

Berkeley Park Bulletin

April
2008

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President's Report

by Ron Horgan
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My dear neighbors,

At last month's meeting a few things were discussed that I would like to focus this letter on. NCA and Traffic.

The first issue is the ever emotional topic of the involvement of our neighborhood with the Northwest Community Alliance ([1](#)). In January of 2007, we invited Mike Koblentz to our meeting to speak on behalf of the NCA with regard to BPNA's official stance of not being part of that organization. In the past year I have had several conversations with Mike, mainly to keep him informed with the neighborhood's progress toward claiming the Selig funds. The funds are another topic so that is all that I will speak on that for now. I have attended several of the meetings of the NCA over the last year and a half as well, mainly to try and understand what that organization is all about. I am still working on gaining a clearer picture but for the most part "my" interpretation of that organization is that it is a group of developers and residents that get together and invite various individuals to speak at meetings to address concerns that effect both groups. Anyone can go to the meetings and be heard. There is a board comprised of

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developers and residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. I am working on learning more moving forward and hope to give a more detailed report at the next meeting.

Last month Jeffery Smythe from the Senior Citizens Center was approached by Mike Koblentz and asked if the NCA could relocate their bimonthly meetings to the Center. Knowing that the NCA was a community-based organization, Jeff wanted to know if I would be willing to help facilitate the meeting space for the NCA. At the same time one of the NCA neighborhood board reps was relocating. In following conversations with Mike, I offered to help the NCA with Jeff's request in return for an opportunity to be the replacement on the board. With Scott Selig on the board I thought it would be a good way for me to get to work closer with Scott and Mike on the BPNA donation from the Selig Group and to keep our neighborhood involved with ongoing developments surrounding the neighborhood. One of the request from Mike Koblentz was that I propose to the BPNA dialogue to consider changing our stance on the NCA. I did that at last month's meeting. As always there were questions and concerns for and against our involvement. The general idea is that I will would get involved as an individual and not as an official BPNA spokesperson for now. We will continue to have update and dialogue on the issues and concerns. I do feel that we are better served by more affiliation than less.

The second topic that I would like to report on is that of traffic calming. Over the years the BPNA has had many discussions concerning this topic and at the last meeting it was proposed that we come up with a FINAL plan to vote on as a neighborhood and try to get the city to act on our requests. Jennifer Gibson has been asked to head up this very important system improvement project to which I am very appreciative. The first Sunday in March, Jennifer sent up a meeting open to anyone who wanted to be part of the process. She also sent out emails for anyone who was unable to make the meeting to get input on the process. At the March meeting the main focus will be on this plan that has been developed over the years and presented for review by the committee. Jennifer and the committee have placed the plan on the website so that you can review it before the March 17th meeting. Please plan to attend this meeting as we hope to finalize a document that can be voted on at the April meeting.

Also start thinking of ideas for a neighborhood spring fling! I would love to get our neighborhood businesses involved with this again so that we can all learn about each other and enjoy what we all should take pride in, "Berkeley Park".

Thanks, Ron

For more information on the NCA and Berkeley Park's history with it, please read [Jim Martin's article](#) about it in the March 2007 newsletter.

Butterfly Wishes for Ellie

My husband and I would love to tell you about a great cause that is near and dear to our heart.....mostly because it involves our 23 month old daughter, Ellie.

Ellie was born in April 2006 with a very rare genetic skin condition called Epidermolysis Bullosa. It is incurable and there is no medicine or treatment for the disorder. We had no idea of this until she was born, as it is one of the disorders not apparent on ultrasound. She is missing a vital collagen in her skin that forms fibers to keep her skin adhered to her body. So as you can imagine, her skin is extremely weak and

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fragile. As if the skin involvement isn't enough, it can also affect her internally in terms of eating and nutrition.

If you have ever seen her as we walk through the neighborhood you would remember her as her arms and legs are wrapped and most people think she has a broken arm or a burn that is healing. In fact, she is wrapped on her legs and arms and occasionally her torso for either protection from further damage or to encourage healing.



We are holding our Second Annual Butterfly Wishes For Ellie at the Park Tavern on May 8th. We have chosen the non-profit organization DebRA (www.debra.org) as our beneficiary as they not only fund research for this disorder but they also supply support and education to families who suffer with this.

We would love to see neighbors there, those we know and don't know and this is a great cause to give to. It is easy to get the information as we have a website dedicated just for the event at www.butterflywishesforellie.com. You can even see Ellie's smiling face on the site.



Thanks for your support!!

Shawn and Andrew Tavani
755 Berkeley Avenue

PS. In case any of you caught Oprah on March 31, she did a piece on the disorder and a celebrity fundraiser that was hosted at Eva Longoria's new restaurant.

Invest One Hour, Save Three Days

When disaster strikes, there's no time to prepare. With that in mind, it's critical to invest time and money now that will save you in the long run. It's easy to overlook something as important as preparing for a complete unknown such as a terrorist attack, pandemic flu or tornado in today's busy environment. But even devoting as little as one hour on the way home from work or on a relaxed weekend can pay off tremendously in a disaster situation.

How? In one hour you can purchase water, canned food, a NOAA weather radio and a flashlight with extra batteries which can help make you self-sufficient for three days. Ready Georgia is committed to helping its residents and sincerely wants them to be prepared in the worst cases. That's why we encourage you to turn to the [Ready Georgia](#) campaign for emergency supply lists and pertinent preparedness information today. Remember, taking the right steps now can save hardship in a disaster situation. Get ready today!

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To find out more about emergency preparedness in Georgia and get a full list of suggest emergency supplies, visit the Ready Georgia Web site at www.ready.ga.gov .

NPU-D Report

by Jim Martin

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There was a pretty full agenda for the March 25 th NPU-D meeting. In spite of this we were able to wrap things about by 9:30, only half an hour behind schedule.

We had two zoning cases on the agenda that no one had previously requested a deferral for and no one showed up to present. One of these was for a transitional yard setback reduction for a development in Riverside. Based on the faith of neighbors who were familiar with the project, we voted to defer this case by a margin of 7 to 3 and 5 abstentions. The other case was for a dense residential project at the corner of Ellsworth and Chattahoochee that we had deferred in November and again in January. Based on the faith of neighbors who were familiar with the project, we voted to deny this rezoning by a margin of 13 to 0.

We unanimously approved the two zoning variances in Berkeley Park that we had endorsed at the March 17 th BPNA meeting: the side-yard setback variance for the Shorters' addition and the parking reduction for the self-storage facility at the corner of Chattahoochee and Howell Mill. The latter approval was conditioned on widening the planting strip in front of the project from the required 5 feet to 10 feet to allow for larger healthier street trees.

We had a presentation about the proposed project for the corner of Northside Drive and Deering Road. We deferred making any decision about this until we could review the alternatives with regard to zoning and the DRI (development of regional impact) study was completed. The DRI study primarily involves traffic, and there was a lot of concern for the working of the intersection once cars are turning in and out of the new development. As I mentioned at the March BPNA meeting, the requested zoning was for MR-5A, a category that permits double the density of the proposed project and of the next less dense zoning category (MR-4A). The rationale for the additional zoned density was that MR-4A limits the size of individual restaurant tenants to 4,000 sq feet, which might be too small, whereas MR-5A permits these to be up to 8,000 sq feet which is just right. Oddly, the nature of zoning restrictions precludes handling this through the obvious and simple path of a zoning variance. This leaves three reasonable alternatives to the proposed zoning other than redesigning the project: (1) keep an MR-4A zoning where a larger restaurant tenant is split between two permissible 4,000 sq foot spaces and therefore doesn't violate any restrictions, (2) an MR-5B rezoning which has densities similar to MR-5A, but has transitional height restrictions for developments that adjoin single-family residences, or (3) a PDMU (planned development mixed-use) rezoning that spells out appropriate conditions specific to this project. (ed note: the site plan for this project is available [here](#).)

We also voted on a city ordinance which proposed to levy a "drought surcharge" in our water bills. The vote was 13 to 1 against this ordinance, with mine being the lone dissenting vote. It was unclear to me where everyone else thought that the shortfall in the watershed budget should be made up. No one seemed interested in offering any alternatives to the proposed fare structure, which was a flat 15% increase on all usage above 3 CCF.

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Next NPU-D Meeting: Tuesday, April 22, 2008

7:30 pm

Agape Center, 2351 Bolton Road, NW

ALL NPU RESIDENTS ARE WELCOME!

What's New In Berkeley Park

by Jeffrey Rogerson

This summer marks twelve years for our household in lovely Berkeley Park. In that time we have seen numerous changes in and around our neighborhood. We have all witnessed the recent surge in retail and restaurant shops in northwest Atlanta. It is debatable as to whether all of the recent additions are in the best interest of our neighborhood. One thing is certain and that is we live in an urban setting and development is inevitable (especially in our fair city).

For so long one of the few distressing things about living in Berkeley Park was the dearth of good restaurant choices. Well, it seems as if the tide is turning and I wanted to provide some information concerning two of the latest additions to our neighborhood confines. It is all about choices now and there is no need to drive to Midtown or Buckhead to experience some casual or fine dining.

Recently, due to our current house renovation, I have had the rather unfortunate task of finding a suitable work office space since I normally work out of our home. Starbucks was the first place I settled. Before you start groaning, this is NOT a review or endorsement for Starbucks. In fact, it was not long before I started looking elsewhere given the noisy and crowded atmosphere (not to mention the coffee is really not that good). We were having dinner one night in Berkeley Heights and noticed a quaint little coffee shop that seemed to have many things in its favor. First, it was not a chain and second, it advertised free Wi-Fi. I was intrigued and immediately went in and met the owner, Chris Sanders. Tazza coffee and espresso bar, is the new coffee shop located 1700 Northside Drive and can be accessed from Bellemeade. The coffee and coffee specialty drinks are outstanding and the atmosphere is cozy yet sophisticated. It was the perfect haven away from the bustle of Howell Mill. Stop in and mention this article and Chris will comp you a regular coffee with a purchase. Let him know we welcome him to the area and once you taste the coffee or latte, you will return.

There is also a new restaurant called the Social House at the end of Holmes on Howell Mill. We all know there have been many tenants (clearing my throat) in this building. Well, I think the current tenant may be around for some time given the quality of the food, the atmosphere, service, and diversity of the menu. We have been there multiple times and have never had a bad meal. The menu ranges from oatmeal and exotic omelets to a blue-cheese crusted rib eye with eggs. It is open for breakfast and lunch and represents a nice compliment to the West Egg down the road (we love the West Egg also). I can personally recommend the cajun sausage and cream cheese omelet, the spinach, sun dried tomato and mushroom omelet, and the home fries are really good. They also have stone ground grits and the staff seems really pleased to see you come by. Lorenzo Wyche is the owner and he has multiple restaurants in the city. Go in and say hey to Kate Pedrick, the manager, and let her know we are glad they are here. Did I mention you can walk there from Berkeley Park and I know Jim Martin appreciates that!

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IKEA Is Helping Atlantans Go Green

by Anna Wynne

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With [IKEA](#) being located right around the corner from us at Atlantic Station, I thought it would be relevant to show the neighbors the recycling initiatives this store is currently promoting. Also this is one of the few places in Atlanta where you can recycle your light bulbs and they are offering an incentive to bring them in (see below).

IKEA is asking their customers to join them in reducing plastic bags usage by 50% - from 70 million to 35 million in the first year. Beginning March 15th they will charge 5 cents for every "throw-away" plastic bag. All proceeds⁽¹⁾ from the first year of this program will be donated to American Forests, the nation's oldest non-profit conservation organization, to plant trees and offset CO2 emissions. REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE! IKEA has a great alternative to disposable plastic bags- the IKEA Blue Bag. They have reduced the price on this large, reusable and durable bag to 59 cents. One of these bags can replace hundreds of disposable plastic bags and has lots of great uses!

Customers can recycle their alkaline batteries and fluorescent bulbs to the IKEA Recycling Center located by the cash lanes. While you are shopping why not pick up a three-pack of IKEA 11W energy efficient bulbs (Lighting Dept.), which use up to 80% less energy than an incandescent bulb! Three-pack 11W energy efficient bulbs only \$5.99! Other retailers sell a single comparable bulb at \$4.99 each! (comparable to a regular 60w bulb).

Every Wednesday....Recycle Lightbulbs and receive 10% off your AS-IS purchase in the AS-IS Department. Discount only applies to AS-IS merchandise and must be used that day. Lightbulbs must be dropped off in AS-IS to receive discount. (2)

1. A maximum contribution of \$1,750,000 within 12 months
2. Offer valid at IKEA Atlanta only throughout the month or while quantities last unless otherwise noted.

Secretary's Report

by Michael Hagearty

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Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association

17 March 2008

Senior Citizens Center conference room

In Ron Horgan's absence, Jennifer Gibson led this meeting of 11 neighbors and friends.

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- Jessica Hill spoke on behalf of Homeland Self-Storage, which plans to redevelop the site at 890 Chattahoochee Avenue. They approached the neighborhood for its approval on an application for a special parking exception that would reduce the number of parking spaces typically designated for a commercial property of this size. The variance would reduce the number of spaces from 149 to 13, a number that is based upon a formula and consistent with industry standards. In addition to the self-storage, there will be seven spaces set aside to rent to individuals as office space [The property is inside the Beltline overlay, thus the office space requirement] utilizing a general access point. BPNA voted unanimously to support the application.
- Kim & Chris Shorter (1638 Tallulah St.) received unanimous neighborhood support for a variance application that will encroach on the property's side yard setback. They plan to add square footage to the property, building along the existing building line. The Shorters also indicated that their immediate neighbors were comfortable with the plans.
- Jim Martin briefed the group on the progress for a [proposed redevelopment](#) at Northside Drive and Deering Road. Though technically in NPU-E, the developers (Courtland Partners) will need to present to NPU-D first. Courtland wants to add a commercial component (specifically, a restaurant) to the project, and has filed a rezoning application from MR4A to MR5A. Martin suggested he was more comfortable with the land remaining as MR4A with a variance application. His justification was that in the event the developer pulls the plug, the property can then be sold with the new zoning attached. The best way to mitigate such a circumstance, he argued, is to prevent the site from being rezoned in the first place.

Traffic Committee Update

by Jennifer Gibson
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Summary of meeting with Clair Muller on traffic concerns, March 20, 2008

A meeting was held today at the office of City Council Member Clair Muller to discuss traffic concerns in Berkeley Park. BPNA President Ron Horgan was joined by Berkeley Park residents Melody McClerode and Jennifer Gibson. Also present was Katie Howard, Senior Assistant, Lorn Whittaker, Chief Traffic Engineer, and Nursef Kadir, Public Works Manager, Sr.

The most current draft of the Berkeley Park traffic plan was reviewed, as we discussed the traffic problems that prompted these requests for improvements and the feasibility of each item.

The Kroger Driveway dedication is still expected to happen at an unknown future date. The City has recently been in contact with the property owners concerning their wish to install a traffic light on Howell Mill and White St. The agreement they have that allows them to connect their parking lot with the District of Howell Mill entrance though an easement is about to expire. We can hope that the upcoming discussions regarding entry to the Kroger Plaza will result in a solution that includes the completion of the driveway dedication.

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The problem of cut-through traffic and speeding on Bellemeade was discussed with questions about whether additional stop signs (at Kroger driveway or at Buchanan) would be effective in slowing traffic or making it safer for pedestrians. Traffic counts will need to be done in order to make this decision.

Bulb-outs were discussed at length, and the representatives from the Office of Transportation (Whittaker and Kadir) will need to assess whether or not this traffic calming measure is feasible for these streets before we can petition for an installation.

Installation of a new traffic light on Howell Mill at 17th St. has already been approved. We should see that happening very soon.

Katie Howard offered to write to DOT on our behalf for the last request on our master plan to raise the median on Northside Dr. and perhaps create a planted area there. DOT has already responded saying that the request will be reviewed by their traffic ops person, Mr. Calvin Duncan, to determine whether this change will be made.

Katie Howard will also provide BPNA with the name of the GDOT official who could assist us in other improvements along Northside Drive and near the Northside Drive/I-75 interchange.

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.

Calendar

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

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March

Monday, March 17

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, March 25

NPU-D Meeting

Agape Center

2351 Bolton Road, Atlanta

7:30 pm

Contact: Jim Martin

404-351-6949

james.martin@me.gatech.edu

Saturday, March 29

Earth Hour Atlanta

8 - 9 pm

Turn off lights for one hour this Saturday night