



The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Board Meeting

February 12, 2009

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:40 – 8:50 PM

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Attendees:

	Name	Neighborhood/Organization	Email Address
1	Yolanda Adrean	Mt. Paran-Northside	yadrean@earthlink.net
2	Frank Bennett	Paces	fobennett@yahoo.com
3	Andrew Billing	Senator Isakson's Office	
4	Bill Bozarth	Common Cause/Garden Hills	
5	Major Robert Browning	APD Zone 2	rbrowning@atlantaGA.gov
6	Glenn Cartledge	Memorial Park	glennacar@bellsouth.net
7	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
8	Anna Cherry	Representative Lewis' Office	Anna.cherry@mail.house.gov
9	Glenn Delk	Brookhaven	glennedelk@mindspring.com
10	Jeremy Ellis	Peachtree Park	jeremyellis@earthlink.net
11	Debra Fowler	Mt. Paran-Northside	debrarfowler@bellsouth.net
12	Daryl Graham	Chastain Park	info@darylbernardgraham.com
13	Amy Halford	Buckhead Forest	amy.haldord@yahoo.com
14	John Haliburton	Peachtree Hills	john@thrashgroup.com
15	William "Bill" Hargett	Paces West	bhargett@oxford-properties.com
16	Jack Hellriegel	West Paces Northside	jehellriegel@bellsouth.net
17	Michael Hilton	Tuxedo Park	michaelhiltonmd@gmail.com
18	Jay Jameson	Peachtree Hills	jjjameson@gproperties.com
19	Kim Kahwach	Buckhead Forest	kajensen@bellsouth.net
20	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
21	Bill Langley	Ridgedale Park	langleybill@comcast.net
22	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@comcast.net
23	Alba Leone	Buckhead Forest	grtmtnvw@earthlink.net
24	Rep. Ed Lindsey	Brookhaven	elindsey@gmlj.com
25	Will Mack	Peachtree Presbyterian Church	wmack@peachtreepres.org
26	Sally Morgens	Tuxedo Park	smorgens@aol.com
27	Jennifer Moyers	Whitewater Creek	jennifermoyers@beacham.com
28	Kirk Oppenlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
29	Garth Peters	Memorial Park	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
30	Elizabeth Pritchard	Peachtree Battle Alliance	elizpritchard@bellsouth.net
31	Jane Rawlings	Lindridge Martin Manor	president@Immna.org
32	Sue Roberts	Peachtree Heights East	Sroberts20@bellsouth.net
33	John Schaffner	Buckhead Reporter	
34	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills Civic	bschneider@gardenhills.net
35	Carl Schuessler	Margaret Mitchell	carl@benefitstrategiesllc.com
36	Sally Silver	NPU-B D&T Chair/North Buckhead	sl_silver@hotmail.com
37	M Marsay Simpson	Senator Chambliss Office	Marisa_Simpson@chambliss_Senate.gov
38	Carla Sklenkas	Mt. Paran-Northside	sklenkas@comcast.net
39	Brenda Smith	Mt. Paran-Northside	brendaDavisSmith@gmail.com
40	Ellen Adair Wyche	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	eawyche@TheWycheGroup.com
41	Henry Wyche	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	hwyche@valleycap.com

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Representation by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Name(s)
2 Brookhaven	Glenn Delk, Rep. Ed Lindsey
3 Buckhead Forest	Kim Kahwach, Amy Halford, Alba Leone
4 Chastain Park	Jim King, Daryl Graham, Kirk Oppenlander
5 Garden Hills Civic	Bob Schneider, Bill Bozarth
6 Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Henry Wyche, Ellen Adair Wyche
7 Lindridge Martin Manor	Jane Rawlings
8 Margaret Mitchell	Carl Schuessler
9 Memorial Park	Glenn Cartledge, Garth Peters
10 Mt. Paran-Northside	Yolanda Adrean, Debra Fowler, Carla Sklenkas, Brenda Smith
11 North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff, Sally Silver
12 Paces	Frank Bennett
13 Paces West	William "Bill" Hargett
14 Peachtree Battle Alliance	Elizabeth Pritchard
15 Peachtree Heights East	Sue Roberts
16 Peachtree Hills	John Haliburton, Jay Jameson
17 Peachtree Park	Jeremy Ellis
18 Ridgedale Park	Bill Langley
19 Tuxedo Park	Michael Hilton, Sally Morgens
20 West Paces Northside	Jack Hellriegel
21 Whitewater Creek	Jennifer Moyers

Jim King called the meeting to order at around 6:40 PM. A quorum was present.

Secretary's Report

Minutes for the January board meeting was approved by the Board.

Treasurer's Report

The BCN has \$1,600 in the bank and \$500 in checks in hand. Three new associations (Lindridge Martin Manor, Margaret Mitchell, and Paces West) paid dues to join the association.

Guest Speaker Bill Bozarth – Common Cause – Local Development Authorities

Bill is a Garden Hills resident, the neighborhood rep to NPU-B and executive director for Common Cause in Atlanta for the past 6+ years. He spoke to us at Kim Kahwach's request about an article he wrote in the December 12, 2008 Buckhead Reporter, "[Homeowners pay for high-end tax breaks](#)". After telling us about Common Cause's non-partisan program that encourages government accountability, Bill spoke about what he considered to be misuse of government powers.

He reported that local governments are empowered to create development authorities. Typically these are staffed by members appointed by elected officials. They are charged with facilitating healthy development that might be needed in blighted or environmentally

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challenged areas where development might not otherwise occur – Bill mentioned Atlanta Station as an appropriate example that might not have been developed without external help.

Development authorities affecting the Buckhead area include the Atlanta Development Authority and the Development Authority of Fulton County. In his article Bill mentioned new Buckhead projects receiving aid from the FCDA included:

- Terminus
- St. Regis Hotel
- The Mansion on Peachtree

As part of facilitating these projects, Bill mentioned that typically the development authority assumes ownership of the site and the owner/developer becomes the tenant, leasing their former property back from the development authority for a dollar a year. The tax valuation is set 50% of a normal valuation, an amount that rises 5% per year over a ten year period. The decrease in tax base reduces the property taxes that would otherwise be due. As a consequence, since government spending continues, those lost tax revenues have to be made up by other residential and business tax payers. However, the development project is made more profitable and is thus more likely to occur.

Ed Lindsey summed up the board's reaction well by commenting that development in Buckhead seems to go pretty well on its own and that you have to scratch your head about providing additional incentives to encourage Buckhead development. The Legislature is considering additional clarifications to the laws related to development authorities and related initiatives to get them back closer to the original objectives.

During the discussion of Bill's report, the topic of impact fees was considered. It was mentioned that Atlanta impact fees may be lower than in other metro governments.

Ed Lindsey introduced legislation several years ago which should cause transportation impact fees to be spent to solve problems near to the project paying them (unlike previous Atlanta practice). We discussed at length whether that new law had achieved its intended result and whether it was easy (or even possible) to determine the status of impact fund collections and expenditures. Sally Silver reported that we should work closely with the district councilmember to ensure that fees were properly collected and used. Clearly, the current system requires external "handholding" in order to work properly – some on the board seemed to doubt if the impact fee funds could be tracked.

The issue of internal loans between Watershed Management came up and a resolution about them was tabled to later in the meeting. These loans will need to be repaid over many years and will probably cause a City millage rate increase – Yolanda Adrean suggested the possibility of having the Atlanta Public Schools (which has a surplus) lower its millage rate while the City raises its millage rate to smooth the impact on the taxpayer.

Bill said we should all go to meetings, ask questions, and "put sunshine" on areas in question – "Democracy doesn't function well in a vacuum."

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Introduction of Major Robert Browning

Major Browning was kind enough to attend our meeting on short notice. He introduced himself and told us about his background. Browning has assumed the position of Zone 2 Precinct Commander, succeeding Major James Sellers, who retired in February. Browning will be a featured speaker in NBC's March meeting.

Guest Panel Representing Area Congressmen – Buckhead Transportation Issues

We were honored to have representatives of our two US Senators and our US Representative, as follows:

- Andrew Billing – Senator Johnny Isakson's office
- Anna Cherry – Rep. John Lewis' office
- Marsay Simpson – Senator Saxby Chambliss' office

Jim King, Jane Rawlings and Gordon Certain briefed the panel on the situation with the incomplete GA400/I-85 interchange and our petition seeking support for completing it. While it became clear that this was a state and local responsibility to elevate the priority of this project and to define it in a way that acceptably minimizes the impact on neighborhoods, the panel was very helpful. Andrew summarized the formal process. The first step in the process is the Transportation Improvement Plan or TIP. The TIP serves as the guidebook for project priorities in a region. In our region, the TIP is administered by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

We discussed the possibility of getting relief "stimulus" funds. This doesn't appear likely for a number of reasons. First, in order to use stimulus money, a project needs to be "shovel ready" (there may be different definitions of that term); it has to be in the TIP; and be ready to go – GA 400/I-85 isn't close. Second, the stimulus money is largely distributed as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which are normally targeted to disadvantaged areas. Third, the money will go through the state government and it is anticipated that about 80% of it will go to repaving projects, not new developments.

There is also "infrastructure" money. This kind of money, also controlled by the state, will probably not go to urban areas. The panel also discussed the highway bill, which may provide additional funds. The possibility of "earmarking" funds specifically to the GA400/I-85 interchange appeared to be a logical and practical solution to funding the project. But to get that far the project needs to have a consensus design and broader support.

Jane Rawlings responded to the panel's question about whether there was an official alignment and whether it was acceptable. Jane said that through open records requests they had found three configurations, none of which were acceptable to her neighborhood. She said that her Lindridge Martin Manor neighborhood had joined with two DeKalb neighborhoods to form the Lindbergh Lavista Corridor Coalition. That group has been working with Ga Tech's Urban Design group's Michael Dobbins and the Georgia Conservancy to develop a Blue Prints Plan for the area. They want a GA400/I-85 solution that stays between the "Y", has low design speeds and preserves all of Lindridge Martin Manor. She reported that parts of her neighborhood had been previously condemned by the GDOT and had fallen into blight. It has since been freed of that threat and has recovered with new condominiums being constructed. The Blue Prints Plan is expected in April.

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The key step for moving the project forward appears to be to get an acceptable plan before the ARC and to elevate its priority on the list. Jeremy Ellis proposed a motion that we take Andrew up on his offer to work with Jane to get an audience with the ARC to get an acceptable plan in front of them. This meeting will happen after the Blue Print Plan is available. The motion passed unanimously. Anna said that priorities are established by an equation that determines how much congestion will be alleviated by a project. She said that congestion in our area should cause our project to rank high but having Ga Tech support would help. It was also suggested that Clair Muller (our rep on ARC) needs to be involved and support from Emory McClinton was needed. It was also commented that we should try to get DeKalb involved. And that when we meet with GDOT, we do so *en mass*.

An open house briefing by GDOT was mentioned. It has not been broadly advertised, but is planned for 2/26 at St. Phillips. (Handouts and photos from that open house are on the BCN web site at www.nbca.org/bcn/GA400_Ramps.)

In addition to GA 400, the problems of sound barriers along expressways came up. Ed asked for e-mails from neighborhoods needing sound walls. Anna commented that her office frequently gets requests from people wanting sound walls – there apparently isn't any system in place to prioritize such requests.

Committee Reports

Public Safety: Chair Kim Kahwach reported that 80% of responding neighborhoods have privately funded security patrols. Some have a limited number of hours/days of coverage; others have more. She wanted to make sure that all neighborhoods were receiving Zone 2 crime reports and were aware of the bi-monthly CAC police-neighborhood meetings – if not, e-mail Jim. Gordon Certain showed a large map he had prepared of 2008 crimes for all of Atlanta. Garth Peters commented on the importance of reporting all public safety incidents to 911. Jim mentioned inadequacies in police reports – certain types of crime are reported on different/separate reports that the neighborhoods do not see in the current shared Zone 2 crime report.

Transportation: Chair John Hallibrton arranged the Congressional panel, above.

Education: Chair Debra Fowler reminded us that 55% of property taxes go to Atlanta Public Schools. Glenn Delk may report on charter schools at a future BCN board meeting.

Parks: Chair Gordon Certain reported on Parks Department budget cuts. From \$40 million to a current \$27 million with an additional \$4 million under consideration. He reported Commissioner Cohen's concerns that the choice is between cutting programs (which will result in kids being turned loose on the streets, resulting in increased crime) or cuts in maintenance (with fewer using parks, making them less safe). She also expressed concern that cuts in park funds to pay for more police may result in parks being less effective in keeping crime from happening in the first place. Yolanda suggested the BCN Parks committee could work with schools and the Parks Dept. to help schools sponsor sports teams that Parks can no longer afford. It was also suggested that officials from Park Pride be invited to speak to the BCN Board (this has been scheduled for the April meeting).

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Community Concerns

Motion on Watershed Management Loans: Glenn Delk had proposed a motion earlier in the meeting, which was deferred until now. Press reports of a total of \$116 million in loans between Atlanta's Watershed Management and other parts of Atlanta's government were discussed at length. Of immediate urgency was a ten-year repayment plan that was to be voted on by the City Council the following Monday. Glenn suggested a petition (later changed to a letter) from BCN to Howard Shook asking that the approval of the repayment plan be deferred until it was known who authorized the loans, what they were used for, and numerous related questions. Gordon suggested that the motion also insist that the City undertake no future loans without the explicit authorization of the City Council, which was apparently completely unaware of them until Howard Shook discovered them recently.

BCN Objectives vs FCTA Objectives: Frank Bennett talked about a Fulton County Taxpayers Association meeting he had attended. The Reason Foundation presenter proposed a "paradigm shift" in budget philosophy – his approach focuses on funding available and doesn't automatically grant all budgets items the same 3% increase. The presenter said government budgets should be managed like family budgets and they should quit funding projects on the list of decreasing project priority when the money runs out, conceding that it was more complicated than that. Frank suggested that we get Mary Norwood to our meeting and see if she, as front-running candidate will commit to that philosophy as part of her run for mayor. Sally Silver suggested that the request not be to just Mary but to all candidates. A board member commented that so far not a single city council member had attended our meetings and they need to be aware of what we are thinking.

Frank expressed concerns about the January minutes' statement that "We need to avoid overlap with the [Fulton County] taxpayer's association." He felt that many of our priorities dealt with funding issues, which are the same as those of FCTA and that we shouldn't consciously avoid working with them. Jim and Gordon commented that the statement was made in the context of discussion of BCN's "Prioritized Efforts for 2009", which had resulted in the creation of the four committees (mentioned above). Jim said that we don't want to start a new initiative that another organization has already started, but that we want to support each other when our interests are common, and that they are often very common. We want to work with all organizations when there is a common interest.

Legislative Update: Ed Lindsey reported on legislation that would block reassessments for property taxes for the next two years. He said that HB1 had not been passed, but there was another chance next year. He provided his contact information: elindsey@GMLJ.com and 404-316-4466.

Next Meeting : March 12, 2009 changed to March 19, 2009

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Prepared by Gordon Certain
BCN Secretary

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March 18, 2009

BCN Organizational Status through 02/12/09							
			Represented?				
	Neighborhood	Member?	10/16/2008	11/13/2008	12/11/2008	1/8/2009	2/12/2009
1	Arden						
2	Ardmore Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
3	Brookhaven				Yes		Yes
4	Brookwood Hills						
5	Buckhead Forest	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Castlewood						
7	Chastain Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Collier Hills North						
9	Garden Hills						Yes
10	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Kingswood	Yes	Yes				
12	Lindridge Martin Manor	Yes	Yes				Yes
13	Margaret Mitchell	Yes					Yes
14	Memorial Park	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Mount Paran Parkway						
16	Mt. Paran-Northside	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	North Buckhead	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Paces	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
19	Paces West	Yes				Yes	Yes
20	P'tree Battle Alliance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Peachtree Heights East	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
22	Peachtree Heights West				Yes		
23	Peachtree Hills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Peachtree Park	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25	Pine Hills				Yes		
26	Pleasant Hill						
27	Randall Mill						
28	Ridgedale Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
29	Springlake						
30	Tuxedo Park	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
31	Wesley Battle	Yes				Yes	
32	West Paces Northside	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes
33	Whitewater Creek	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
34	Wildwood		Yes				