



# The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

## Board Meeting

August 13, 2009

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:35 – 8:40 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 Laura Braddick	Northside Neighbor	lbraddick@mdjonline.com
4 Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
5 Elly Dobbs	House of Representatives	Jedobbs10@aol.com
6 Jeremy Ellis	Peachtree Park	jeremyellis@earthlink.net
7 John Haliburton	Peachtree Hills	john@thrashgroup.com
8 Jack Hellriegel	West Paces Northside	jehellriegel@comcast.net
9 Phillips Jones	Tuxedo Park	gpjatl@bellsouth.net
10 Barbara Kennedy	Collier Hills	bar2010@aol.com
11 Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@comcast.net
12 Lee Morris	Brookwood Hills and Brookwood Alliance	
13 Jennifer Moyers	Whitewater Creek	jennifermoyers@beacham.com
14 Ceasar Mitchell	City Council / Candidate Council President	
15 Clair Muller	City Council / Candidate Council President	cmmuller@earthlink.net
16 Garth Peters	Memorial Park	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
17 Elizabeth Pritchard	Peachtree Battle Alliance	elizpritchard@bellsouth.net
18 Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
19 John Schaffner	Buckhead Reporter	johnschaffner@reporternewspapers.net
20 Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bschneider@gardenhills.net
21 Betsy Teplis		bbteplis@bellsouth.net
22 Erik Underwood	Candidate for City Council Post 1	ErikUnderwood@AOL.com
23 Henry Wyche	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	hwyche@valleycap.com

### Representation by Neighborhood:

Neighborhood/Organization	Name(s)
1 Brookwood Hills	Lee Morris
2 Collier Hills	Barbara Kennedy
3 Garden Hills	Bob Schneider
4 Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Henry Wyche
5 Memorial Park	Garth Peters
6 Mt. Paran-Northside	Yolanda Adrean
7 North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff
8 Paces	Frank Bennett
9 Peachtree Battle Alliance	Elizabeth Pritchard
10 Peachtree Hills	John Haliburton
11 Peachtree Park	Jeremy Ellis
12 Tuxedo Park	Phillips Jones, Mercy Sandberg-Wright
13 West Paces Northside	Jack Hellriegel
14 Whitewater Creek	Jennifer Moyers

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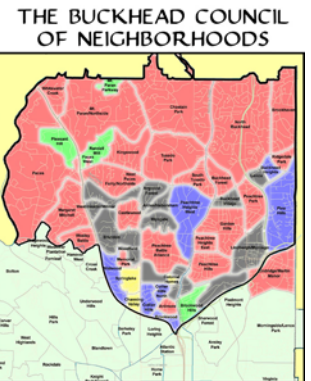
## I. Welcome

Jim King called the meeting to order at around 6:35 PM. A quorum became present early in the meeting.

## II. Introductions

The attendees introduced themselves.

The map at the right shows the status of BCN membership. Twenty-four neighborhoods are members (shown in light red) and eight additional neighborhoods have been represented at least one BCN board meeting (light blue).



Elizabeth Prichard reported on her membership outreach efforts:

- **Peachtree Heights West** – They are in the process of appointing a representative to BCN, hopefully for our next meeting.
- **Wildwood** – They expressed interest in BCN but haven't had a volunteer yet to represent them.
- **NPU-C area neighborhoods not affiliated with associations** – She has been in contact with Eric Ranney.

Yolanda Adrian reported on her membership outreach efforts:

- **Kingswood** – She talked with two of their members about becoming represented in BCN. Yolanda will give their e-mail contacts to Elizabeth for her follow up.
- **Randall Mill** – Are they a separate association or part of Mt. Paran Northside? Both Randall Mill and Whitewater Creek are under the Mt. Paran Northside "umbrella". Lynn Irving is the representative from Randall Mill to the Mt. Paran Northside board – maybe she can find a rep.

## III. Secretary's Report

Minutes for the July board meeting were approved by the Board, with a minor correction.

## IV. Treasurer's Report

No report.

## V. Committee Reports

### a. Public Safety

Thefts - Jim King reports that there has been a rash of landscaping equipment thefts.

Fire station brownouts - Frank Bennett reported that Fire Station 26 had reopened. Yet even with the tax increase, it had been browned out all day on a recent Sunday. He was wondering whether anyone had any information about when it was going to get better and what's being done to prevent a recurrence.

Clair Muller said brownouts were tied to how many people were off (sick, family leave and vacation) on a particular day. Yolanda Adrean commented that the chief was being replaced and there may be a leadership issue as well as staffing issues resulting from temporary workers not being familiar with an area. Further, there may be another chief after the elections. Frank said the basic needs were police, fire and trash and they are having trouble with all three – they have to pay thousands of dollars a year to hire private police patrols and as a result see their city police reassigned to other areas.

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Cesar Mitchell said in his West End neighborhood, they have the same problems and having to hire private police patrols represents a failure of the city government. Mitchell said he has received information that some of the fire brownouts are not short term staffing shortages but longer-term planned strategic actions in spite of the fact that taxes had been raised to provide for police and fire. He said he plans to look into these conditions on [the upcoming] Monday.

Frank mentioned the diagrams Chief Cochran showed BCN in January of areas where timely (five minutes) emergency response service was not being provided even with full staffing, including most of his neighborhood. When Station 26 is closed, it is much worse.

Henry Wyche asked Cesar Mitchell, who voted for the tax increase, what can be done to ensure that needed services are actually provided. Mitchell said the reason he supported the tax increase was to overcome the issue of furloughs and brownouts. He indicated that the first he had heard of ongoing brownouts was an e-mail he had received the previous week. He said it is a real concern for him since this was not what he had bargained for when he voted for the tax increase.

There was a long discussion about what Cesar meant by “strategic”; strategic on whose part? His comments suggested that the management of the fire department was involved in longer term planning to brownout particular station for reasons other than day-to-day staffing shortages. Frank suggested that the city’s leave benefits package was incentivizing upwards of 30% of the fire workforce to be absent at any one time and that those incentives didn’t exist in the business he runs. He said the city should be more careful what it incentivizes. John Schaffner commented that the absences are not just due to sickness, that there were training programs that they had to attend. John said the strategic planning issue might be the leadership looking at how much training and normal sickness they are having to plan around. John also remembered specific comments during the consideration of the tax increase that we could expect some brownouts even with the tax increase.

Buckhead Coalition Radar Speed Sign Subsidy – Garth Peters reported on the new initiative of the Buckhead Coalition to help neighborhoods calm speeding on their streets. Under the program, the Coalition will provide 75% of the acquisition cost of portable speed signs for each neighborhood willing to pay the remaining 25% or only \$750. Garth wanted to make sure that every neighborhood had been notified of this program.

### b. Transportation

GA-400/I-85 Interchange - John Halliburton reported he had a meeting with Vance Smith, the new GDOT commissioner, at which he gave him a high-level report on the I-85/GA 400 issue. He expects Smith to be a good friend of Buckhead.

Jim King reported that the start of the environmental impact study of 85/400 had been delayed by minor changes made in the engineering of the interchange made by GDOT. The Lindridge-LaVista Corridor group has put together a blueprint for that area and will have a public meeting in September (2<sup>nd</sup> week?) – we will follow up and will share the details with everybody.

Jim expects that, best case, the environmental study will be done around the end of 2010. Then, the issue becomes one of funding. There is a federal highway bill coming up in the next month or two and we need to work on lining up some money. We need to work together with the ARC to make sure this project is in the TIP. Clair said she would e-mail ARC about this need.

Henry Wyche mentioned to Clair that there is a big advertising banner on the side of one of the condo towers along GA 400 in North Buckhead. It may be in violation of city ordinances.

Streetcar Project - Betsy Teplis inquired whether BCN had taken a position on the proposed streetcar project.

Clair Muller reported that the proposal to use stimulus money to study the streetcar project initiated by the Downtown and Midtown CIDs came as a surprise to the City Council since the Council had previously not been interested in taxing adjoining property owners to finance a previous streetcar proposal. She said the Council had not yet had the “conversation” about whether it could support such a system. She said the proposed system is just an inverted T, going to Auburn Avenue, to Five Points and up to Midtown(?). Clair wanted to know if they

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could look at some streetcar look-alike vehicles, with rubber wheels, avoiding the problems with rails, able to go from Brookhaven to Ft. McPherson.

Jim King pointed out that Councilwoman Fauver voted against the proposal, since it didn't service destinations such as Lenox Square. He also pointed out that BCN had never discussed the streetcar project. It did come up in some of the Connect Atlanta meetings, with some counter proposals, such as a subway located under Peachtree Street/Road.

Jim asked any neighborhoods adjoining Peachtree whether they had a position. John Schaffner suggested that we ought to discuss how it would be paid for, that a previous proposal suggested that would be levied on properties within ¼-mile of Peachtree. Clair said the cost would be \$300 million and that the proponents had a long list of potential revenue sources and had dropped the idea of a condo and business tax along Peachtree. She said it is very much up in the air and that the community needs to be involved in discussions and that groups, such as BCN, all the way down to Ft. Mac need to have a say-so.

Jim expressed the concern that the study might be obligating the city to support the project. Clair said, no, they told Midtown and Downtown that they would have to come back to Council before anything was agreed upon.

Cesar Mitchell concurred saying he believed that both Midtown and Downtown recognized that it was not a "done deal" and that they had to come back to the Council. He said there are concerns that the streetcar project is putting transportation on top of transportation and on the other hand is a tourist attraction rather than transportation. He said any hopes of bringing the streetcar north of 75/85 had been pretty much "doused" due to community concerns about a funding mechanism and whether it is a profitable project, putting a trolley car on this area's only main road.

Garth said, regarding the potential extension of the Buckhead CID southward along Peachtree: the BCID funding mechanism is levying taxes on businesses and as you go down Peachtree, there are fewer and fewer businesses. He also said that there was a "Brookwood Squeeze" from 85 up to Piedmont Hospital which imposed engineering limits in changes to the corridor.

Gordon Certain commented that North Buckhead borders Peachtree for a considerable distance. He said his concern was that tourists like to visit Lenox Square and if you have a tourist solution that doesn't get people to Lenox Square, it is not a solution. We need to consider "why would we be doing that?" Clair agreed, saying that on the Council floor it was stated that "Buckhead didn't want it" (overhead wires, etc.), but a lot of people will still say it would be nice if there were some tourism mechanism that would get people in Downtown and Midtown up to the great shopping areas in Buckhead. That's why she is interested in small vehicles that look like trolleys – we need to have a work session with MARTA. She said the idea would be to take away big buses and replace them with San Francisco style small vehicles.

Elizabeth Pritchard noted that the Peachtree Corridor now works much better and, having spent a lot of money burying the wires, she can't imagine that Buckhead would want new wires for a trolley that would block the smooth-running traffic lanes.

Not enough specific information about the project was available to justify a vote and so none was taken. Clair commented, "We don't even know if they will even get the grant."

Peachtree Corridor/BCID Expansion – Elizabeth Prichard reported that Jim Wright, Jim Case and Peachtree Battle Alliance, members of the Brookwood Alliance, and Peachtree Hills met together and subsequently with Jim King. The subject was to determine if the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods needed to be the designated representative of the area to work with the Buckhead CID on possible plans to extend future phases of the Peachtree Corridor project to the area between Piedmont Hospital down to Midtown. In a response to a question, she said this concern was more oriented to road improvement projects and BCID expansion plans than to the streetcar. Jim agreed that the role of BCN was to support the neighborhoods and to avoid becoming divided.

### c. Education

Charter schools – Jeremy Ellis reported that the Obama administration had provided for \$4 billion in funding for new charter schools.

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Sidewalks for new Sarah Smith Elementary annex – Gordon Certain reported on the creation of a new elementary school on Wieuca Road. Being a new school, much infrastructure is needed to get it working, infrastructure that was not foreseen by the City since the APS works independently when determining the location of new schools. The existing Sarah Smith school will be split into two campuses with the original campus serving grades K-2 and the new one educating 3-5. The new school will become operational in January.

While there have been several meetings involving city officials (city council, public works, and police), the Atlanta Public Schools, the PTA, the neighborhood association and various affected neighbors, there is no final plan for traffic signals, stop signs, crosswalks, school zone markings and the sidewalks which are all needed to get vehicle and pedestrian traffic safely to and from the new campus. To make matters worse, some of the neighbors adjoining the school have been outspoken in their opposition to some changes, particularly new sidewalks, likely needed to make the school safely accessible. A new school bus routing policy is further compounding the planning process – as a money saving measure, the school buses will supposedly no longer pick up children who live within a one-mile walk of a school.

The North Buckhead Civic Association has compiled a listing of every Sarah Smith student not eligible to take the bus (those who live within the one-mile walk) and has used their aggregated walking routes as a rationale for proposing a certain specific set of improvements (stop signs, traffic signals, crosswalks and sidewalks). It is not clear that the city has sufficient money or time to make the needed improvements. The neighborhood association and PTA are working very closely with Councilman Shook to implement a workable plan.

### d. Parks

No report.

## VI. Speakers and Major Topics

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*Note on Presentation Reports: For simplicity in reporting, the material reported below is usually reported from the point of view of the speakers. These reports reflect the opinions of the individual presenters and may not necessarily be the position of BCN or its member associations.*

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There were no invited speakers for this meeting.

### Capitol Report

Water Issue - Elly Dobbs reported on the “water issue”. There was a meeting at the Governor’s mansion after the judge ruled on the Lake Lanier case that Ely attended. (Clair Muller also attended.) Elly said possible approaches were (1) to appeal, with little hope of winning, (2) to negotiate with the governors of Florida and Alabama, and (3) to try to get Congress to pass legislation permitting Georgia to use water from the lake, the approach that she thought was most likely to help. However, Georgia has 15 congress members, Florida has 28 and Alabama has 9. States in the west have similar issues to Georgia’s, so Congressional help needs to be sought there.

Clair Muller commented that there were 22 lakes controlled by the Army Corps of Engineers which had similar restrictions: navigation, hydro power and flood control. When Hartsfield was mayor, there was an effort to include drinking water as a purpose for Lanier, but that involved the city putting money into the construction of the dam. Clair said Mayor Franklin attended many of the hearings and reported that the judge mentioned Hartsfield over and over. We are in the same situation as many other states.

Elly reported that when she first got out of law school she worked for the Florida Justice Department – one of her cases was the Federal water case with Florida, Georgia and Alabama. Since then it has morphed into about six cases.

Clair reported regarding her work with the ARC that because of the draught that Atlanta has conserved a tremendous amount of water. These conservation efforts have paid off.

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State Revenues - Elly also reported that state revenue was “way down”, resulting in state furlough days. A special session will not be held at this point in time.

### BCN Mayoral Forum

The BCN Mayoral forum will be at Trinity Presbyterian Church on September 22 at 7PM. Trinity Presbyterian Church was in the process of putting together a forum; they found out we were putting together a forum. We had Dick Williams as a moderator; they had Bill Nigut. So we joined forces and both will moderate. Five candidates have been invited.

Jeremy Ellis outlined the categories of the questions:

- Transportation
- Public Safety
- Education
- Parks
- Taxes/Finance/“Managed Competition” (Privatization)/Pension

He said we would try to come up with 15 questions, not necessarily spread across those five topics – these ground rules have not been worked out yet. These would be provided to the candidates in advance, so they could research them as needed. The moderators would ask those questions in random order, not to every candidate, and would be responsible for any follow-up questions. The intent was to make the questions very Buckhead specific. The churches will also have questions which will probably be more general in nature.

Yolanda Adrean was concerned about too many questions. She was interested in hearing several candidates' answers to the same questions.

Lee Morris said the Campaign for Atlanta had managed to get especially good insights into candidate's positions – we should try to avoid duplicating what Campaign for Atlanta has already explored in depth.

Would there also be questions from the audience? Jim said “Yes, the churches wanted that”. Walda Lavroff commented, “In two hours?”

Jeremy noted that while there are many unanswered questions, we should remember that when we met last the assignment was to pick a location, work out dates with the candidates, and get a moderator. Those have all been completed in a short amount of time – we should not lose sight of all we have accomplished.

Gordon Certain made a comment about needing a question about playgrounds and parks. Buckhead has few of each. The city has permitted the development of thousands of condo units along Peachtree where the residents do not even have a place to walk a dog. The city's policy is that parks must be at least two acres – in Buckhead two acres is too expensive. We need pocket parks and small dog runs.

There was a long discussion of the proposed “managed competition” question. Walda Lavroff spoke of her experience with service contracts at Georgia State University and stated her belief that the city has neither the expertise to write invitations for proposals for service contract nor the expertise to administer them once they were awarded – she said, unlike the state of Georgia, all they want to do is to make the award to the lowest bidder and hand them the problem. She said the city needs a contract officer who knows what to do and how to evaluate the contractor during the contract term. She said that in the long run, given the City's current capabilities, using managed competition will cost the city money, not save it money. Ceasar Mitchell commented that you need to ask the candidates how you practically implement managed competition and have you visited other cities (Indianapolis, San Diego, Chicago and even Philadelphia) which have implemented managed competition successfully, and others not so successfully? He said the third issue is to ask them how they would “evolve managed competition from a cost control measure and efficiency driver into an enterprise for a municipality”.

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Another question was suggested: how do we get the city to respond to code enforcement issues, whether it is zoning or the tree ordinance? What is the mayoral candidate's proposal to hold the city employees responsible for their job performance? Another voice: The same goes for Watershed Management.

Another question for the mayoral candidates: How do they feel about changing the form of government to a city manager? Charlotte was mentioned as a good example of a city with an effective city manager and managed competition system.

In conclusion: Jennifer Moyers will prepare a press release. There will be a planning meeting with the moderators to firm up the ground rules.

Another forum - Incidentally, Yolanda Adrean's neighborhood will have a forum on October 13 at 7PM at Northwest Presbyterian Church (holds ~200 people). They are inviting the two candidates for city council president, the top candidates for the three at-large council seats, and district 8 candidates. Brenda Smith is coordinating – her address is [BrendaDavisSmith@gmail.com](mailto:BrendaDavisSmith@gmail.com). Yolanda said they are not doing this as a Mt. Paran Northside Citizens Association event – they want to reach out to other neighborhoods to be involved.

### **VII. Community Concerns**

#### **Watershed Petition Status**

Kristy was not in attendance. No response had been received from Watershed Management in regard to BCN's letter transmitting residents' petitions, so Jim King sent an e-mail to Janet Ward, WSM's PR person. Jim reached Janet, on vacation. She said that "to treat the Buckhead neighborhoods as a separate group, as opposed to individual customers, would be inconsistent with the department's values and policies".

#### **Survey of Neighborhood "Best Practices"**

Craig Perry, President of West Paces Northside, collected survey forms sent by e-mail. Gordon reported that he is working on the summary and should have it in another week or so. This item was deferred until next month.

### **VIII. Updates and Announcements**

None.

**IX. Next Meeting:** September 10? (Will announce by e-mail.)

### **X. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at around 8:40 PM.

Prepared by Gordon Certain  
BCN Secretary  
September 8, 2009



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**BCN Organizational Status as of 08/13/09**

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