**By-Laws**

**City of Decatur**

**Decatur Youth Council**

*Section 1. Establishment of a Decatur Youth Council.*

A City of Decatur Youth Council will be established to provide the City’s youth with the opportunity to participate in the City’s decision-making process, create projects and activities for the community, and to instill a sense of civic responsibility, thereby becoming effective leaders helping to shape the future of Decatur. The Decatur Youth Council members will be the voice of the adolescent population and will assist with implementing the recommendations of the various citywide plans.

The Decatur Youth Council should participate in the following:

1. Assisting city staff with public education and outreach activities to their peers.
2. Coordinating with established programs and organizations in the community working to address the needs and concerns of the youth.
3. Identifying and researching potential programs and activities for youth engagement and education.
4. Assisting with identifying potential solution and research opportunities in support of City programs and activities.
5. Reviewing local, state, and regional policies pertaining to equity, inclusion and engagement of the youth population and recommending enhancements or changes needed.
6. Identifying physical and perceived barriers to active participation in the community and informing possible areas in need of improvements.
7. Identifying the latest developments in community youth engagement in communities, schools, and businesses.
8. Providing recommendations regarding the implementation the various citywide plans.

*Section 2. Membership Qualifications and Terms.*

The Youth Council shall consist of fifteen (15) members selected by Advisory Committee. Council members should be high school-aged students that currently reside in the City of Decatur. Youth Council members must meet the following qualifications:

1. Have an interest in learning about government and how it functions.
2. Be able to think critically and articulate thoughts and ideas.
3. Be able to commit to serving at least one full term.
4. Be in good academic standing and free of any serious disciplinary infractions within the last six months.

An ideal Youth Council will be composed of a diverse group of young people that represent all youth in Decatur. Members of the board shall support the stated mission and goals of the Decatur Youth Council.

The Advisory Committee shall appoint members to a term of one (1) year. Members will have to apply every year; should a returning member reapply, he/she will receive preference but selection is not guaranteed. Board members shall serve without compensation.

*Section 3. A Officers.*

The Youth Council shall elect one member to serve as chair and to preside over its meetings, and shall create and fill such officers and sub-committees as it may deem necessary. The term of the chair and other officers shall be one (1) year, with eligibility for re-election to succeeding terms.

*Section 3.B Officer Duties*

*Section 3.C Subcommittee Duties*

*Section 3.D Vacancies, Removal, & Resignation*

*Section 4. Charge and Responsibilities of the Youth Council.*

The Youth Council is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. *Mandatory*: Participate in the Youth Council kick-off orientation
2. Draft Youth Council by-laws and establish Committees
3. Attend monthly Youth Council meetings
4. Attend at least one (1) City Commission meeting a term
5. Develop at least one (1) citywide function or event
6. Develop a public service announcement regarding an issue currently affecting the adolescent population
7. Develop a communication plan to promote and inform youth of “what’s going on”
8. Research and make recommendations to the City Commission regarding a specific task from the 2010 Strategic Plan.
9. Volunteer for a minimum of eight (8) hours at any city-sponsored event
10. Report the Council’s accomplishments to the City Commission at the conclusion of each term.

*Section 5.A Meetings.*

The Youth Council shall meet on the first Wednesday of every month from 4:00 – 5:30 pm, except for the month of January in which orientation will be held on the first weekend. Special called meetings may occur more frequently. The Youth Council shall keep a record of its meetings, including attendance of its members and its findings, recommendations, and actions.

*Section 5.B Call to Order*

*Section 5.C Conduct*

*Section 6. Meeting Attendance.*

Any member of the Youth Council who misses more than three (3) unexcused and consecutive meetings shall lose his or her status as a member of the Youth Council. Absence due to sickness, death, or other emergencies of like nature shall be recognized as excused absences and shall not affect the member’s status on the Council.

*Section 7. Quorum and Voting.*

A quorum of the Youth Council shall consist of a simple majority. The vote of a simple majority of a quorum shall be necessary to take any official council action.

*Section 8. Staff Liaison*

The staff liaison for the Youth Council shall be designated by the City Manager and may consist of multiple persons as deemed necessary. The staff person(s) or a staff designee shall attend all Youth Council meetings.

*Section 9. Advisory Committee.*

The advisory committee will be comprised of seven (7) members: three (3) City staff, one (1) Decatur High School Resource Officer, one (1) Decatur High School representative, one (1) additional representative from Decatur High School or a private school representative, and one (1) City Commissioner or community youth liaison.

The advisory committee will serve as the selection committee for Youth Council members. The committee will also provide guidance to the Youth Council when necessary on the various responsibilities tasked to the Youth Council.

*Section 10. Reports to City Commission*

*Section 11. Bylaw Amendmendments*