

## **A RESOLUTION BY THE DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **TO ASK THE CEO OF DEKALB COUNTY TO REQUEST A PHASE II ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT AND A NOISE STUDY FOR THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

**WHEREAS** - The DeKalb County Planning and Sustainability Department has received permit applications for the development of the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center (APTC); and

**WHEREAS** - The DeKalb County Board of Commissioners (BOC) is under no legal authority to require a vote of the BOC before the APTC site developers can submit land disturbance permits for consideration, and instead the approval decision is an administrative process, under the CEO's purview under the DeKalb County Organizational Act (Charter); and

**WHEREAS** - The Governing Authority of DeKalb County (DeKalb) has made environmental protection and conservation a top policy priority, over the last two decades, and has invested tens of millions of dollars into the preservation and conservation of forested, wetland, and riparian zones and parcels throughout the County; and

**WHEREAS** - DeKalb acknowledges and appreciates that after a 2019 master planning process, the City of Atlanta amended its City Charter to create a "South River Forest Park", designated in this area, including the land proposed for the development of the APTC; and

**WHEREAS** - DeKalb values the environmental and quality of life assessment processes in our land development regulations and zoning review deliberations and further acknowledges and encourages enhanced ecological and quality of life reviews when the scale and size of developments present a significant impact on the immediate land and surrounding communities; and

**WHEREAS** - DeKalb agrees with the previously stated intent from the developers of the APTC to conduct a "Phase II Environmental Site Assessment", which would provide a more diligent review of potential environmental hazards that might yet be unknown, such as possible site contaminants, buried debris, and significant data gaps; and

**WHEREAS** - The APTC site developers revised the scope of work for their environmental consultants to a "Limited Site Investigation;" and

**WHEREAS** – In August of 2021, a [community member's independent environmental assessment](#) was performed which highlighted several areas within the entire Prison Farm site that are environmentally sensitive areas and contain vital habitat ecosystems that deserve to be considered in the overall assessment and conservation areas in the APTC development plan; and

**WHEREAS** – It should also be considered that excessive noise concerns are a fundamental quality of life issue for our neighbors, especially for the neighborhoods surrounding the APTC site, and the current gun range activity does generate concerns for continued noise nuisance from regular gunfire training exercises and any future investments in the gun range land-use should alleviate this noise nuisance; and

**WHEREAS** - The public is encouraged to [read the history of the Atlanta prison farm site](#); and

**WHEREAS** - The Atlanta Prison Farm site is not the “Honor Farm” and DeKalb publicly acknowledges the distinction and recognize that both were part of the “slave labor” prison system born out of the end of reconstruction and implemented by a government that was fundamentally racist against Black Americans and fed white supremacist ideology that dominated local government office holders during this period; and

**WHEREAS** -This site is also near Soapstone Ridge, [a 25-square-mile area](#) that offers dozens of Late Archaic quarries and workshops that were the epicenter of a vast trade network, land that Native Americans inhabited, and land that was ultimately taken through broken treaties with instruction from the United States Government, and given to private individuals for private gain in DeKalb County’s early years; and

**WHEREAS** - This site, with all of its history and complexities, deserves a complete retelling and correcting of the public record by the Government(s) that perpetuated the racially unjust carceral labor system, acknowledging the damage done to communities in DeKalb County surrounding the derelict former prison farm site, and a more diligent review on how to achieve the stated goal of the APTC to “set a national standard for community engagement, neighborhood sensitivity, and devotion to the civil rights of all citizens by law enforcement”, by further engaging stakeholders and community groups to expound upon this history and reconciliation processes; and

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

1. To ask the CEO to request the APTC site developers to perform a “Phase II Environmental Site Assessment” and a noise study based on the proposed gun range location and design; and
2. To request that the APTC Stakeholder Committee create a “History, Reconciliation and Reparations Committee” to further explore and enlighten the public about the injustices perpetrated at the Atlanta Prison Farm site and the impact its abandonment has had on the surrounding DeKalb neighborhoods, and draft an action plan to further memorialize the history for posterity, and propose investments in the larger community of Southwest DeKalb to further redress the damage done by the actions condoned at this site; and
3. To ask the Atlanta City Council to require a “recommendation vote” by the established Stakeholder Committee, of the proposed site plan, after the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and noise study have been conducted, and before any further action contemplated in the Land Disturbance Permit currently filed with the DeKalb County Department of Planning and Sustainability can continue; and
4. To ask the APTC site developers, if the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and noise study return additional actions deemed necessary for the protection of these vital ecosystems, to adjust the site plan to meet the standards prescribed in the study; and
5. To ask the APTC site developers to consider another site location for the APTC if the site plan cannot adequately be amended to satisfy the environmental protection standards DeKalb County BOC would require of any major development proposals through the normal zoning and land development approval process.