402 LEE STREET
DECATUR, ALABAMA 35601
July 9, 2026
MINUTES

Council Chambers	**Architectural Review Board**	**4:00 PM**

I CALL MEETING TO ORDER

4:00 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Carol Chenault, Jay Clark, Jacob Woods

Absent: Paige Bridges, Matt Cross

II APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 11, 2026

Vote: Motion made by Carol Chenault to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Jay Clark. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

III EXPEDITED CoAs SINCE THE JUNE MEETING:

1041 Jackson Street SE, replace rotting siding in kind (which was replaced last in 1998) (#9 for the CoA)
503 Ferry Street SE, new roof
608 Ferry Street SE, replacing rotting siding in kind (#9 for the CoA)
623 Johnston Street SE, new roof (#47 for the CoA)
626 Sherman Street SE, repair rear wall damaged by storm debris (#9 for the CoA)
620 Sherman Street SE, new roof (#47 for the CoA)
1030 Sherman Street SE, replace damaged siding in kind (#9 for the CoA)

IV NEW CoA REVIEWS

CoA #1: 804 Jackson Street SE (Rogers)

Action Requested: Retore auxiliary building and covert into a garage.

Decatur's Design Review Guidelines: 9.0 Historic Garages and Outbuildings 9.1 Preserve and maintain original garages, carriage houses, sheds, and other outbuildings that contribute to the history of a property. 9.2 Repair an original outbuilding with materials to match the original.

Staff Report: Building was originally used as an apartment. It is being converted into a garage. The garage door will be added on the east elevation which is out of the public view. The south elevation (which faces the south) will have a center window replaced by a door. The elevation has a stoop indicating that at one point there may have been a door at that location.

All siding will be replaced in kind. The proposed garage door will be Amar Classica steel. The three windows on the second floor of the east elevation will be wood. The door on the south elevation will be an antique that the property owner is searching for. He has requested that staff and the board architect give final review and approval to the design once he locates a suitable door.

Discussion: Mr. Rogers presented new information since the original CoA was submitted. Interior demolition in the structure showed significant termite infiltration. Code Enforcement was called to evaluate the building. The building has been condemned. Mr. Rogers has requested changing his CoA into a demolition request.

Vote: Motion made by Jacob Woods to approve the CoA as amended, to approve the demolition of the apartment. Motion seconded by Jay Clark. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

CoA #2: 613 Sherman Street SE (Chaney)

Action Requested: Exterior staircase on west elevation that reaches the second floor. This is a retroactive CoA for a project that was started without approval.

Decatur's Design Review Guidelines: 12.0 Porches 12.8 It is not appropriate to add new porches or balconies to primary elevations or other areas of a building in the public view if none existed historically.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards: 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided. 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic

materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Staff Report: Owner would like a staircase that is easier to move through, without the hairpin turn. Owner does not feel it is feasible to add a staircase to the back of the house.

This project was undertaken without a building permit or a variance from BOZA, which will be needed due to the proximity of the staircase to the lot boundary.

Discussion: Mr. Chaney stated that it would take too long to get the required permits, that is why he built the staircase without an approved CoA, or a building permit, or going to BOZA for the required variance approval. Has owned house since 1987, house was 2 apartments when he moved in. Inter staircase has two turns. When emergency personnel was called for an illness for his first wife due to the staircase turns they had to carry her down on a sheet.

Jacob Woods wants to know why no permits were applied for the staircase. Mr. Chaney stated that "high powered people" had told him it was "better to beg for forgiveness than ask permission." Mr. Woods asked why the staircase wasn't placed to the rear of the house, where it would be hidden from sight. Mr. Chaney stated that he would have had to cut down a dogwood and cedar tree and he didn't want to do that.

Carol Chenault and Jay Clark both stated that they agreed with the comments Jacob Woods had made. Jay Clark reiterated that the staircase could be constructed on the back of the house. Its scale and size in public view adjacent to the front elevation made the staircase out of character for the district.

Jacob Woods added that the staircase placed so closely to the exterior wall of the house made maintaining the wall and the siding difficult.

Mr. Chaney stated that there was a power line in the way if the staircase was moved to the rear of the house. Mr. Woods stated that a service drop could be relocated allowing for a staircase to be moved to the rear.

Vote: Motion made by Jacob Woods to approve the CoA as submitted. Motion seconded by Jay Clark. Motion failed to carry with zero votes in favor.

Motion made by Jacob Woods that the applicant had 90 days to the date of this meeting (July 9, 2027) to remove the non-approved staircase from the exterior of the house. Motion seconded by Carol Chenault. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

VI COMPLIANCE UPDATES

Motion to adjourn meeting at 4:33 pm by Carol Chenault. Motion seconded by Jay Clark. Unanimous approval, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.