

Berkeley Park Bulletin

February 2008

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Tax Scam Targets Seniors

by Maureen Finneran Hetrick

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scam /skæm/ - noun, verb, scammed, scam·ming.

-noun

1. a confidence game or other fraudulent scheme, esp. for making a quick profit; swindle.

-verb (used with object)

2. to cheat or defraud with a scam.

Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/scam>

The Internal Revenue Service has issued a warning to senior citizens about a metro Atlanta scam that promises to get seniors refunds on Social Security taxes.

According to the IRS, seniors should not fall victim to this scam which offers refunds of the Social Security taxes they have paid.

Here is how the scam works: The con artist tells the victims that he or she can get his or her Social Security payroll taxes refunded for an up-front fee based on the amount of the refund. The con artist also offers to complete and/or prepare the tax return.

Seniors must know that the law does not allow such a refund of Social Security taxes to be paid. If they participate, they could be subject to a penalty for filing a false tax return.

The Fulton County Human Services Department's Communications Unit spoke directly to Mark Green, who released the alert on behalf of the IRS. Green said, "The IRS is very concerned that some people in

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the metro Atlanta area have fallen for this scam. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Getting a refund of Social Security taxes is generally not an option and, in this case, it's not legal."

Green said that when choosing a tax preparer, seniors should look for a person who is credible, accountable and knowledgeable about tax law.

If anyone has any information about suspected tax fraud or a tax scam they should contact the IRS Tax Fraud Hotline at 1-800-829-0433. To read more about tax scams and how to recognize them, visit www.irs.gov. For more information on aging services in Fulton County contact the Office of Aging STARline at (404) 730-6000.

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Membership Update

Maureen Hetrick

404-609-9873

maureenfh@mindspring.com

A new year is upon us, so annual membership fees for the BPNA are now due again. Dues are \$10 per person (seniors pay half price) and \$20 for businesses. We now have a Paypal button on our website, so if you prefer to pay online, you can visit <http://berkeleypark.org/joinbpna.asp>. If you prefer the old-fashioned cash or check method, you can fill out the form [here](#) and return it with your check to our Treasurer, Nina Kleine, or bring cash or check to a meeting.

At our last meeting, we discussed trying to increase the membership of the BPNA by welcoming new neighbors when they move in (plus, it's neighborly!). If you would like to join in this effort, please contact me at 404-609-9873 or maureenfh@mindspring.com.

NPU-D Report

by Jim Martin

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The January 22 nd NPU-D meeting was another quiet one. I am beginning to suspect that quiet NPU meetings are leading indicators of an economic recession, since rezoning generally precedes redevelopment.

We were again scheduled to hear the application to rezone the Healy Brown site to MR5B, which we deferred in November, because the developer did not request a deferral of his Zoning Review Board hearing date until after the city had printed our meeting agendas. We voted to defer this until the spring at the request of the developer who plans to resubmit an application to rezone this site and the adjoining property along Ellsworth to a different zoning category.

There were two other zoning cases that we voted on. One of these was a blanket rezoning of a portion of the Bolton neighborhood from R-5 (which permits techatoriums) to R-4 (which does not). This was similar to the rezoning that we went through in Berkeley Park eight years ago except that the neighborhood did not yet have any techatoriums that would be grandfathered in as ours were.

The other zoning case was a setback reduction for a triangular parcel in Hills Park that we assigned a problematic RG-2 rezoning to several years ago. Although the developer's site plan for this was universally disliked, we voted 8 to 0 with 5 abstentions to endorse it. This was in part a confirmation of a previous endorsement by Hills Park, in part because no one seemed to have any better ideas for the site and in part because we were tired of hearing about it and wanted it to go away.

We also approved two liquor licenses at the meeting. One was for the change of ownership at Chin Chin restaurant in the Kroger mall. The other was for the Bone Garden Cantina which will be moving into the old Ambra location in the lumberyard lofts off of Ellsworth. They are hoping to be open in time for Cinco De Mayo.

Next NPU-D Meeting: Tuesday, February 26, 2008

7:30 pm

Agape Center, 2351 Bolton Road, NW

ALL NPU RESIDENTS ARE WELCOME!

Paper or Plastic?

by Anna Wynne

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404-495-8283

Attention supermarket shoppers: The next time you get asked the question paper or plastic maybe you should consider neither. Did you know plastic bags can take up to 1,000 years to break down, and their constituent chemicals remain in the environment long after that? And for those who thought paper bags were environmentally friendly, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection agency, paper bags, generate 70% more air pollutants and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags. This is because four times as much energy is required to produce paper bags and 85 times as much energy is needed to recycle them.

Americans use 100 billion plastic shopping bags a year, according to Washington-based think tank Worldwatch Institute, or more than 330 a year for every person in the country.

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Countries from Taiwan to Uganda, and cities including Dacca in Bangladesh, have either banned plastic bags outright or impose a levy on consumers. Australia aims to phase them out by the end of this year, and China by June 21.

Whole Foods, is the first U.S. supermarket to commit to completely eliminating disposable plastic grocery bags to help protect the environment and conserve resources. Whole Foods Market has declared a ban of plastic bags by April 22nd 2008, Earth Day.

In order to encourage you all to carry reusable bags, I have ordered several for myself, my friends and my neighbors. The first 20 people to e-mail me a request for these bags to anna.wynne@harrynorman.com will be a lucky recipient of 2 free reusable bags. Please let me know your address and I can drop them off.

Sources: <http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSN2255508520080125>

Help Wanted

Help Wanted: Full time position - accounting experience preferably with an accounting degree and who also has property management experience. Salary to be negotiated. Please fax resume to 404-237-6927 Attn Nan or Ella. Preferred Skyline system experience.

About Us

The Berkeley Park Bulletin is published monthly in print and at www.berkeleypark.org by the Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association, a non-profit organization. It is distributed to all Berkeley Park residents 3 times a year. To subscribe to the monthly edition, submit an article or Talk Back letter, or inquire about advertising, contact the editor, Maureen Hetrick, at 404-609-9873 or maureenfh@mindspring.com. We accept appropriate articles from all Berkeley Park residents or other interested community members at the discretion of the editor and as space permits.

Membership in the BPNA is \$10 per person (up to 3 adults per address are eligible to become members), and \$5 for seniors. To join the association, attend a monthly meeting and pay dues to the treasurer, [Nina Kleine](#), or the president, [Ron Horgan](#). If you cannot attend a meeting but wish to join, or for more information, email us at info@berkeleypark.org.

Berkeley Park is run solely on dues as well as advertisements from our sponsors. Please take a moment to visit our [sponsors](#) and thank them for their support of Berkeley Park.

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Calendar

To place events on the calendar, please contact
Maureen Finneran Hetrick at maureenfh@mindspring.com or 404-609-9873.

February

Tuesday, February 5

Georgia Primary Election

Vote for Republican or Democratic candidates,
as well as a Municipal Option Sales Tax
Berkeley Park votes at the Senior Center
For more info, call (404) 730-7072

Friday - Sunday, February 8-10

Performance: Peter Pan

Fri.-Sat. at 8:00PM Sundays at 2:00PM
The Ferst Center for the Arts at GA Tech
349 Ferst Dr. NW
Contact: (404)894-9600 or
www.atlantalyrictheatre.com

Monday, February 18

Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association meeting

7 pm
Senior Center, 1705 Commerce Dr.
www.berkeleypark.org
Contact: Ron Horgan
404-355-0220
rhorgan@ansleygolfclub.org

Tuesday, February 26

NPU-D Meeting

Agape Center
2351 Bolton Road, Atlanta
7:30 pm
Contact: Jim Martin
404-351-6949
james.martin@me.gatech.edu