



# The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

## Board Meeting

December 11, 2008

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

### Meeting Attendees:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Association</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
1	Allison Adair	Chastain Park	Alliadair@aol.com
2	Yolanda Adrean	Mt. Paran-Northside	yadrean@earthlink.net
3	Joel Baker	Atlanta Fire Rescue Department	jgbaker@atlantaga.gov
4	Frank Bennett	Paces	fobennett@yahoo.com
5	Glenn Cartledge	Memorial Park	glenncar@bellsouth.net
6	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
7	Cheryl Chapman	Atlanta Fire Rescue Department	
8	Kelvin Cochran	Atlanta Fire Rescue Department	
9	Bernard Coxton	Atlanta Fire Rescue Department	bcoxton@atlantaga.gov
10	Jim Daws	Peachtree Hills	jdaws@atlantafirefighters.org
11	Glenn Delk	Brookhaven	glennndelk@mindspring.com
12	Jeremy Ellis	Peachtree Park	jeremyellis@earthlink.net
13	Murray Forbes	Pine Hills Neighborhood Association	murlatl@aol.com
14	Debra Fowler	Mt. Paran-Northside	
15	Kristy Gillman	Peachtree Hills	phca_kristy@hotmail.com
16	John Haliburton	Peachtree Hills	john@thrashgroup.com
17	Jack Hellriegel	West Paces Northside	jehellriegel@bellsouth.net
18	Michael Hilton	Tuxedo Park	michaelhiltonmd@gmail.com
19	Joel Hughey	Peachtree Heights West Civic Association	joel.hughey@premierglobal.com
20	Kim Kahwach	Buckhead Forest	kajensen@bellsouth.net
21	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
22	Bill Langlely	Ridgedale Park	billlanglely@bellsouth.net
23	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@comcast.net
24	Alba Leone	Buckhead Forest	grtmtnvw@earthlink.net
25	Sally Morgens	Tuxedo Park	smorgens@aol.com
26	Jennifer Moyers	Whitewater Creek	jennifermoyers@beacham.com
27	Kirk Oppenlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
28	Garth Peters	Memorial Park	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
29	Issac Robinson	Atlanta Fire Rescue Department	
30	John Shaffner	Buckhead Reporter	
31	Roxanne Smith	Peachtree Battle Alliance	rgsaccoc@bellsouth.net
32	Jim Wright	Ardmore Park	wrightjr@mindspring.com
33	Henry Wyche	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	hwyche@valleycap.com

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### Representation by Association

<b>Association</b>	<b>Representative/Attendee(s)</b>
1 Ardmore Park	Jim Wright
2 Brookhaven	Glenn Delk
3 Buckhead Forest	Kim Kahwach, Alba Leone
4 Chastain Park	Jim King, Kirk Oppenlander, Allison Adair
5 Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Henry Wyche
6 Memorial Park	Glenn Cartledge, Garth Peters
7 Mt. Paran-Northside	Yolanda Adrean, Debra Fowler
8 North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff
9 Paces	Frank Bennett
10 Peachtree Battle Alliance	Roxanne Smith
11 Peachtree Heights West Civic Association	Joel Hughey
12 Peachtree Hills	John Haliburton, Kristy Gillman, Jim Daws
13 Peachtree Park	Jeremy Ellis
14 Pine Hills Neighborhood Association	Murray Forbes
15 Ridgedale Park	Bill Langley
16 Tuxedo Park	Michael Hilton, Sally Morgens
17 West Paces Northside	Jack Hellriegel
18 Whitewater Creek	Jennifer Moyers

**Jim King** called the meeting to order at around 6:45 PM.

Jim asked that the regular agenda be deferred to permit a presentation by Fire Rescue Department Chief Kelvin Cochran and his leadership team. Jim briefly summarized the history of the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods.

### Special presentation by Chief Kelvin Cochran

Chief Cochran was introduced by Yolanda Adrean. She spoke about her contacts with Chief Cochran and the efforts of Michael Wagner to prepare a petition about the budget situation impacting the Fire Rescue Department so adversely.

Chief Cochran outlined the mission and responsibilities of his department. The mission is to protect life, property and environment in the City. They are responsible for needs arising from fire protection, homeland security, weather, natural disasters, airport operations. They are responsible for providing first responder services and rescuing entrapped people, emergency medical services, fire prevention, life support services, hazardous processes, transportation of hazardous materials, fire prevention equipment regulation, public education and public safety, as related to their mission.

Chief Cochran initially addressed his comments to the City budget crisis which preceded the country's economic downturn. The budget cuts in mid 2008 involved several iterations. The

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overall General Fund had an anticipated shortfall of \$140 million for the fiscal year July 2008-June 2009. The department started out with a budget of \$86 million.

In April, the Mayor mandated cost reductions throughout the City with the Fire Rescue Department's share being \$4 million. The premise was that there would be no impact on public safety. The \$4 million reduction was accomplished by the proposed elimination of 51 unfilled positions and the consolidation of administrative personnel.

These cuts proved to be insufficient. An additional \$4.4 million in cuts were mandated by the mayor. These were accomplished by demotions, elimination of 84 firefighter positions, elimination of several chiefs, the video program, 6 EMS supervisors, the reduction of 7 battalions to 6, the reduction of the training academy by 50% and the elimination of the fire fighter's health and wellness program. Coupled with the April reductions, planned cuts totaled \$8.4 million.

These efforts throughout the administration yielded a reduction of \$100 million, so the shortfall was reduced from \$140 million to \$40 million, which the mayor asked be raised by increased property taxes. The City Council refused. Additional cuts were made, which resulted in the closing of Station 7, a 98-year-old heavily used station; deactivation of Squad 4, elimination of "relief day reinstatement", cuts altogether totaling an additional \$4.7 million.

With these \$15 millions in cuts (from \$86 million to \$71 million), it is evident that public safety and fire personnel safety are compromised. As the Chief put it, "We are doing the best we can for what we have left over."

The operational strategy for the department is to "blackout" (temporarily deactivate until at least 6/09) certain equipment along with Station 23, and to "brownout" (deactivate on a day by day basis) selected equipment. They are also reducing the staffing of fire trucks and fire engines from a normal typical crew level of 4 to 3. Operationally, since a certain number of personnel are required for various types of situations, this means that firefighters will either be forced to stand by waiting for their counterparts to arrive in other pieces of equipment, or to violate City policy and act with insufficient staffing levels.

The issue of whether this degraded level of service would impact home insurance rates. The answer is, yes, but the change would not come as a surprise. The rating agency would initially have to prepare a list of deficiencies which would be presented to the mayor and city council. If they failed to address the deficiencies, the ratings could be cut and insurance rates would then rise.

An extended Q& A session followed Chief Cochran's presentation. It seems that high-rise buildings present a special challenge to the department, both in terms of equipment requirements and demands on personnel. Comments were made that suggest tax and fee contributions made for these tall buildings was not commensurate with their additional demands.

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Chief Cochran ended his comments with comment that “things are supposed to get worse” and that the only foreseeable immediate solution is if the budgets of other general fund organizations be reduced to provide funds for restoration of fire department staffing and equipment – he said they have “cut 22 parks, [then] do all the parks; they have cut some arts, [then] do away with all of the arts; concentrate on water, good streets, fire and police protection”.

### **Lt. Jim Daws – President of IAFF Local 134**

Jim is a Peachtree Hills resident and presented the firefighter’s point of view on behalf of the firefighters union. He said that Chief Cochran was completely accurate in his comments and was not to blame for the situation. The said that the City had embarked on a “very dangerous policy” of adopting reduced staffing levels (of 3) on fire trucks and engines. He said there are too many tasks to do for just three people and that they will exhaust themselves too quickly. He said that OSHA and NFPA standards mandate a certain number of people to do specific tasks and with the blackouts and brownouts, firemen would have to wait longer for equipment (with added personnel) to arrive. In some cases they won’t be able to wait, placing them and the public at risk. He pleaded that budgets be reprioritized.

### **BCN Press Release**

Jennifer Moyers distributed a press release prepared to educate neighborhoods and the public on the purpose of BCN. (Jennifer handed it out. If you need a copy, it is at [www.nbca.org/BCN](http://www.nbca.org/BCN).)

### **Next Meeting : January 8, 2009**

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Prepared by Gordon Certain  
BCN Secretary  
January 8, 2009

**Interim BCN Web Page**  
**[www.buckheadcouncil.org](http://www.buckheadcouncil.org)**

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**BCN Organizational Status as of 12/11/08**

	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Member?</b>	<b>Represented at 10/16/08 meeting</b>	<b>Represented at 11/13/08 meeting</b>	<b>Represented at 12/11/08 meeting</b>
1	Arden				
2	Ardmore Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Brookhaven				Yes
4	Brookwood Hills				
5	Buckhead Forest	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Castlewood				
7	Chastain Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Collier Hills North				
9	Garden Hills				
10	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Kingswood	Yes	Yes		
12	Lindridge Martin Manor		Yes		
13	Margaret Mitchell				
14	Memorial Park	Yes	Yes		Yes
15	Mount Paran Parkway				
16	Mt. Paran-Northside	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	North Buckhead	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Paces	Yes		Yes	Yes
19	P'tree Battle Alliance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	Peachtree Heights East	Yes	Yes	Yes	
21	Peachtree Heights West				Yes
22	Peachtree Hills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
23	Peachtree Park	Yes		Yes	Yes
24	Pine Hills				Yes
25	Pleasant Hill				
26	Randall Mill				
27	Ridgedale Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
28	Springlake				
29	Tuxedo Park	Yes	Yes		Yes
30	Wesley Battle	Yes			
31	West Paces Northside	Yes	Yes		Yes
32	Whitewater Creek	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
33	Wildwood		Yes		