



The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Board Meeting

February 11, 2010

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:35 – 8:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

	Full Name	Neighborhood/Organization	Email Address
1	Frank Bennett	Paces	fobennett@yahoo.com
2	Laura Braddick	Northside Neighbor	lbraddick@mdjonline.com
3	Robert Bradshaw	Buckhead Alliance	
4	Major Robert Browning	APD Zone 2	rbrowning@atlantaGA.gov
5	Glenn Cartledge	Memorial Park	glennacar@bellsouth.net
6	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
7	Lt. Mark Cotter	APD Zone 2	mcotter@atlantaga.gov
8	Julian de Juan	Margaret Mitchell	jdejuan@rawdatainc.com
9	Glenn Delk	Historic Brookhaven	glennelk@mindspring.com
10	Elly Dobbs	House of Representatives	Jedobbs10@aol.com
11	Jim Elgar	Cesar Mitchell for City Council President	jimelgar@gmail.com
12	Jeremy Ellis	Peachtree Park	jeremyellis@earthlink.net
13	Sally Flocks	PEDS	info@peds.org
14	Kristy Gillmann	Peachtree Hills	phca_kristy@hotmail.com
15	Jack Hellriegel	West Paces Northside	jehellriegel@comcast.net
16	Rob Hunter	Commissioner of Watershed Management	
17	Kim Kahwach	Buckhead Forest	kajensen@bellsouth.net
18	Barbara Kennedy	Collier Hills	bar2010@aol.com
19	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
20	Bill Langley	Ridgedale Park	langleybill@comcast.net
21	Greg Mauldin	Springlake	greg.mauldin@alston.com
22	Nancy Meister	Atlanta Board of Education	nmeister@atlanta.k12.ga.us
23	George Mirgorod	Pine Hills	gMirgorod@comcast.net
24	Jennifer Moyers	Whitewater Creek	jennifermoyers@beacham.com
25	Kirk Oppenlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
26	Garth Peters	Memorial Park & Buckhead Coalition	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
27	Elizabeth Pritchard	Peachtree Battle Alliance	elizpritchard@bellsouth.net
28	Buff Quillian	Peachtree Heights West	BuffQuillian@gmail.com
29	Jane Rawlings	Lindridge Martin Manor & President NPU-F	president@Immna.org
30	Jud Ready	Wildwood	jud.ready@gatech.edu
31	Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
32	John Schaffner	Buckhead Reporter	johnschaffner@reporternewspapers.net
33	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bschneider@gardenhills.net
34	Sally Silver	NPU-B D&T Chair	sl_silver@hotmail.com
35	Marci Vincent	Mt Paran Northside	marcia_vincent@hotmail.com
36	Debra Wathen	Paces	6wathens@bellsouth.net
37	Kerry Witt	Pine Hills	kerrywitt@mindspring.com
38	Jim Wright	Ardmore Park	wrightjr@mindspring.com
39	Henry Wyche	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	hwyche@valleycap.com

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Representation by Neighborhood:

Neighborhood/Organization	Name(s)
1 Ardmore Park	Jim Wright
2 Buckhead Forest	Kim Kahwach
3 Chastain Park	Jim King, Kirk Oppenlander
4 Collier Hills	Barbara Kennedy
5 Garden Hills	Bob Schneider
6 Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Henry Wyche
7 Historic Brookhaven	Glenn Delk
8 Lindridge Martin Manor	Jane Rawlings
9 Margaret Mitchell	Julian de Juan
10 Memorial Park	Glenn Cartledge, Garth Peters
11 Mt Paran Northside	Marci Vincent
12 North Buckhead	Gordon Certain
13 Paces	Frank Bennett, Debra Wathen
14 Peachtree Battle Alliance	Elizabeth Pritchard
15 Peachtree Heights West	Buff Quillian
16 Peachtree Hills	Kristy Gillmann
17 Peachtree Park	Jeremy Ellis
18 Pine Hills	George Mirgorod, Kerry Witt
19 Ridgedale Park	Bill Langley
20 Springlake	Greg Mauldin
21 Tuxedo Park	Mercy Sandberg-Wright
22 West Paces Northside	Jack Hellriegel
23 Whitewater Creek	Jennifer Moyers
24 Wildwood	Jud Ready

I. Welcome

Jim King called the meeting to order at around 6:35 PM with a quorum present.

II. Introductions

The attendees introduced themselves. Current membership is shown in red in the map to the right.

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for January were approved by the Board.

IV. Committee Reports

Treasurer – Henry Wyche reported that BCN had eight or nine hundred dollars in the bank account. He proposed that dues for 2010 be kept the same, \$100 per year, and that a \$50 late fee be instituted for neighborhoods which pay after March 31. The \$50 penalty will be waived for associations joining for the first time during 2010. The proposal was adopted unanimously.

Communications – No report.

Development and Infrastructure – No report.

Education - Glenn Delk reported that the Governor's Task Force identified 51.9% (47) of APS schools had unusually extensive erasures on CRCT tests last year. He thought we should ask for an independent audit of the school system. He said that in some schools, 80% to 90% of the individual tests were suspect.

THE BUCKHEAD COUNCIL
OF NEIGHBORHOODS



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Parks – Gordon Certain reported that four neighborhoods from Buckhead attended the Parks Commissioner's Quarterly Meeting on Parks and Greenspace on February 10. The Beltline project was discussed - plans for 2010 include tangible progress: real paths and real parks. Copper thefts amounting to \$750,000 in damages have occurred in Atlanta city parks. Jim King, who also attended, added that a presentation was provided about play structures by two professors from Georgia Tech. He also discussed a Beltline map, pointing out that Atlanta Memorial Trail is a Beltline project in Buckhead. Ardmore and Tanyard Creek and modifying two holes on the Bobby Jones Golf Course were mentioned. Gordon continued by saying that the trestle at the CSX railway right of way had been acquired.

Public Safety – No report.

Transportation – No report.

V. General Business

VII. Invited Guest Speakers

Rob Hunter – Commissioner of the Watershed Management Department

Commissioner Hunter said that the department's annual report provided much information about the department's operations. See http://www.atlantawatershed.org/DWM_AR_2009.pdf.

The department's budget is \$543 million, one third of the City's total. The department is a regional utility business serving customers in Atlanta and other jurisdictions. They take waste water flows from the northern third of DeKalb County and both take and give flows with Fulton County. All of Sandy Springs is provided drinking water by WSM, as is most of unincorporated Fulton County. WSM wholesales water to some other cities and counties.

WSM has various operational and strategic plans, some extending as far as 2060. The City has adopted the three-year budgeting system that WSM developed, which is being extended to five years, with certain aspects extended to fifteen years. WSM has a BBB bond rating, one step above junk bond status. Part of the 15-year plan is to improve the bond rating to secure more favorable interest rates.

WSM accounting is kept separate from the general fund. However, WSM provides funding for some City positions in the finance department whose work is dedicated to WSM. WSM currently has 1,080 employees. WSM had two bond issues this past year: \$750 million in June and \$450 million in October.

Between fiscal year 2009 and 2000, WSM's budget went up about 1%. But their controllable operating budget went down almost 19%. This was more than offset by increased debt service. Water fee revenue is down about 6% this year and sales tax revenue is down about 20%, though January improved (year over year). As a result, projects are being deferred and employee hiring is being delayed because of the revenue shortfall. Consent Decree projects are progressing on schedule and under budget.

Questions and Hunter's Answers:

Q. Jud Ready asked, what were the target staffing levels? **A.** WSM is developing a target as part of their 15-year plan.

Q. Should we look to increased rates in the future? **A.** The City Council has set rates for the next two years: a 12.5% increase, followed by a 12% increase. WSM is working with EPA to determine how rate increases beyond those two years can be contained. The hope to tie future rates to median household income: if the household income doesn't change, rates wouldn't change. In the long term, rates will not go down until long-term (30-year) bonds are paid off.

Q. Christy Gillmann asked: Are you planning to continue as commissioner? **A.** Hunter has met with Mayor Reed. He has no plans to resign as commissioner. **Q.** Many of us have been impacted by

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customer service issues. Can you address some of the changes you have made and changes you plan and suggest ways we might better work with the department? **A.** Customer service means different things: WSM has a new call center, a new billing system, a new phone system, all sorts of infrastructure and training for customer service reps. Generally, the problem is not the customer service, it is the underlying utility service that's the problem. While in former times, customers might have had to wait for 20 minutes to talk to someone, now wait times and drop rates are very low. Actually improving the speed of repairs is now the challenge and is more expensive to improve. **Q.** Christy asked to see a presentation in his office about these improvements so she could report back to BCN. **A.** Hunter would be willing to come and give a longer presentation. **Q.** Could we do it in your office? **A.** Certainly. Hunter said he gave a presentation several hours long to the five new City Council members.

Q. Why is there a missing link between calls coming in to customer service reps and actually getting the repairs or billing adjustments made? **A.** When he came into the department Hunter found that it wasn't particularly focused on efficiency and productivity. You can put in systems, but how do you change the people? That's why you need to focus on individual/group productivity. You need to change the culture of the organization. You need to provide better support systems (mobile computers and better route planning). But all of this is constrained by budget realities. We have made great strides, but it does not turn on a dime.

Q. We got a bill with the notation "adjustment", increasing in the bill by \$50. Can you explain adjustments better so customers don't get upset and calls to customer service aren't needed? The bill could have said "adjustment for payment previously credited in error". Can you make bills clearer? **A.** It is difficult to do on the bill since there is a limited amount of space. We create more confusion by putting a statement on the bill and the people say, WHAT? **Q.** Couldn't you say what type of adjustment it was, type "a" or "b", and so forth? **A.** We can, but then you have to explain "a" or "b". The problem with bills is the space is limited. He'll look at it.

Q. Kirk Oppenlander commented regarding hydrology: runoff problems are considered individually as building permits are reviewed, but nobody seems to be looking at the cumulative effect of new PD-Hs and new subdivisions. Are there any plans to improve communications and is this the right time to do so? **A.** This is a great time for the City Council to consider a storm water utility fee. The issue is that WSM is limited in what they can spend funds on – if it is not drinking water or waste water, they are legally constrained. Storm water issues are "general fund" issues. The general fund is currently depleted. Hunter feels bad when people call about flooding issues and he has to tell them that since it is flooding, he can't spend money on it, and that these cumulative impacts are not addressed in the code of ordinances. It would help WSM if it were in the code – the NPUs can help by making their opinions known that better controls are needed.

Q. Gordon Certain said the FEMA maps for his neighborhood were last updated in 1998 and don't show major changes like GA400, the Buckhead Loop and a lot of other new hard surfaces. The flood maps couldn't be accurate. What is the plan to get accurate flood maps? **A.** Some areas have old flood maps and, in the combined sewer area, they didn't prepare flood maps at all. He is proud that Atlanta is the only municipality that has figured out how to get the Corp of Engineers to come out and do this kind of project. We are the only people in the eight years this kind of funding has been available that has gotten a contract. So we have started to update maps. **Q.** Would that be the Nancy Creek Basin? **A.** I don't know which basin. Our intention is to keep expanding that effort. But there are areas that don't have any FEMA maps and we have areas that have very old maps.

Q. Jim King asked what constrains WSM from dealing with storm water issues? Is it city ordinances or state law? **A.** The actual constraints are the covenants on our revenue bonds. Dealing with storm water requires another funding source. **Q.** [Directed to Elly Dobbs] We discussed flooding in a previous meeting. Have you made any progress or have you had any interaction with Commissioner Hunter? **A.** Elly Dobbs replied that she hasn't personally made contacts but a lot of her constituents have. There are a lot of problems affecting people who don't know whether to build or re-build. They don't know what's going to happen the next time it floods. **A.** [Hunter] The city did pass legislation dealing with reconstruction in the floodplains, limiting work to the same footprint of the original house. Significantly, the legislation permitted "migrating" that footprint to a better area of the site. Also, there is some federal money for elevating homes, but it is only a partial payment. There is also federal money available to buy out flood-prone property (as at below market value). This is being pursued in the Buckhead area.

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Q. Jim King asked about the WSM fueling depot in the middle of Chastain Park, which he would like to see gone, since it is an incompatible use. Would Hunter consider moving to another site? **A.** Yes, but no promises.

Q Elly Dobbs asked a broad question about the flooding: Part of the reason we had so much flooding recently is that a lot of construction and impervious surfaces have been built in the past 20 years. When permitting new construction, does the city ever consider where the water is going to go? We have had a 100-year and a 500-year flood within the past year. Is there any coordination between permitting and storm water planning? **A.** Part of the permitting (site development) is in WSM. The issue isn't in permitting. The issue is in code. A WSM engineer dealing with hydrology for an application cannot arbitrarily say "no" to an applicant, this may cause problems and WSM would be quickly sued. All they can do is ask, "does this meet the code?" There is no code (or state law) requirement for developers to consider storm water in a comprehensive fashion.

Q. Jane Rawlings: Does WSM have any plan to introduce legislation to tighten up the code to close these flood-related loopholes? **A.** WSM is doing a comprehensive review of the code affecting them. They are looking at the requirements. However, there are obviously people who don't want any change in runoff policy; there are people who want to pave every inch of their land. The City of Atlanta needs to have discussion about what it wants the code to require.

Q. How do we reach you about our neighborhood's problems? **A.** His office is 404-330-6287. His assistant's name is Michelle. His e-mail address is rhunter@atlantaga.gov.

Nancy Meister, Post 4, Atlanta Board of Education

The Atlanta Public School System was given a \$10 million grant last week by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The funding was to put an effective teacher in every classroom. Nancy will be working on the committee charged with implementing this grant.

Regarding the CRCT Test erasures issue, Nancy was happy to say that no District 4 schools were involved. The school board has not met since the report was released yesterday, so she doesn't have a lot to say at this point.

Regarding the proposed new Buckhead high school: Our area has a great challenge with increasing enrollment. The system has put quite a lot of money into our elementary schools in the past few years, including \$14 million in the Sarah Smith intermediate campus on Wieuca Road, almost \$13 million to Brandon for their primary annex, and \$4.3 million for Jackson. APS has six elementaries feeding into Sutton Middle School. Of the six, three have a campus annex. Sutton has grown a lot and has an anticipated enrollment for 2014 of 1,800 students, which is too big for one middle school. To address short and long term challenges, Dr. Hall has recommended changes. In the long term, North Atlanta High School on Northside Drive on 17 acres will be converted into a middle school. North Atlanta is land-locked and a good high school site requires about 30 acres for parking and athletic facilities. A piece of land has been identified in Buckhead for the new high school. They hope to acquire it by the end of the year. An 18-month building phase will follow, making the new school available in 2012. A lot of feedback has been provided by parents. Some want to see Sutton become a 6th grade annex with North Atlanta becoming a 7th and 8th grade middle school. She thinks that idea should be considered. The school "cluster" has an "international baccalaureate" curriculum, pre-K through 12, which is unusual, nation-wide. This designation could be threatened and it could take time to reinstate if they break up the middle school into two districts. In the near-term the plan is to get eight portables in place at the Sutton campus, in the back by the tennis courts. That addition should be sufficient for several years.

Questions and Meister's Answers:

Q. Are there any potential new elementary schools? **A.** Not at this point. But it is possible for some of the annexes to turn into full K-5 schools.

Q. Could you explain the Gates grant more fully? **A.** The grant applies to a three year period. The goal is getting "effective teachers" and the grant provides for the implementation of an effective evaluation system for teachers. Teacher effectiveness will be measured by student achievement and

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effective teachers would be rewarded. The Atlanta system competed against hundreds of districts and was one of ten districts awarded grants.

Q. Glenn Delk commented, regarding the test erasure situation: I think the school system and the board should consider hiring your own independent auditor. Dr. Hall has already had an independent study once and they found no problems. I don't know if you have seen the editorial from Maureen Downing in yesterday's AJC: she said that evidence suggesting that tampering with test sheets took place in 67% of the 55 elementary schools in the Atlanta Public School system. Dr. Hall was paid \$400,000 last year including \$120,000 in bonuses based on what now appear to be false test results. She should not be asked to investigate herself. The board needs to get someone totally independent from Dr. Hall to investigate this situation. **A.** I don't disagree. I would appreciate an e-mail from you or anyone else stating your thoughts on this.

A long BCN Board dialogue occurred later in the Q&A session, but is covered here to keep the topic in context. It was concluded that, to be accepted by the general public, any investigation resulting in the clearing the school administration must be completely independent. If it were conducted by the administration, it would be ignored. The following motion was approved unanimously by BCN member neighborhood representatives in attendance: "**We ask ... the Board [of Education] to appoint and pay for an independent audit of the CRCT scandal so that Dr. Hall does not control who's hired and the results.**" In leading up to our vote the point was made that the resolution we were voting on doesn't presume that anybody is guilty – it is an investigation.

Q. Sally Silver commented in regard to new school campuses: She lives in North Buckhead near the new Sarah Smith Intermediate Campus. She said that a principal cause of the problems experienced with the new school is that there is no interface between the APS and City of Atlanta, none at all. The school site selection was completed and construction work was started in 2008. But that is not all that is needed to have a school. The City of Atlanta is required to fund and provide all of the infrastructure including any traffic calming, crosswalks, and traffic lights. With the lack of communication, the city ended up with a window of time that was too short to accomplish all of those improvements before the school opened. So as a result, we have a school that opened in January where we have third through fifth graders walking down a busy street that hasn't gotten needed sidewalks, crosswalks, radar signs or traffic signals. Sally asked that the next time APS plans a new school that they contact the district City Councilman and start the process of identifying what city legislation and planning is required, assessing what infrastructure needs the school is causing, and developing a joint plan. **A.** Nancy responded saying that she and Howard Shook had met the day before. She plans to meet with Yolanda Adrean. She said we have to work together. She knows what went on at Smith. She apologized for that and said she thinks in the future they can handle it better. **Q.** Sally said that one of the things that would help the APS/City relationship is if the school board and city council members would sit down together once a month to share thoughts and developments.

Q. If there is redistricting for the additional middle school, what allowances for public involvement will APS make regarding how and where the lines will be drawn? **A.** APS has hired demographers to review the situation including looking at the enrollment of preschools and other things that haven't been considered before. The results of that study will be available. APS will hold community meetings. Principals and PTA presidents are always involved in that kind of discussion. She hopes that the Sutton campus becomes a sixth grade and that the seventh and eighth grades will be located at North Atlanta, keeping all the kids together.

Q. Will elementary schools be redistricted again? **A.** If some of the current schools become so large, the annexes may potentially become full schools. But that is not a decision that has been made.

Q. Has a property already been publicly identified for the new high school? **A.** No public announcement has been made. Nancy says her husband doesn't even know.

Q. What is the acreage of the new site? 30 acres? **A.** Nancy has been told it is a little over 30.

Q. What is the timeline for announcement? **A.** They hope to secure the land by the end of the year and hopefully by the end of the school year. She said the "six weeks" mentioned in the newspaper was a number she didn't know what its source was – she can't imagine that is correct.

Q. Is Smith being redistricted? **A.** There is nothing being considered.

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Q. There was talk of dividing North Atlanta High School into three different high school units. Will the new school have different buildings to reflect that division? **A.** North Atlanta is ahead of other APS schools in implementing "small learning community" units and this division has already been implemented. North Atlanta is already undergoing a \$32 million renovation, a plan that will probably be scaled back because of the new high school plan. The small learning community philosophy will be implemented at the new school, whether that means separate hallways as is done today at North Atlanta or different buildings. Carver, for instance, has five different buildings.

Q. How many of the 1800 students at Sutton will end up at North Atlanta? **A.** Percentage-wise, we have gone from perhaps 50% to 75 or 80%. Today at North Atlanta, we have 1,014 students, fed only by Sutton. APS has taken the "magnets" out of the system at the high school level and has gone to the small learning community approach. This is the first year North Atlanta is not accepting out-of-zone students into the performing arts or international baccalaureate programs. North Atlanta with Mark MyGrant has really turned around – last year, of 202 seniors, 198 went to college, placed at 102 colleges, with \$18 million in scholarships.

Nancy said for us to e-mail or call our questions to her. Her cell is 404-861-1595. Her APS e-mail is nmeister@atlanta.k12.ga.us.

Garth Peters, Jud Ready, Sally Flocks and Gordon Certain on the Buckhead Coalition Speed Radar program.

Garth Peters: The Buckhead Coalition started the Speed Radar program back in July, 2009. It was offered to all Buckhead neighborhoods on the basis of one sign per neighborhood and a grant of \$2,300 each. There would be a net cost of \$523 to each neighborhood for the units. Some neighborhoods elected to upgrade their units to include data recording capabilities. The program is still in effect but is nearing its end. Hopefully, the presentation tonight will influence those on the fence to proceed. Chastain Park, Garden Hills and another neighborhood are currently considering a sign. Garth asked Sally Flocks from PEDS to speak since they had jointly looked at some devices even before the program began last July. PEDS awarded the Golden Shoe award to the Coalition for this program in 2009. Garth was very encouraged with the use Jud Ready from the Wildwood neighborhood had made with their device and the relationship that has developed between Wildwood and APD Zone 2.

Jud Ready: [Jud's presentation is on the BCN site at www.nbca.org/bcn/radar/Jud.pdf.] Jud raises money for Georgia Tech and decided to raise money for Wildwood to help them get a device. With the \$2,300 from the Coalition and their \$523, they purchased unit and operated it for several weeks before determining that it would be more useful with the addition of:

- a tamper alarm (a car alarm) to make it more difficult for thieves to steal it,
- a memory capability – it was good to inform drivers of their speeds, but it was also useful to capture the data for the neighborhood's own analysis,
- a speed limit sign letting drivers know what the speed limit is to compare to their actual speed.

These additions amounted to \$870 more, plus shipping. A lot of the software capabilities advertized for the unit were not borne out when Jud tried to use the improved unit. For instance, he wanted to find out when (date and time of day) the fastest of three cars recorded (going more than 80 MPH) happened. Jud said it took a "brutal amount of work" to get the answer, given the inadequacy of the software that was provided.

They set up the unit on Howell Mill (but have subsequently relocated it), operating from 6AM to 11PM (limited for battery-life reasons). The highest speed detected so far was 88 MPH (for real). The unit records speeds each ½ second and they were able to verify the validity of the vehicle as it changed from 86 to 87 to 88 in a plausible pattern. They saw ten cars going faster than 70 and 272 cars going faster than 50 MPH. About 9% were going 10 MPH over the speed limit in one direction and almost 20% in the other. Maximum traffic volume was between 5PM and 6PM. An average of about 2,500 vehicles were tracked a day. Jud provided all the data to Major Browning, who replied quickly. Lt. Cotter and Officer Broom came out and gave out tickets, but only to drivers exceeding 41 MPH. Of the 39 ticketed, 28 were neighbors.

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Sally Flocks commented that if a pedestrian is hit at 40 MPH, there's an 85% change of a fatality – that should have a bearing at what speed drivers should be ticketed. The median speed was shown at 37 MPH – that's pretty lousy in terms of the risk to people walking along the side of the road. She would encourage Wildwood to have the unit flash at a lower speed than 33 and APD to ticket at lower speeds.

Q. Jim King asked Major Browning what constraints law enforcement has to operate under when ticketing speeders. **A.** Within a school zone, they can ticket 1 MPH over. If it is 40 or higher, they have to allow a 10 MPH grace zone with a laser. **Q.** Sally commented that drivers within the 10 MPH grace zone should not be regarded as obeying the law – their behavior is dangerous. Jud also said that people who are complaining about speeders should look in the mirror. He commented that due to the radar sign and/or to the increased police enforcement activity, they had seen a significant reduction in speeds through their neighborhood. In conclusion, Jud expressed gratitude to the Buckhead Coalition for this program.

Sally Flocks: Sally is executive director of PEDS. Garth asked Sally to explain PEDS' greatest recent accomplishments and to outline what they are working on now.

Greatest accomplishment: last year, PEDS got GDOT to change their policy on resurfacing streets. The previous policy had been in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act: when a road is resurfaced, government agencies are required to make it accessible to all users. That means that accommodations must be provided for wheelchair users and those with visual impairment, which was not being done. GDOT had argued that resurfacing was just routine maintenance – PEDS wrote to the Federal Highway Administration and got a response the same day, explaining to the GDOT that their interpretation of the law was incorrect. GDOT changed their policy with a week. That was a major change, affecting the entire state.

Current top priority in the city: In 20 years, one out of five people in Atlanta will be over 65, so it is a big PEDS concern that seniors can be mobile and independent. People can still walk after they can no longer drive, so walking needs to become a feasible transportation option. This year, PEDS' priority is to get the City of Atlanta to change its policy on sidewalk maintenance. Currently, they say that sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the abutting property owner. She said that policy treats sidewalks as if they are frills. What you need for walking is a network that connects throughout the city and it needs to be cared for by the city. We have a high poverty rate in Atlanta and people are just not repairing sidewalks because the city is not enforcing it.

In the region, PEDS is focusing on getting safe crossings at bus stops. The GDOT policy is to eradicate crosswalks when they resurface streets that at crossings, like on Roswell Road, that are not signalized and are without 4-way stop signs. PEDS is fighting that policy. GDOT is misinterpreting a research study that the Federal Highway Administration published a decade ago that said that, on its own, a marked crosswalk is actually going to make crossing the street more dangerous under certain conditions. This study meant that in areas like on Roswell Road, where you have multiple lanes with high-speed, high-volume traffic, you need to do more than just provide a crosswalk – you need to supplement it with other devices. But the GDOT misinterprets the study to say, well if it doesn't have the signals or other equipment, we're just going to do nothing. So, PEDS is trying to change that policy and is going to try new devices. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (which is the "bible" of highway engineers) now includes something called a hybrid signal – high intensity activated crosswalk – these are being used in Suwanee now and they will be used elsewhere on Buford Highway. PEDS is encouraging its use in those areas where signals would not be warranted by the engineer's rules. They are also recommending something called a "rapid flash beacon", which only cost \$10,000 in each direction (a traffic signal will cost at least \$100,000) – they are very effective. They have been tried in St. Petersburg and 88% of drivers complied with the device on a road very much like Roswell with a refuge island installed in the middle. PEDS is trying to get these devices (and crosswalks) installed at all the bus stops on multi-lane roads. She says it is really wrong to be expecting people to get across roads like Roswell without assistance.

Q. Jim King said people have fought sidewalks because they considered them a liability issue. **A.** Sally and Madelyn Archibong met yesterday and discussed that very issue. It is completely untrue that property owners are responsible. Because sidewalks are on city property, the city cannot delegate the liability to someone else. The city can make the adjacent property owners fiscally responsible for repairs, but if someone hurts themselves on city property, the adjacent property owner cannot be held liable. **Q.** Jim said they have had lawyers cite precedents of cases decided

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the other way. **A.** Sally will send Gordon a court case supporting her position. (Gordon posted it at www.nbca.org/bcn/minutes/Sidewalks.pdf.) Sally mentioned the "walkscore" web site (www.walkscore.com), which quantifies the value of sidewalks.

Gordon Certain: North Buckhead also got a radar unit with the memory upgrade and a burglar alarm installed when it initially shipped. It was received in late December and is being semi-permanently attached to existing poles without the use of the portable stand. (In fact, they got the burglar alarm free in lieu of the stand.) The sign is being operated 24x7. The software that comes with the unit, as Jud says, is poor. To really get anywhere, you have to put the data into Microsoft EXCEL. Gordon wrote some EXCEL routines which are available to others using the radar units equipped with the memory upgrade. This software provides useful analyses by day of the week and time of day, percentiles, etc. Gordon also was able to extract a subset of the data representing the behavior of individual vehicles as they approach the radar device. This data clearly shows that almost all drivers slowed as they reached the last 60 to 80 feet before the radar display. Graphical reports of vehicle behavior at various distances from the radar unit are provided by Gordon's software in a yet to be polished format. [Gordon's presentation is at www.nbca.org/bcn/radar/gordon.pdf. Gordon's EXCEL routines are available at www.nbca.org/bcn/radar/software along with sample reports.]

VIII. Community Concerns

No report.

IX. Next Meeting

March 18

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Prepared by Gordon Certain
BCN Secretary
March 15, 2010

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BCN Organizational Status as of 02/11/10																			
		Represented?																	
		2008			2009												2010		
Neighborhood		BCN Member ?	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
1	Arden																		
2	Ardmore Park	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
3	Brookwood							✓								✓			
4	Brookwood Hills												✓						
5	Buckhead Forest	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Buckhead Heights										✓								
7	Castlewood	✓									✓				✓				
8	Chastain Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Collier Hills	✓								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Collier Hills North										✓								
11	Garden Hills	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
12	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Historic Brookhaven	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
14	Kingswood	✓	✓							✓									
15	Lindridge Martin Manor	✓	✓				✓									✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Margaret Mitchell	✓					✓				✓				✓		✓	✓	✓
17	Memorial Park	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
18	Mount Paran Parkway															✓			
19	Mt. Paran-Northside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
20	North Buckhead	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	P'tree Battle Alliance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
22	Paces	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
23	Paces West	✓				✓	✓												
24	Peachtree Heights East	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓			✓			✓		
25	Peachtree Heights West	✓			✓									✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Peachtree Hills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓
27	Peachtree Park	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Pine Hills				✓												✓	✓	✓
29	Pleasant Hill																		
30	Randall Mill																		
31	Ridgedale Park	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
32	Springlake																	✓	✓
33	Tuxedo Park	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
34	Wesley Battle	✓				✓		✓											
35	West Paces Northside	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Whitewater Creek	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
37	Wildwood		✓																✓
Count		26	17	13	18	14	20	17	12	14	18	17	15	17	11	18	16	17	24