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Berkeley Park Bulletin

February 2010

In this Issue:

[Home](#)

[City Council Report](#)

[Doctor's Express](#)

[President's Report](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Tawn Chi / TC Properties](#)

[NPU-D Report](#)

[About Us](#)

[Jeff DePaola ReMax](#)

[Secretary Report](#)

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President's Report

by Michael Wagoner

mwagoner@clcnetworks.com

404-391-3573

Happy February and I hope everyone is staying warm. Punxsutawney Phil says we have six more weeks to go. Due to access issues at the Senior Citizens Center, last months Meeting was relocated to the Atlanta Global Preparatory Academy. Thanks to Head of School, Angela Edmond for facilitating this last minute change. The timing was perfect seeing how Angela was on the Agenda to present the initial plans for a Neighborhood Playground at the School. In conjunction with Kaboom, Berkeley Park and Atlanta Global Prep will start discussions to determine the feasibility of this effort. I hope to have further discussions in the February Meeting, so please plan to attend.

We also received an update from Sgt. Ormond of Zone 2. Violent crime is down, but smash and grabs are up. Zone 2 has increased both marked and unmarked patrols in the area, and APD is currently working with Code and Zoning in an effort to cite illegal Boarding Homes. To date, 6 separate (yes 6) illegal rooming houses have been cited. I have requested an update on these citations from Lt. Cotter and ADA King. Lt. Cotter could not make the meeting, but wanted everyone to have his cell number in the event the you see illegal activity in the Neighborhood. That number is 404-617-8030.

We had a healthy discussion regarding ideas to bolster new Membership into the BPNA. Many options were offered including a BPNA Coupon Book for area restaurants, New Resident Welcome Packets, and mugs and tote bags. But in order to complete this in an effective manner, we need more Volunteers. I am asking once again for 2 Representatives from each street to act as a direct link between the Association and their street. The main task initially will be to gather information from all of your Neighbors, and provide information about what the BPNA does on behalf of Berkeley Park. I am confident with greater Neighbor participation we will be able to accomplish so much more.

Lastly, in accordance with the BPNA By-Laws, two expenditures proposed in last months Meeting need to be announced. These items will be voted on in the February Meeting, but only current Dues Paying Members are eligible to vote. The Association begins its Fiscal Year January 1, so in order to vote, your 2010 Dues must be up to date.

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Proposal 1- A motion was entered to allocate \$2,500.00 from the BPNA General Account to purchase a new batch of BPNA Flags. Approximate cost is \$100.00 per Flag.

Proposal 2- A motion was entered to allocate \$1,400.00 from the BPNA General Account to purchase 10 new Neighborhood Signs. Approximate cost is \$140.00 per Sign.

Thanks for your time, and I hope to see you all at this months Meeting.

Michael Wagoner
President- Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association
404-391-3573
<http://www.berkeleypark.org/>

Next Meeting:

**Monday, February 15, 2010
Senior Center
1705 Commerce Drive
7:00 pm**

NPU-D Report

by Jim Martin
james.martin@me.gatech.edu

The January-26 th NPU-D meeting was more chaotic than usual. We only had one zoning case on the agenda, which was the source of the confusion, so the meeting did not run beyond its designated 9:00 pm ending time. This was the third month in a row that we have been able to end on time. The rezoning application was for the Atlanta Oxygen building at 1746 Defoor Ave in Underwood Hills. The owner was seeking to rezone the site from its current R-4 residential designation to a C-1 commercial zoning. The problem with this was that no one could figure out why he really wanted to do this and he was either unable or unwilling to explain this to us. The discussion was further complicated by the fact that he had presented his application to the Underwood Hills Neighborhood the night before the NPU meeting. There, he raised several issues there that were not referred to in his application. Although the neighborhood voted to deny the application, no one had time to research the relevant facts pertaining to the new assertions between the two meetings.

The applicant, Mr. Gibson, seemed to have essentially three arguments: that the current zoning was fundamentally “incorrect”, that he wanted to put an addition onto his building, and that he wanted to have a dumpster. Exactly how or why the recurring theme of an existing “incorrectness” entered into this was unclear. His current use of the building, which we were told would continue, is legally permitted under the current zoning. The current zoning was in place when Mr. Gibson bought the building, and there does not seem to be any history of an error having been made when this zoning was assigned decades earlier.

No one could quite understand the link between the proposed construction and the proposed zoning. As it was described, the construction would have required a variance under the new zoning or a, nominally equivalent, special exception under the existing zoning. Thus, rezoning appeared to impede rather than facilitate this project.

The discussion surrounding the dumpster was the most bizarre element of all this. At the meeting, Mr. Gibson seemed to assert that he needed the rezoning in order to get a dumpster for the site, although the application

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made no reference to this and no one was aware of any relationship in city code that tied these two things together. I checked on this the next day and found nothing in the city code. When I followed this up with a call to Mr. Gibson, he told me that the dumpster has nothing to do with the zoning. I still do not understand why this topic consumed so much time at the meeting.

In the end we voted 9 to 7 to deny the rezoning with 6 abstentions. It was pretty clear from the discussion that most of those who abstained or voted against the denial would have preferred to defer the case because they couldn't make any sense out of it, but they suspected that there had to be some sense there. My suspicion is that the sense is tied to a desire to resell the property. That was the situation that we had with the Van Winkle property on Bellemeade several years ago. In that case, none of the arguments that were presented to the neighborhood had anything to do with the real motives for the application. This case will go to the ZRB on February 4 th . Hopefully, that discussion will be better focused on the relevant facts.

Major Browning, our new zone two police commander attended the NPU meeting. The news on crime that he presented seemed to be generally good; with the previous week having been one of the quietest that anyone could remember.

On the evening after the NPU meeting, I attended the ARC truck-route planning meeting. The folks running this spent a great deal of time explaining to us all what this planning study was not going to be about. This left me with the impression that it is probably a complete waste of time and effort. The result of the study is intended to be a set of recommendations for specific improvements to roadways that will better accommodate trucks. There is no specific funding tied to implementing these recommendations and there will not be any recommendations to restrict truck traffic elsewhere. Thus, the only way that this study could possibly reduce truck traffic in our area is if funding is found to make the proposed improvements and if those improvements make alternative routes so incredibly attractive that truckers who would otherwise drive through Berkeley Park cannot resist them.

One interesting thing that I learned from speaking to a trucker at the ARC meeting was that the requiring trucks to use I-285 instead of going through town on I-75/85 adds truck traffic to our surface streets by giving trucks that are already inside the perimeter an incentive to make their way through town to get to the interstate rather than coming around I-285 and turning inward. Berkeley park gets a hefty dose of this traffic because trucks along Marietta Blvd that are headed for destinations southwest or west of the city would rather come into our neighborhood down Chattahoochee to get to I-20 west than drive around the perimeter.

Secretary's Report

by Amy Hoover
amyh@talentzoo.com

Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association January 2010 meeting minutes

The meeting was moved to Atlanta Global Prep Academy to the Senior Center being inaccessible at the time of the meeting.

11 members were in attendance, plus Angela from the Academy (mentioned above), and Officer Ormond of APD Zone 2, who attended in lieu of Lt. Cotter.

First subject discussed was status of the BPNA account. The current balance is \$8577. Expenses in 2009 included the 08 and 09 holiday party, newsletter printing costs, meet & greets, lawncare, and the chili cookoff.

It's a new year, and that means dues are due. Please be on the lookout for renewal forms via flyers, mail, or email.

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We discussed at length the desire to gain more members in 2010 and grow our group of participating residents in the BPNA. Amy briefly outlined ideas for an early Spring membership drive, targeting residents who haven't joined the Association in the past. Ideas included designating a special week for the membership drive, buying tote bags with the BPNA logo that would be given away with memberships (similar to PBS drives), and a coupon book from local businesses to be given to dues-paying members. Also discussed regarding memberships was the price, and modifying the dues to include access to both the chili cookoff and the holiday party. It was agreed upon that a door-to-door effort should be put together to truly make an impact during the membership drive which would likely mean 2 block captains from each street to spearhead the efforts. Joel and Amy agreed to work on putting more formal marketing plans for increased membership and participation.

Jim Martin proposed taking \$2,500 from the BPNA account to purchase new flags to have available for sale to residents; the cost is \$100 each. Those in attendance agreed by vote.

Mike Wagoner showed samples of new neighborhood signs that are being considered to replace the current signs reminding the neighborhood of our meetings. They will also include a designated area for specific announcements.

Office Ormond then spoke. He distributed Lt. Cotter's cell phone for all residents to keep in case of need: 404-617-0830. Also, Lt. Cotter oversees the impact team now, which often works behind the scene but has been recently successful in our area. It was noted a recent arrest was made on Holmes based on a call from a resident that there was a suspicious person attempting to enter multiple houses through the front doors. Various zoning enforcement issues were also discussed. And as always, Office Ormond reminded us as residents to call 911 when you see anything at all suspicious, and when you do have a need to call 911, please be specific about the immediate threat level to yourself or others at that time so your call can be prioritized correctly.

Angela then spoke about a playground project she is pursuing at the Prep Academy. She would like BPNA to fund 1/2 of the cost to turn the courtyard between the Sizemore buildings on Bellemeade into a semi-public playground so that it can also be a recreation area for residents outside school hours. A more formalized set of plans was requested so that the request can be considered. It was mentioned this may be a project that some of the funds awarded to BPNA from Selig Corp could be used toward.

Finally, Michael let us know that many of his contacts downtown turned over at the end of the year and with the new administration so he is working to determine who to contact for neighborhood needs as they arise.

[Berkeley Park Professional Directory](#)

by Amy Hoover
Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association Membership Chair
amyh@talentzoo.com

Hello everyone; for those I've not met I'm Amy Hoover, I live at 716 Berkeley. I'm writing because I would like to put together a **BPNA Professional Directory** so we are aware of products or services that may be of use or value to each other. (For example, if you are a carpenter and I want an addition on my deck, I would like to call you first - but can't if I don't know this is what you do.)

If you would all please respond at your convenience and ideally before the end of the month and let me know:

- 1) if you would like to be included,
- 2) your business name, website/email, and 2-line description of what you offer, and also
- 3) if you have a neighbor who isn't in the Association but would be a good addition to our directory, please put me

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in touch with him/her/them.

Thanks everyone, I hope we can all start referring new customers to each other.

City Council News

By Yolanda Adrean
City Council, District 8
yadrean@atlantaga.gov
(404) 330-6051

Dear Neighbors,

Greetings from District 8! In an effort to keep you abreast of happenings here at City Hall, I will be sending you periodic emails with information and calendar items that may be of interest to you and your community. I will also be attending your meetings at least quarterly.

I am serving on three Committees: Finance/Executive (Chair), Public Safety and City Utilities. Each committee meets bi-monthly and these meetings are open to the public. You are more than welcome to come to City Hall to observe the proceedings, or tune into Channel 26 where meetings are aired live. Citizens are welcome to sign in to make public comments at committee meetings or at full Council meetings which are on the first and third Monday of each month beginning at 1:00 PM. The responsibilities for these committees are as follows:

City Utilities : sanitation, sewage and waste disposal, clean streets, safe bridges and sidewalks, Department of Watershed Management, Department of Public Works and matters pertaining to cable television.

Public: police, fire, corrections, office of emergency management and courts.

Finance/Executive : the budget, taxing and public revenues, Department of Finance, purchasing contract compliance licenses, Department of Personnel and intergovernmental relations and more.

During the past few weeks I have met almost half of the Department leaders and have had a briefing by Watershed Management. All have communicated the desire to serve you well so please let me know when service is not satisfactory.

The Finance Committee will be working on the Five Year Plan, the 2011 budget, pension reform, sale of City Hall East, financing of the international terminal and reports from internal audit. I will alert you to key hearings related to these and other issues. I want to hear your ideas and concerns.

There is no doubt that there will be challenges as we try to budget for top priorities during a period when every type of revenue is down. The City is not alone with these challenges.

Here are some of the things that make our challenges more difficult:

- We are the 44th in the country for federal dollars
- We also lag in support from the state.

Do you know where your sales tax dollars go? Look at this:

- 4 pennies for the state

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- 1 penny for Marta
- 1 penny for the schools (expires 6/30/2012)
- 1 penny for consent decrees for improvements to water/sewer
- 1 penny is shared with Fulton County; the city's share is .42

Council unanimously voted to support a resolution to enact a one cent municipal sales tax (MOST) to be used to fund the aging infrastructure of the city. The city has a backlog of at least \$750 million in infrastructure needs including roads, bridges, fire stations and equipment. If the Georgia Assembly approves this measure, voters would have an opportunity to vote on a referendum. The SPLOST sales tax, which has generated nearly \$1 Billion for the school system, is due to expire 6/30/2012.

Please stay in touch and let me know what we can do to help. My staff, Katie Howard and Priyam Bhargava, are readily available and willing to help you address your concerns.

Yours for District 8,
Yolanda Adrean
Councilmember
yadrean@atlantaga.gov

Announcements

Census Bureau Jobs

Every 10 years, the Census Bureau takes a snapshot of our population, determining how many people reside within the nation's borders, who they are, and where they live. The results help determine your representation in government, as well as how federal funds are spent in your community on things like roads, parks, housing, schools, and public safety. To ensure that everyone is counted in the Berkely Park community, the Atlanta North Office is conducting an extensive hiring campaign for the 2010 Census. We have a variety of positions available with hourly wages ranging from \$14.25-\$20.25/hr. Join us in making sure every person is counted. It's in your hands. To schedule an application/testing appointment, contact 404.348.2160 or visit www.2010censusjobs.gov

TREES ATLANTA ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR GEORGIA ARBOR DAY 2010

ATLANTA, ga (February 2, 2010) – Trees Atlanta announced plans for its 25 th Georgia Arbor Day celebration today. Opportunities for all ages will take place throughout the month of February and will peak on the actual Arbor Day holiday, Friday, February 19 th .

Arbor Day is a holiday for individuals, schools, civic clubs, and other organizations to reflect on the importance of trees. Arbor Day was founded in Nebraska in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton. Quoting Morton, "Other holidays repose upon the past; Arbor Day proposes for the future." Each state has its own Arbor Day depending on the best time to plant trees. In Georgia, our ideal planting season runs November - March, so we celebrate Arbor Day each year on the third Friday in February. National Arbor Day is celebrated on the last Friday of April.

"Georgia's Arbor Day is a time for us to pause and recognize that trees are part of our lives and communities," said Trees Atlanta's Executive Director, Marcia Bansley. She added, "Getting your hands dirty by planting or caring for a tree is a fitting way to celebrate. Trees Atlanta hosts a variety of programs and projects so you can do just that."

Trees Atlanta's Georgia Arbor Day lineup will include tree-related events for all ages, including tree planting activities, city-wide neighborhood arboreta projects, educational school programs, seedling giveaways, a big tree contest, and a photography exhibit and contest. Schedule highlights include:

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- Throughout February: Tree-themed activities at five Atlanta Public Schools located along the Atlanta BeltLine. These presentations will feature interactive activities by Tim Womick (in partnership with the Georgia Forestry Commission) and the Alliance for Climate Education. Each program will be followed by a tree planting.
- Friday, February 19 th , 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Trees Atlanta will host “Focus on Trees: Photography of Kathryn Kolb and David Knox” at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda Center, 225 Chester Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30316. The reception is free and open to the public, and the exhibit will run through April. Trees Atlanta will also announce its “My Favorite Tree” photo contest at the reception. Both are sponsored by the Georgia Forestry Commission (please see disclaimer at www.treesatlanta.org).
- Friday, February 19 th and Saturday, February 20 th , 9:00 a.m. to Noon: Trees Atlanta will host Seven Tree Projects for Seven Neighborhood Arboreta. Volunteers will fan out to Inman Park, Virginia-Highland, Midtown, Sylvan Hills, Oakhurst and Reynoldstown/ Cabbagetown to plant and care for trees and install educational granite markers. Volunteers are invited to the Trees Atlanta Kendeda Center, 225 Chester Avenue, SE, Atlanta, GA 30316 after the projects on Saturday for a celebration and luncheon.
- Atlanta’s Champion Tree contest, offering the chance to nominate trees that are believed to be the biggest of their kind within I-285.
- Distribution of a total of 400 seedlings at North DeKalb Mall, Whole Foods Market on Ponce deLeon, Atlanta Public Schools, and other locations. The seedlings are courtesy of Smurfit-Stone Container Corp, and distribution dates vary.
- Friday, February 19 th and Saturday, February 20 th , 9:00 a.m. to Noon: Trees Atlanta will host Seven Tree Projects for Seven Neighborhood Arboreta. Volunteers will fan out to Inman Park, Virginia-Highland, Midtown, Sylvan Hills, Oakhurst and Reynoldstown/ Cabbagetown to plant and care for trees and install educational granite markers. Volunteers are invited to the Trees Atlanta Kendeda Center, 225 Chester Avenue, SE, Atlanta, GA 30316 after the projects on Saturday for a celebration and luncheon.

“We are offering something for everyone this Arbor Day,” said Bansley. “No matter what your age or whether you are a morning or evening person, we’ve got a great way for you to say ‘thank you’ to the trees that make Atlanta home,” she concluded. She also noted that each tree planted and cared for on Arbor Day helps clean our air and water, connect and beautify our communities, provide homes for wildlife, conserve energy, prevent soil erosion, and more.

For more information about Trees Atlanta and an up-to-the-minute list of Trees Atlanta's Georgia Arbor Day programs and events, visit www.treesatlanta.org or call 404-522-4097.

About Trees Atlanta

Trees Atlanta is a nationally recognized citizens group that protects and improves Atlanta's urban forest by planting, conserving and educating. Since 1985, Trees Atlanta has planted and distributed more than 75,000 trees. Each year, 4,500 volunteers lend their expertise to Trees Atlanta. For more information, visit www.treesatlanta.org.