council then discussed the following questions: why are these things important and to whom are they important?

For Rockbridge Road, the discussion on why it was important included that actions to improve the corridor reflect the community's self-stated values, it reinforces the North Star principles, expands civic engagement and it further connects as an attractive contributor to the City's landscape. Discussion followed that the redevelopment was important to the Mayor and Council as well as the community and the business owners, but it was acknowledged that many in the residential community have no real connection and do not care about the issue.

For operational sustainability, the discussion on why it was important included it would provide grounding for the City and for elected officials over time, it supported operating as a City and not as an HOA, it allowed continuity of business processes and reinforced the business plan and foundations of city operations. Discussion followed that operational sustainability was important so that residents, businesses and taxpayers would have trust that the City was operating in a business-like and professional manner, it provided clear expectations and accountability for staff and provided a stable platform for Mayor and Council and for future Mayors and Councils.

For Green Infrastructure, the discussion on why it was important included that the lake is part of what Pine Lake is and is a community builder, that the future existence of the lake, wetlands and green areas was important to the future of Pine Lake and that resilience against threats from storms and floods, particularly because of the City's topography challenges was going to be more challenging in the future due to climate change. Discussion followed that Green Infrastructure was important to residents whose properties and quality of life could be negatively affected by storms and floods, to the Mayor and City Council who were responsible for protecting the public health, safety and welfare of the community, to the larger community who enjoy the lake, beach and trails, to the regulators who wanted to make sure the City complied with existing laws and regulations.

For Community Policing, the discussion on why it was important included that the ethos of community needed to be owned by all members of the police department, that community policing builds trust and positive connection between the community and police staff, it was consistent with the North Star principles, and it was a two-way process with both the community and the police department committing to working and learning from each other. Discussion followed that this was important to the residents and business owners, the Mayor and Council, the larger community and DeKalb County and to City staff.

For Civic Engagement, Mayor and Council agreed it was foundational to all the issues discussed above and needed to be incorporated throughout with emphasis on incorporating outcomes from "Ridge to Rockbridge."

Last, four tactical issues were identified that needed attention during the 24-month timeframe. Those issues are review of the tree ordinance, a master plan for potential development of the 13-acre property at Rockbridge Road and Allgood Road, an operational and fiscal analysis of the municipal court function and a compensation review of City of Pine Lake staff positions.

Mayor and Council concluded the retreat with a commitment to develop a timeline for addressing the strategic issues and the specific tasks currently identified.

Attachment A

North Star Principles (identified in council retreat 7/21):

- Accessible
- Creativity
- Communication
- Equitable
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Future Focus
- Habitat Protection
- Participatory
- Safe