



# The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

**Board Meeting**

March 18, 2010

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:35 – 8:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

## Attendees:

	<b>Full Name</b>	<b>Neighborhood/Organization</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
1	Michael Adams	Candidate - State Senate District 38	adamsforsenate@gmail.com
2	Yolanda Adrean	Councilmember District 8	yadrean@atlantaga.gov
3	Peter Aman	Chief Operating Officer, City of Atlanta	paman@atlantaga.gov
4	Jim Birdsong	Unknown	
5	Laura Braddick	Northside Neighbor	lbraddick@mdjonline.com
6	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
7	Julian de Juan	Margaret Mitchell	jdejuan@rawdatabinc.com
8	Glenn Delk	Historic Brookhaven	glennelk@mindspring.com
9	Jim Elgar	Office of City Council President	jimelgar@gmail.com
10	Vincent Fort	State Senator District 39	vincent.fort@senate.ga.gov
11	Debra Fowler	Mt. Paran-Northside	debrarfowler@bellsouth.net
12	Kristy Gillmann	Peachtree Hills	phca_kristy@hotmail.com
13	John Haliburton	Peachtree Hills	john@thrashgroup.com
14	Corrie Havie(?)	Observer	
15	Jack Hellriegel	West Paces Northside	jehellriegel@comcast.net
16	Phillips Jones	Tuxedo Park	gpjatl@bellsouth.net
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	Caroline King	Guest	
21	Bill Langley	Ridgedale Park	langleybill@comcast.net
22	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@comcast.net
23	Rep. Ed Lindsey	State Representative District 54	elindsey@gmlj.com
24	Paul Melvin	Chair of NPU-C	plmj@mindspring.com
25	George Mirgorod	Pine Hills	gMirgorod@comcast.net
26	Sally Morgens	Tuxedo Park	smorgens@aol.com
27	Jennifer Moyers	Whitewater Creek	jennifermoyers@beacham.com
28	Gary Neumark	Lindridge Martin Manor	gneumark@gsu.edu
29	Kirk Oppenlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
30	Garth Peters	Memorial Park & Buckhead Coalition	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
31	Buff Quillian	Peachtree Heights West	BuffQuillian@gmail.com
32	Lou Lee Reece	Memorial Park	
33	Kasim Reed	Mayor of Atlanta	mayorreed@atlantaga.gov
34	Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
35	John Schaffner	Buckhead Reporter	johnschaffner@reporternewspapers.net
36	Sheldon Schlegman	Mt. Paran-Northside	shelarchitect@purdigital.net
37	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bschneider@gardenhills.net
38	Brenda Smith	Mt. Paran-Northside	brendaDavisSmith@gmail.com
39	Roxanne Smith	Peachtree Battle Alliance	rgsassoc@bellsouth.net
40	Jackson Wilson	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	jlw253@gmail.com
41	Jim Wright	Ardmore Park	wrightjr@mindspring.com
42	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 Chair of NPU-C	Paul Melvin
4 Chastain Park	Jim King, Kirk Oppenlander
5 Collier Hills	Barbara Kennedy
6 Garden Hills	Bob Schneider
7 Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Henry Wyche, Jackson Wilson
8 Historic Brookhaven	Glenn Delk
9 Lindridge Martin Manor	Gary Neumark
10 Margaret Mitchell	Julian de Juan
11 Memorial Park	Garth Peters, Lou Lee Reece
12 Mt. Paran-Northside	Debra Fowler, Sheldon Schlegman, Brenda Smith
13 North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff
14 Peachtree Battle Alliance	Roxanne Smith
15 Peachtree Heights West	Buff Quillian
16 Peachtree Hills	John Haliburton, Kristy Gillmann
17 Pine Hills	George Mirgorod
18 Ridgedale Park	Bill Langley
19 Tuxedo Park	Phillips Jones, Sally Morgens, Mercy Sandberg-Wright
20 West Paces Northside	Jack Hellriegel
21 Whitewater Creek	Jennifer Moyers

### I. Welcome

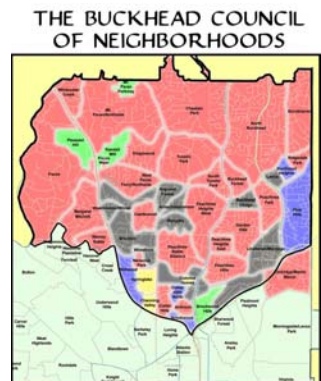
**Jim King** called the meeting to order at around 6:35 PM with a quorum present.

### II. Introductions

The attendees introduced themselves. Current (March) membership is shown in red in the map to the right. Chairman Jim King welcomed political candidates in attendance to participate in the discussions.

Paul Melvin, new chair of NPU-C, was introduced. He spoke about the number of neighborhoods in NPU-C which were not represented by neighborhood associations and their efforts to plan a membership drive to expand their numbers.

Jim King said that Jud Ready of the Wildwood neighborhood had indicated their intention of joining BCN.



### III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for February were approved by the Board.

### IV. Committee Reports

**Treasurer** – No report.

**Communications** – No report.

**Development and Infrastructure** – No report.

**Education** – Glenn Delk said, regarding the CRCT school test situation, that the Board of Education had responded to requests, such as BCN's, to hire an independent firm to perform an audit. Initially they had planned to use the Atlanta Education Fund but apparently additional pressure resulted in the

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hiring of a nationally recognized firm from Utah called Caveon Test Security to do an independent analysis. Glenn believes that BCN had some impact on this situation.

**Parks** – Gordon Certain announced that Ken Gillett has submitted his resignation. Park Pride is having a big parks conference on March 20 – 22. Sally Morgens commented that Mayor Reed is scheduled to speak about parks at the end of the conference. Gordon said that he planned to have an organizational meeting of the BCN Parks Committee and asked for volunteers to serve on the committee – Bob Schneider and Sally Morgens expressed interest.

Jim King said, responding generally to the topic of volunteering for committees, that BCN needed every board member to be involved in one of BCN's committees.

**Public Safety** – Kim Kahwach asked Peter Aman if the City of Atlanta had an evacuation plan on record. Peter Aman responded that there was an approved emergency plan involving Atlanta and Fulton County. He said a lot of work needs to be done regarding emergency planning, but there are plans on file. Peter said he has not looked into how sufficient they are. Kim said she had just seen a video of a lot of malls being blown up and she thought that since areas like North Buckhead had a lot of malls, we needed to look into what BCN could contribute.

**Transportation** – Jim King asked Gordon Certain to briefly describe MARTA legislation that was under consideration in the legislature. Gordon is on the BATMA board. BATMA deals with transportation and congestion in Buckhead. A concern is that if MARTA goes through with the planned reduction in service being considered (one third of the bus routes and a reduction in train frequency and hours), there will be a real impact on Buckhead. Every year BATMA sells 27,000 monthly passes which means something like 200,000 trips a year to and from Buckhead. If MARTA becomes unworkable to commuters, people will be in cars. The Buckhead Coalition is expected to join BATMA and BCID in signing resolutions supporting legislation to help MARTA avoid the cuts. Gordon argued that BCN should consider a similar resolution. Jim suggested a vote be conducted by e-mail or later during the meeting.

Gordon encouraged neighborhoods which had or were considering acquiring the radar signs being purchased with help from the Buckhead Coalition to strongly consider acquiring the memory storage module, a \$500 option. He will make a software package available which produces standardized reports from the memory modules. He said that without reports to convey how bad the neighborhood speeding problems are, the police will not be able to respond.

**BCN Watershed Coordination Committee** – Christy Gillman and George Mirgorod had a very productive meeting with Watershed Management Commissioner Rob Hunter. Hunter committed to send a representative to BCN's monthly meetings and perhaps quarterly, the representative may be Commissioner Hunter or Deputy Commissioner Sheila Pierce. BCN will define what metrics we would like to be briefed on each month. Kristy asked for neighborhood volunteers to join her committee to define those metrics. WSM committed by July to empower their front line representatives to settle disputes below a set value, avoiding delays resulting from reviews by several levels of management.

Jim King added that resolving the storm water (flooding) issues are a major task for WSM to take on and resolve.

**Peter Aman**, the city's Chief Operating Officer, added that all the city's operating departments report to him. He offered himself as another conduit for communications with the city. He said he lives off of Dudley Lane in Chastain Park.

### **V. General Business**

The Peachtree Battle Alliance will have its semi-annual Peachtree Creek Cleanup scheduled on April 24. Memorial Park and Springlake neighborhoods will join them. They will meet at Woodward Way and Peachtree Battle Median at 9AM.

## VII. Invited Guest Speakers

### Kasim Reed – Mayor of Atlanta

*[Note – in order to facilitate future reference to Mayor Reed's comments, key works are bolded for each question or topic, to make a particular answer easier to find.]*

Jim King introduced the mayor. Jim said that among the issues he asked the mayor to cover were the pension crisis and the incomplete GA 400 interchange.

Mayor Reed said he had been in office for 70 days. He said that he wanted, as a result of his talk to us, for us to feel completely comfortable to contact him or people in his administration. He said that one of his first phone calls upon being elected was to **Peter Aman** of Bain & Company. Aman agreed to serve as Chief Operating Officer for Reed for at least a year. Bain had done considerable pro bono work during the Franklin administration and Reed hopes that Aman will help the city implement some of the Bain recommendations. **David Bennett**, formally of the AJC, was invited by Reed to become a senior policy advisor. Sonji Jacobs Dade, a vice president of Adleman, joined the Reed administration as Communications Director. He said his intent is to attract a different kind of person to his administration. He formed a transition team including Lisa Borders and Laurence Ashe of Ansley Park. He has also created search teams for the senior cabinet positions of police chief, fire chief, CFO, public works commissioner, and city attorney – these teams include Jesse Spikes, Mary Norwood, and Kile Kaiser.

Reed said that **crime is down** in every major category by 20% and is down in every category by 10%. He said nothing is more important than keeping the city safe. He said the city needs to invest in a larger police force.

He addressed the **pension burden** resulting from votes in 2001 and 2005. The pension obligation increased from \$44 million to more than \$144 million last year. That was because of retroactive pension benefits approved in 2005 at the same time that taxes were repeatedly cut. He said that they would have to "unravel" some of those decisions without raising taxes. He committed "to not raise taxes as we move into the 2011 budget cycle". He said the current revenue shortfall is between \$35 million and \$52 million, but will be able to overcome it by belt-tightening and doing more with less.

Reed plans an investment in **greenspace and parks**. He is committed to the **Beltline** project.

He is very interested in the **GA 400 interchange** that Buckhead has needed for such a long time. He said that is why he has been working with the Governor, Lt. Governor and the Speaker, to pass the Regional TSPLOST Transportation Funding Bill. He believes that Atlanta's interests will be well served by the bill if it is passed.

Reed plans to look at **APD Zone 2** to see if it is the appropriate size.

He said in the last 70 days that he had given 50 speeches. He told the Commerce Club today that "Atlanta needed a hug." We are used to winning and we have had a bad patch for about two or three years." He mentioned the article in the New York Times by Harvard economist Edward L. Glaeser: "**Don't Count Atlanta Out**". He said the core of his reasoning is that Atlanta is made up of very special people with unusually high levels of education (43% of adults have a 4-year degree). People come to Atlanta in spite of the lack of an ocean or mountains – they genuinely want to be here.

He said "I want to be your mayor. **I do not view Buckhead as a bank**. You will not see me try to shift the burdens of the City of Atlanta's fiscal condition on this community, which gives so much so often. So I come here tonight to extend a hand and tell you I look forward to serving every single day of the rest of my term in office as a friend and as a partner of this community."

**Q.** Jerry Neumark of Lindridge Martin Manor said, as the one BCN neighborhood with the most concern about the **GA 400/I-85 interchange** because "we are right there", there was talk at one time that the project would take 20 of their 300 homes. Jerry said "we are not not in favor of the interchange ... we do not want to stand in the way of the interchange; we feel it is necessary too. The problem is, what can we do to protect our neighborhood, our investment in our neighborhood and our quality of life in our neighborhood? Because we happen to feel that even though our neighborhood is small, it is important. ... keep Lindridge Martin Manor in mind as you move forward." **A.** "If the Regional TSPLOTS passes, we need to reconvene. ... I would certainly advocate that the GA 400



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project be included in the list of projects. We will then be in a real time situation. So rather than give you a "puffy" answer, I along with Councilman Howard Shook and Councilwoman Yolanda Adrean should meet pretty soon after the passage ... and then we need to inform Vance Smith of this concern immediately so the concern gets "baked in" to the thinking of the interchange. You have to do that very early in the process." It needs to be a forethought, not an afterthought.

**Q.** Shel Schelgman, representing "The Tree Next Door", said that during the mayoral campaign, he never heard candidates address the issue of the **environment**. We need to work hard to save our trees and would like you to address the whole issue of the environment. **A.** The city will do a "green audit", something that has not been done in four years. We have a woman on the city's staff that deals with nothing but sustainability. Her position is funded by a grant. Our environmental record is strengthened by our investment in clean drinking water, which has been transformational for the state of Georgia. The city has made strides in water conservation, reducing water usage by more than 20%. Paradoxically, our own conservation measures caused us to pay more for water. After the "green audit", we will "run the numbers" to determine what we can do immediately at very low cost, and then have a bigger conversation about things that cost more. For instance, the city needs to convert its vehicle fleet away from traditional gasoline vehicles. We need to retrofit lighting. We have moved from 34th to 18th and Reed wants the city to become one of the nation's top ten environmental cities.

**Q.** Jack Hellriegel reported a situation at West Paces Ferry Road at Lanier [perhaps at Valley] in which a **developer clear-cut trees** on an entire piece of property in violation of the tree ordinance. Since the one arborist who seemed to care about enforcing the ordinance was fired, developers are running rampant. Can you do anything to help? **A.** "Absolutely, I was just talking about." Yolanda asked to comment: City arborists have made more visits to that site than any other site in the city. This developer has taken down trees illegally, he submitted a plan that didn't have a retaining wall that he then put in, so we are aware of all the violations. He has been fined for all of his tree violations. The Arborists are looking at "that deep cut" that will affect the neighbors' tree roots. There is a stop work order on the project, the second one. His fines on the wall have been doubled. The developer has not demonstrated good faith with the community – the plan submitted to the NPU was changed afterward. Commissioner Shelby is very involved. Mayor Reed said that the administration has been "extraordinarily responsive" to Councilwoman Adrean on this issue.

**Q.** Kristy Gillmann complimented Reed on his efforts in support of the Census. She asked Reed for additional information about his involvement in the **Beltline project**. **A.** The Beltline is happening in several phases. It is vital to our national and international reputation. It has Reed's complete support. He has joined the fundraising effort as honorary chair and is working hard. The team has raised \$35 million towards a \$60 million goal for the Beltline. The 2011 budget honors commitments to Beltline parks, which the funding community wanted to see. The right-of-way acquisition effort is 63% complete. It is Reed's goal see all right-of-way acquisitions completed within the next 36 months. He plans to step up efforts to get federal funding for the Beltline in the long term.

Regarding the Census: He said that the federal funding was important but there were other consequences. Atlanta has added 100,000 people between 2001 and 2009. We will have a sales tax renegotiation in 2012. With this new population the city could receive \$15 million to \$25 million in new sales tax revenues without any added effort.

He also recognized Senator Vincent Fort for his attendance, saying we must be "really special" to have him attend our meeting. [Laughter.]

**Q.** Brenda Smith said her neighborhood was extremely concerned about efforts to create **Milton County**. She said that in conversations with Milton proponent Jan Jones, Ms. Jones suggested that if Milton were created, the remainder of Fulton and Atlanta could merge. Brenda said that if Milton were created, she would like to see the merger be simultaneous. Her neighborhood is concerned that they will become the "bank" for Fulton County. What are your thoughts on that? **A.** His number one priority for the city is to make sure it stays fiscally strong. He doesn't think the votes exist to create Milton County but doesn't want to engage in a battle with the Speaker Pro Tem [Jones]. Even if the Milton legislation were to pass, it would have to go through a Voting Rights Act Section 5 review with the Justice Department, which he thought would be "particularly challenging" and he didn't think the "pre-clearance" would be approved.

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**Q.** Gordon Certain stated that, except for Chastain Park, **Buckhead has very little park land and greenspace**. Further, the northernmost 10% of the city had only 1% of the city's playgrounds. Land is so expensive here in Buckhead that if the city allocated the same amount of money to every council district, then almost all districts will get five or ten parks and we will get a half of a park. We have a challenge – how do we get more parks here? **A.** Reed thinks "now is the moment" because of where we are in the real estate price standpoint. We can get more money for parks acquisition by reforming government as you are going to clearly see set out in the 2011 budget, so we have money to do special things like greenspace acquisition and the rest. "I am not in the position philosophically that the money should be deployed in a balanced way across council districts. I don't take that approach. I don't agree with congressional rebalances at the state level regarding road money and I don't agree with an equalization formula for council districts. I certainly understand that in order to acquire greenspace in certain parts of the city it will be more expensive. And I am a capitalist and I happen to believe that right now is our moment which is why we are working very hard right now to get our act together. And by getting our act together it means that we will run a government that is smaller. We are dealing with a pension crisis that is literally absorbing Atlanta's greatness. If the modifications were not made in 2001 and 2005, the City of Atlanta's pension liability would be about \$73 million in a year. So that is versus \$125 million. That's \$50 to \$55 million in cash that would be available to spend on other initiatives. So that's the long answer. The more direct answer to the question is, you and I and the council person for the district just have to have a conversation about what we need to do about acquiring more greenspace."

**Q.** Gordon's follow-up: We have been working with the Georgia DOT and Parks Department in an effort to get parts of the **GA 400 right-of-way covered by a master greenspace agreement** so we don't have to lease every inch of it. We can have a master agreement and come in and say let's get this parcel and have a contract between the neighborhood, the Parks Department and the state to have us maintain the area rather than having the state do it. **A.** "If you allow me to help, I think I may be of help to make that so."

**Q.** Jim Wright asked about the mayor's position on **gangs**. **A.** Reed answered, "I believe the gang problem in Atlanta is an urgent threat. Which is why I am expanding the size of the police force to deal with it. The police force in the city right now is too small. Period. There are periods during shift change that you have a real risk if you have an urgent need. ... We can't meet the gang threat with the size of force we have right now. ... I will share this with you. We are going to expand the number of police and we're going to meet the number of gangs and confront gangs in a way that they have not been confronted in the last eight years." What's going on right now in Atlanta is that ragtag groups of young people are being trained by authentic gangs such as the *Crips*, the *Bloods*, and the *Gangster Disciples* and they are organizing groups in a different way. They have resources to develop gangs and they build them like businesses. So gang members from Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles come here to set up shop and they have a particular focus around burglary which is why we are going to be so aggressive about it. ... I have talked over and over again about opening recreation centers in some of the most challenged communities in Atlanta because that that is part of the crime relief strategy as well." Closed recreation centers create a feeder system for gangs. The age of people committing burglaries is dropping.

**Q.** Julian de Juan commented that Reed spoke during the campaign about **improving Atlanta's relationship with the politicians at the state level**. What is your strategy to do that and how do you think the city will benefit? **A.** "I think we are living that right now. First of all you have to have fundamental cooperation. So on a range of issues we can talk about in private, we are doing very well. We are 14 days away from the end of the legislative session and ... you are not seeing the traditional kinds of legislation that target Atlanta and bash Atlanta for political purposes. That is a first step." His strategy is to stay constantly engaged with the legislature.

**Q.** Henry Wyche complemented Reed on the **very open hiring** such as that of Peter Aman in the COO position and hope that will continue. The next important position is the chief financial officer and hope we get a good "hire" there. Henry liked the openness of Reed's speeches – openness in government is a great antibody. Henry asked how Reed plans to work with the City Council. **A.** Reed said he is a legislator at heart. He respects the legislative process. He talked about having philosophical sessions with a group of councilmembers regarding the budget process. He is dedicated to avoid "hiding the ball" from the council. He wants them to have the same information as he does and to treat them with respect.

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**Q.** Henry's follow-up: philosophically, how do you feel about **privatization**? **Q.** You should look at it on a case by case basis and have to remain open to it. Employees who have the positions have to be able to compete.

He said that we are losing \$36 million a year running the jail and that Fulton County has a charter to operate jails and the City of Atlanta does not. There are 300 employees who could be moved from the city payroll over to Fulton's. The city, Reed said, should not be in the jail business.

**Q.** Gordon Certain commented that we have a new school, Sarah Smith Intermediate Elementary campus. The land was bought 21 months ago, but the sidewalks aren't completed yet. The **lack of coordination between the school system and city** has been a disaster. They basically haven't talked. The school system went off and built their building and the city didn't have any money, didn't have any choice in the land that was selected, and finally through heroism of our city councilman money was appropriated for the sidewalks. But at this point, there are no traffic lights and no crosswalks there. APS is talking about a new high school in Buckhead. Please help us. **A.** "Actually, I want to look into the challenges you are having around the work that has been done." Yolanda Adrean added, "It's a problem because the schools are only required to put a sidewalk on their piece of property, and then they dump on us the safety infrastructure to move the children in and out of the school. I am sweating bullets over here in District 8 because I hear that's where the school is going to go. I am wondering where are we going to get the money for the sidewalks, crossings, and traffic lights and so forth and my wish would be that the school would be better partners in providing safety measures ... and not lay so much of the burden on the city. I am putting in a mile of sidewalks over in Julian de Juan's neighborhood at the Margaret Mitchell annex and I have a tiny bit of sidewalk money and my priority is first" getting children to school and second access to parks. Reed said "I will work with the Council on that. I didn't know anything about that challenge." **Q.** Gordon continued, part of the problem is that they have the SPLOST, so they have money to spend. It is not sharable with the city. There ought to be legislative changes so that if you build a new school, some of the money goes to the city to make it work. **A.** "I think you are right."

**Q.** Kristy Gillman, talking about the **September floods**, said when they ask the city for help they are told, "not my department", by everybody they talk to. How do we get answers? How would you guide us? **A.** "I would guide you by fixing it. There are two phone calls you should make. One is to your council person and the second is to David Bennett. So I am not even going to send you to the department. If you have those kind of challenges that you are having, I think you should call David who is empowered to fix particular problems and I will speak with him. I don't even want you to have to get bogged down in figuring out that department work." Kristy asked how to contact David and Peter Aman added, "All departments report up through me." Reed continued, "Until we have an effective 311 system, which is my goal, I want to find a way to make sure people are treated well."

**Q.** Can you educate us on **impact fees** and how we can track the fees that are collected? **A.** "We have a lot of work to do to be able to track that, and that is to make sure that all of the internal paperwork within the city government is taken in in a way that enables us to put it in and track it." He asked Peter to address the problem.

Jim King asked Mayor Reed to return at least once a year. [Applause.] Kim Kahwach commented that Peter Aman can come every month.

Mayor Reed's phone number is 404-330-6100. His e-mail address is mayorreed@atlantaga.gov. Peter Aman's e-mail address is paman@atlantaga.gov.

### **State Senator Vincent Fort – District 39**

*[Note – in order to facilitate future reference to Senator Fort's comments, key works are bolded for each question or topic, to make a particular answer easier to find.]*

Senator Fort said he saw in our minutes that we were concerned about the **CRCT investigation**. He said he is concerned as well. He said he has worked with Ed Lindsey, Kathy Ashe and Senator Tate and "asked APS to come over to the state capitol and explain to us what's going on. We urged them to make sure the investigation was independent and transparent because we were concerned that the investigation could be compromised if folk who had been connected to APS were in charge of the investigation. At this point the investigation is on-going. We hope it is forensic, asking people what happened as well as quantitative, looking at the numbers. And let the chips fall where they may is my



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attitude at this point." Fort has great respect for Superintendent Hall, but the taxpayers have a right to know. He is mostly concerned with the young people, because if they were promoted because someone changed their answers, they didn't get the education they need.

"**Milton County**: the mayor is right – the votes are not there." He thinks Milton is 15 to 20 votes short in the House.

**Q.** Sheldon Schlegman asked if we are going to get more **money for mass transit** from sales taxes. And the state needs to start funding for MARTA. **A.** Fort stated that Cleveland, Baltimore and Chicago each get between \$100 million to \$200 million a year from their state capitols for transit. "Georgia is way back in the pack." Regarding the regional transit bill, some of his constituents wonder if we should have to pay a penny on top of the penny we have been paying for all these years for MARTA. "And should we get consideration for doing the right thing for so long?" He is willing to vote for it, but some people say it is not fair. Yolanda suggested that other metro counties should have the same total sales tax rate (say, everybody at 8%) and she'd be happy. Another speaker said we would be shooting ourselves in the foot if we didn't support the additional sales tax to "do the right thing" with transportation. Fort agreed. He said that MARTA is largely built out and that the 50%-50% artificial limit on MARTA should be lifted by the MARTA legislative package. The second aspect of the MARTA legislation would help MARTA with short term financing. He said he thought that **state funding for MARTA** is dependent on "new leadership" and he is not optimistic that it will happen in this session. The leadership doesn't see the value of mass transit. However, we need to be careful because "Charlotte, NC is eating our lunch. We have to remain competitive."

**Q.** Yolanda Adrean asked with the legislature willing to tax everything including cigarettes and hospital beds, why is increasing the gas tax off the table? We have the **lowest gas tax in the country**. Why not raise it? **A.** "That gas tax is precious for those people in the state capitol, rural legislators who believe in building more roads... It would take a constitutional amendment to use the gas tax for mass transit. ... It is a matter of leadership and if I had a magic wand it would be done in a minute."

Fort's cell number is 404-287-7116. His e-mail address is vincent.fort@senate.ga.gov.

### **State Representative Edward Lindsey – District 54**

*[Note – in order to facilitate future reference to Representative Lindsey's comments, key works are bolded for each question or topic, to make a particular answer easier to find.]*

Ed said, "The good news is, during a time of crisis, the General Assembly focuses on the big things." The first big issue is the budget. Two years ago, the **state budget** was \$21.2 billion. At that point we ranked 49th in the nation in per capita spending and had a AAA bond rating and \$1.6 billion in the bank. This year the budget will be about \$17.4 billion. We have had rapidly increasing unemployment, ahead of the nation because we are a boom state – we go straight up and go straight down. A lot of businesses are making less money and many of those citizens who are employed are making less money. The state's two biggest sources of revenue are sales taxes and income taxes. Both are down. The state is cutting out things that are not absolutely essential and are trying to prioritize things that are essential, such as education and public safety. Education and public safety will take a larger percentage of the budget than ever. They have been cut, but a lot less than other areas. Even with the \$17.4 billion amount, they state still has about a \$1 billion shortfall. By constitution, the budget must be balanced.

The second big issue is to **start planting the seeds for our recovery**. The three areas he thinks are most important are transportation, water, and education.

- Ed said a **regional transportation plan** passed out of committee today. Lindsey thinks the plan is good. The state would be subdivided into 12 areas. Each area would be able to vote for a one cent sales tax to work on particular projects that area's residents think are important. The plan can involve transit as well as roads. The plan has state-wide bipartisan support.
- The Senate has passed a **water plan**. We have a water crisis since the courts ruled we can't depend on Lake Lanier, so we need to look elsewhere. The solution involves improving our capacity and improving our conservation. The bill is primarily a conservation bill, but it begins



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the work of creating new reservoirs. Each year in the future will require bold new steps to address the water situation. Lindsey said we need to start thinking outside the box – the East Tennessee River has great potential as a water source for Atlanta. We need to work with the Chattanooga-Knoxville area to provide them with what they need: economic development. We need water. We need to start building coalitions along those lines and an economic corridor up through Dalton to Tennessee with high-speed rail and tapping into their airport as our second airport.

- Regarding **education**, we have made progress, but the status quo is unacceptable. 50% of low-income children who enter the 9th grade do not graduate. Ed regards that as morally, economically and socially unacceptable. Ed has been working on the "Bridge Bill", to provide technical skills for kids who don't want to go on to college. Local areas which have used the bill's approach have seen graduation rates rise from 40%-60% levels to 80%-90% levels.

The third issue is **Milton County**. The bill is currently in the House Rules Committee. Ed asked for our help by asking our neighborhoods' residents to send e-mails to their state representatives. He said that many residents were unhappy with Fulton County government. He said that over the last five years the Fulton County Commission has been given reports by two study groups recommending wide-spread reforms. The Commission ignored the first and fought the second on the House floor, blocking it.

While the state constitution limits the number of counties to 159, HR21 allows the recreation of a county that once existed, allowing an exception to the 159 limit. Since originally Georgia only had one county, Chattham, the bill potentially allows a lot more than 160 counties by recreating previous configurations.

Ed says Milton County is dangerous for us because we could be stuck with the bill if Fulton is divided. The Milton bill (HR21) does nothing to reform Fulton – all it does is allow one group to walk away. It also takes away the right to vote on the division. Under the state constitution, when a county divides, everyone in the county gets to vote. Under HR21, only those who want to leave can cast votes, which Ed thinks it is morally wrong. Of 700,000 Fulton voters, HR21 takes away the right to vote from about 400,000. Ed thinks HR21 is in clear violation of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Section 5 blocks any bill that would dilute or diminish minority voting rights. Fulton south of Sandy Springs is about 60% African American.

Ed said the best way to stop HR21 is to make sure it never gets to the floor. Ed thinks HR21 proponents are 15-20 votes short.

Ed and Kathy Ashe are working on HR1589 which is intended to lessen the footprint of Fulton County. It establishes that highly "municipalized" counties would provide only specified limited services (jail, courts) with many of the remaining services turned over to the cities.

Ed explained an important legislative procedure called Crossover Day. The legislature meets 40 days a year. In order for a bill only approved by the House or Senate to be considered by the other body, it has to pass over to them by the 30th day to give them adequate time to consider it.

Ed's e-mail is [elindsey@gmlj.com](mailto:elindsey@gmlj.com). His phone is 404-316-4466.

### **VIII. Community Concerns**

No report.

### **IX. Next Meeting**

April 15

### **X. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM.

Prepared by Gordon Certain  
BCN Secretary  
April 14, 2010

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		<b>Represented at BCN Board Meeting?</b>																				
	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>BCN Dues</b>		<b>2008</b>			<b>2009</b>												<b>2010</b>			
		<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	
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 Bohler	✓	✓				✓		✓													
35	West Paces Northside	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Whitewater Creek	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓
37	Wildwood			✓																	✓	
<b>Count</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	