

Berkeley Park Bulletin

April 2009

In this Issue:

[Home](#)

[Photos of Berkeley Park](#)

[Hammersmith](#)

[President's Report](#)

[About Us](#)

[Tawn Chi / TC Properties](#)

[NPU-D Report](#)

[Join BPNA Today!!](#)

[Jeff DePaola ReMax](#)

[Beautification Report](#)

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[Florist Atlanta](#)

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[Andrew T. Crawford
Ironworks](#)

President's Report

by Michael Wagoner
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Can you believe Spring is officially here in Berkeley Park? I can't tell you how excited I am to spend time riding bikes with the children and firing up the grill once the pollen clears and the weather stays above freezing. I hope to see each of you enjoying the Neighborhood in your own way. As always, please be aware of traffic on the streets, and realize with the warm weather, crime tends to spike a bit. Keep an eye on your lawn mowers and gardening tools. Keeping in line with the topic of Spring, we have a couple items to tell you about.

The Beautification Committee will be coordinating clean up days, annual and perennial plantings, and general maintenance throughout Berkeley Park. Please take a look at [Elizabeth's article](#) on page 4, and contact her directly for more details. This is an excellent opportunity to make a noticeable difference in Berkeley Park, as well as meet and spend time with your neighbors.

It's also time to nail down a date for the 3rd Annual BPNA Chili Cook Off. Last year's event was held on Sunday June 22nd. There has been a request to move the date up a few weeks so it's not so hot, maybe late in May??? We will discuss the details and determine the date in the April BPNA Meeting.

I would like to encourage you all to attend the next Meeting which is at 7:00pm on April 20th. In addition to the items above, we will discuss the current state of the Antone Street Speed Hump Petition, schedules for the approved enhancements to Bellemeade, and ideas to utilize the lot on Verner Street. I hope to see you all then.

Michael Wagoner

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President- Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association
404-391-3573

NPU-D Report

by Jim Martin

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The March 24 th NPU-D meeting was one of those long ones. There was no obvious reason for the excessive length of the meeting other than that people felt compelled to talk at length on a variety of subjects with little apparent significance. We were visited for the first time by state representative Elly Dobbs, who is a new representative for the central portion of the NPU. Until she contacted me I was not aware that the NPU spanned three different state congressional districts.

We voted to support an application for public financing by the owners of the Hampton Oaks apartments in Bolton. They are planning to renovate this complex in order to provide improved low-income housing. People generally agreed that this was a good idea, but expressed concern about property crimes committed by juveniles who are currently living in the complex. We endorsed an application for a setback variance to allow for an addition to a single family residence in Underwood Hills, which seemed pretty straightforward. We did not vote on the resolution to restrict the tethering of dogs, because this had already been passed by the council before our meeting.

The only contentious issue of the evening was the liquor license application for Chili Peppers restaurant on Green St. This was the application that we deferred action on at the March BPNA meeting. The issue then was that we were not told what the parking requirements were for the business, and if or how those had been satisfied. At the NPU-D meeting we were told that the parking requirement for the restaurant had been satisfied by leasing 50 spaces from the owner of Swinging Richards. Swinging Richards parking requirements, we were told, were satisfied by the remaining 75 spaces in the lot. This was said to be fine because the legal requirements for Richards were somewhere in the range of 42 spaces, although the exact number was not given because all the relevant records were very very old and difficult to locate. The argument was presented that the new liquor licenses for both businesses must be OK because they had been issued for these locations before. Apparently, the city could not have made a mistake in issuing them, because the city does not make mistakes. Thus, we could all feel assured that the parking situation had been thoroughly investigated. Implicit in all of this was that Swinging Richards had *accidentally* lied to us when they applied for their liquor license in August, as that application stated that they were required to have 133 parking spaces and that this requirement was satisfied by all of the spaces in the parking lot from which 50 are now being leased for a different use along with 25 others that appear not to have ever existed. Most of the folks at the meeting bought the argument that we could not hold the restaurant's "owner" responsible for the mistakes of the club's "owner", and the license was approved by a vote of 12 to 1. No doubt the club's next owner will receive similar support when he next makes the argument that he can't be held responsible for the mistakes by the restaurant's "owner". An interesting side note to all of this was that both the club owner's license application from August and the restaurant owner's license application in March were written in the same handwriting, so whoever is making these mistakes is the same person, who apparently fails to consult with himself between application requests. Another interesting side note is that that no one is

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willing to commit to the actual size of Swinging Richards (i.e. the building not the Richards). Building permits indicate that it could not be any larger than 4,200 square feet, tax records indicate that it is 5,700 square feet and license records indicate that it is 10,000 square feet. How the building grew by 1,500 to 5,800 square feet without any building permits is a mystery.

On the topic of adult businesses, the city has revoked the building permits issued for the Starship on Northside Drive, because the owner submitted fraudulent information in his permit application. The owner has appealed this revocation and is now fighting with the city to have his permits reinstated. The bad news here is that the matter is not yet resolved, but the good news is that the city is now on our side and the odds of a favorable resolution are looking a lot better.

**Next NPU-D meeting:
Tuesday, April 28, 2009
7:30 pm
Agape Center, 2351 Bolton Road, NW
ALL NPU RESIDENTS ARE WELCOME**

Beautification Report

by Elizabeth Sears
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There will be a neighborhood clean up day on Sat. April 25 from 9am - 12pm. (In the event that this date is not convenient for a lot of people, we can change it to Saturday, May 2. If there is an overwhelming response for the May date -- or an underwhelming response in general -- I will announce the changed date) Tasks for the morning will include trash pick up all over the neighborhood, entrance signs maintenance, miscellaneous green space/empty lot clean up, and Howell Mill sidewalks clean up. This is work that can all be accomplished in a few hours and without any major purchases or donations. Helpful donations include mulch, lawn bags, plants - annuals and perennials, and maybe gloves.

Please contact me if you are able to attend and/or you wish to donate materials. Thanks so much.

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Berkeley Park in the Past

Here are a few fun photographs of Berkeley Park locations from back in the day. This photograph was taken across the street from the Underwood Methodist Church at 1671 Howell Mill Road. Apparently, there has been a car dealership on that corner for quite awhile. The photograph is from the website atlantatimemachine.com and is credited as being taken in September of 1955.



Special Collections Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

The website is run by Greg Germani and has a lot of great photographs of Atlanta in the past and present. With our city changing so fast, it's a fascinating peek into where we've been, and sometimes, where we seem to be going again! The Atlanta Journal Constitution ran an article on Mr. Germani in February, and you can read it here: http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2009/02/07/atlanta_time_machine.html.

Mr Germani utilizes the Georgia State University Library's online photography collection (www.library.gsu.edu/spcoll/photos/). In that collection can be found many photos of what Berkeley Park would have looked like in another time.

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The Atlanta Journal Constitution also ran a recent article on Atlanta in the 1970's (<http://projects.ajc.com/topics/metro/70s-city/>) which featured a photograph of Melvin's Restaurant, which was housed in a distinctive building on Northside Dr. near Bishop St. circa 1979.



This photograph is listed in the GSU archives as being taken at the Smith Brothers Texaco Service Station at Northside Drive and Bishop St. in 1952.

Check out the websites and see for yourself how Atlanta has changed.

Let's Spring Forward Together

Jeffrey Rogerson
BPNA Board Member at-large
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It is that most wonderful time of the year in Atlanta. It is a time when we all renew our outdoor zeal for the many activities we can now enjoy. Perhaps we will dust off our bicycles from their winter off season or get back to nature by sprucing up our yards or even plant a vegetable garden. Whatever your desire it is now time to enjoy it once again with only the vigor that spring provides.

Another way to renew ourselves is to become active in the BPNA. Participation in your neighborhood is an excellent outlet for your inner collaborative spirit. Our neighborhood desperately needs you to become active. Not everyone has the same level of desire and commitment but we all can provide something invaluable to our neighborhood. We have a number of activities planned this year and it is all for our enrichment we can enjoy as a collective group of friends and neighbors. This spring we have a clean-up day planned for April 25 so we can concentrate on problem areas in our neighborhood that need our attention. Local businesses will provide refreshments and we provide the sweat and tools to make Berkeley Park a more beautiful place to live.

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Please remember how fortunate we are to live in this beautiful setting within the city. Yes, we have some warts such as crime, absentee landlords that do not care for their property, traffic issues, graffiti, closed fire station and others. However, it is how we work together to help alleviate and possibly eradicate these issues that is the key. The medium for that collaboration is the BPNA. We may not all agree on everything but working together we will find common ground and consensus.

Recently the BPNA board members worked with the city to determine what our options might be to combat the excessive speeding on our streets. The Atlanta DPW provided some options but most options were cost prohibitive and not conducive to our narrow streets. The DPW conducted several street tests to determine what streets might be eligible for speed humps. Antone Street was the only street to qualify based on the testing criteria. We recently had a BPNA planning meeting for the residents of Antone to discuss the possible addition of speed humps to combat the excessive speeding on that street. There were less than a handful of Antone street residents to participate in this discussion. There was a petition drive to be discussed that needed 75% approval from the residents on Antone. In the end there was very good discussion on both sides as this topic stirred some very intense debate and feelings. This level of apathy can be demoralizing but also costly. If you own a home and decisions are being made without your input it could be a very costly decision to you and your family down the road when you try to sell your home. We need to educate ourselves not only by what we read in the media but also by collaboration with our neighbors.

In March at the BPNA meeting we were able to agree on some other improvements that are available to us. They include updating existing crosswalks, improving ADA ramps, and tightening turn radii on Bellemeade at the Commerce/Tallulah and Buchanan intersections. Some additional items we are working with the city include:

- o Change out Speed Limit Signs on Holmes from 30MPH to 25MPH (approved but not erected)
- o Add No Parking Signs at the end of Verner at Howell Mill on the South Side of the street
- o Re-painting of all cross-walks, stop bars, etc. through Berkeley Park
- o Traffic Signal installation at 17th Street
- o Installation of a No Left Turn Sign on Howell Mill South at Verner to enforce the double-double yellow lines
- o Synchronization of the Traffic Signals on Howell Mill from the District to Chattahoochee

We are also planning our annual Chili Cook-off but we are moving it up this year. We are tentatively looking at a May or June date. There will be live music, food and drink, and those neighbors you have desired to meet. We should have a date confirmed by the next BPNA meeting on April 20. We would love to see you there at the Seniors Center on Commerce at 7 pm. The BPNA meetings are held every third Monday of the month.

So let us all renew ourselves physically and mentally this year. Let us strive to be more involved with our neighborhood and the collective conscience of concerned neighbors. It takes us all to determine the

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BPNA direction and not just a few. Our renewed collective spirit can work wonders together but will wither when apathy rears its ugly head.

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.

Effective January 1, 2009, membership in the BPNA is \$20 per person (up to 3 adults per address are eligible to become members), and \$10 for seniors. To join the association, attend a monthly meeting and pay dues to the treasurer, [Nina-Daniela McCormack](#), or the president, [Michael Wagoner](#). If you cannot attend a meeting but wish to join, or for more information, email us at info@berkeleypark.org.

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