

August 11, 2015 – FINAL

**Emory Village Alliance: Statement Regarding 1574 North Decatur Road (Chevron site)
Zoning Board of Appeals Variances - Meeting August 12, 2015**

The Emory Village Alliance (EVA) supports responsible development in the Village that is consistent with the spirit of the Emory Village Zoning Overlay and its Historic Design Guidelines. Before addressing the variance requests for the Chevron site, please note that EVA supports the overall restoration of the historic Chevron building, and the high standards of renovation that are proposed by this applicant.

The application submitted by Mr. Doug Bryant for 1574 North Decatur Road (known commonly as the 'Chevron' site), requests several variances to the Emory Village Zoning Overlay. In response to points outlined in Mr. Bryant's July 2, 2015 letter to the DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals, EVA is not opposing the variance requests that are before the Zoning Board of Appeals today.

EVA takes this position because the Chevron project reflects the renovation and reuse of an existing historic building, which is not specifically addressed in the Emory Village Zoning Overlay, (as opposed to the development of a new building in the Village, which is addressed in the Village Zoning Overlay).

However, we do have specific concerns about certain variance requests.

1. **Safety.** Regarding the variance request for two parking spaces to be located within thirty feet of the front of the Chevron building, we have safety concerns for drivers who reverse out of those spaces, and how to preclude them from reversing over the sidewalk and/or into North Decatur Road. This point was also noted by DeKalb County's Planning Department's Staff Analysis in their staff recommendations (page 3). We request to see a traffic engineer's report showing the safety and feasibility of these spaces and that drivers will not have to back onto the sidewalk in order to exit. We ask that the Board review the engineer's report before granting this variance.

We will encourage the DeKalb County Transportation Department to further examine this issue. Also, EVA requested that the applicant post signage to warn drivers to avoid reversing in the path of pedestrians or vehicular traffic, and we have suggested plantings or fixtures along the edge of the property to provide a physical barrier to direct drivers accordingly.

2. **Landscape.** Related to the variance waiver request to eliminate the five foot wide landscaping buffer area between the parking lot and the build to line, we request that there be some permanent landscaping along North Decatur Road between the existing western parking lot entrance and the property line with the Doc Chey's site. This will soften the absence of landscaping along this section of North Decatur Road.
3. **As a point of inquiry,** EVA would like to understand and clarify how the calculation was made regarding parking credits on this site. We would request a future discussion between several of our Board members and the Planning Department on this point, as it impacts not just this site, but future redevelopment in the Village.