



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Agenda Item

June 24, 2025

File ID: 2025-0681

Substitute

Public Hearing: YES ☐ NO ☒

Department: Board of Commissioner - District 6

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): District 6

Resolution requesting that the Administration take action to: recover land traded to Blackhall Real Estate Phase II, LLC in the 2021 land exchange if Blackhall's remaining contractual obligations are not promptly met; reopen Intrenchment Creek Park; and restore Intrenchment Creek Park's land and trailhead.

Information Contact: Commissioner Ted Terry

Phone Number: (404) 371-4909

PURPOSE:

To ask the Administration to take action to reopen and improve Intrenchment Creek Park.

NEED/IMPACT:

Intrenchment Creek Park and forested land in the area are important for the environmental health of DeKalb County and the recreation and enjoyment of DeKalb County's residents and visitors.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impact not known at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the attached substitute resolution dated May 23, 2025.

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION TAKE ACTION TO RECOVER LAND TRADED TO BLACKHALL REAL ESTATE PHASE II, LLC IN ITS 2021 LAND EXCHANGE WITH DEKALB COUNTY, REOPEN INTRENCHMENT CREEK PARK, AND RESTORE INTRENCHMENT CREEK PARK’S LAND AND TRAILHEAD.

WHEREAS, in 2003, DeKalb County purchased approximately 136 acres of forest, that would later become Intrenchment Creek Park, with the assistance of a grant by the Trust for Public Land funded by the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Intrenchment Creek Park is a forested park in the larger South River Forest area that has been deemed one of the four “lungs of Atlanta” that provide the Atlanta Metro area with clean air, respite from heat, and flood mitigation, ultimately making it a vital component in ensuring DeKalb County is resilient to climate change; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, DeKalb County Board of Commissioners voted to approve a resolution to commit to the transformation of the South River Forest by adopting the recommendations of the "Explore South River Forest" report and requesting for the Administration to coordinate with the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to develop a master plan. This report outlines the South River Forest is an opportunity for “an expansive 3,500-acre network of connected greenspaces along the South River and its tributaries” that includes the Intrenchment Creek Park area; and

WHEREAS, a real estate exchange between DeKalb County and Blackhall Real Estate II, LLC (“Blackhall”) was approved by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners in 2020 and the real estate exchange transaction (the “Land Swap”) was completed in early 2021;

WHEREAS, under the terms of the Real Estate Exchange Agreement for the Land Swap, DeKalb County agreed to transfer to Blackhall one parcel of land that had been part of Intrenchment Creek Park, parcel i.d. no. 15 083 01 004 (“2235 Bouldercrest Rd.”), in return for three parcels of land that Blackhall owned nearby, one of which was parcel i.d. no. 15 083 01 003 (“2055 Bouldercrest Rd.”), and other consideration described in the Real Estate Exchange Agreement;

WHEREAS, Blackhall has not fulfilled all of its obligations under the 2021 Real Estate Exchange Agreement with DeKalb County, including but not limited to an obligation to complete certain park improvements at Blackhall's sole cost, up to \$1,500,000, and provide an additional \$100,000 to DeKalb County for greenspace acquisition;

WHEREAS, there is a large public interest in protecting park land as a part of the South River Forest and discouraging further development in the form of paved trails and other infrastructure that may disturb biodiversity, destroy wetlands, and cut down remaining trees; and

WHEREAS, Intrinchment Creek Park is a valuable public resource that has offered recreational opportunities and natural beauty for all DeKalb County residents and visitors;

WHEREAS, Intrinchment Creek Park was closed more than two years ago by the former CEO's March 24, 2023 Executive Order, which cited safety reasons for the closing; and

WHEREAS, 2055 Bouldercrest Rd. has been identified as a possible location for an inclusive county park for children;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners requests that if Blackhall does not act promptly to fulfill its remaining obligations under the Real Estate Exchange Agreement, the Administration take appropriate action, through negotiation or otherwise, to recover 2235 Bouldercrest Rd., the land swapped to Blackhall in 2021 and, if possible, retain ownership of 2055 Bouldercrest Rd., one of the parcels received from Blackhall in 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners requests that the Administration open Intrinchment Creek Park for public use, lifting the Executive Order issued by former Chief Executive Officer Michael Thurmond on March 24, 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners requests that funds originally planned for hard surface trails through Intrinchment Creek Park go towards overall restoration of the park, including restoring the original trail head, removing invasive species, and wetlands restoration.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ____ day of _____, 2025.

MICHELLE LONG SPEARS

Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

BARBARA SANDERS-NORWOOD, CCC

Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

MATTHEW C. WELCH

Interim County Attorney
DeKalb County, Georgia