



THE BUCKHEAD
COUNCIL OF
NEIGHBORHOODS
P.O. Box 11934, Atlanta, GA 30335

The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Board Meeting

June 10, 2010

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:45 – 8:15 PM

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

	Full Name	Neighborhood/Organization	Email Address
1	Laura Braddick	Northside Neighbor	lbraddick@mdjonline.com
2	Major Robert Browning	APD Zone 2	rbrowning@atlantaGA.gov
3	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
4	Diane Cox	Brookwood	DianeCox41@gmail.com
5	Otis Dancy	Ceasar Mitchell/Sheletha Robinson	Odancy@gmail.com
6	Glenn Delk	Historic Brookhaven	glennedelk@mindspring.com
7	George Dusenbury	Future Commissioner of DPRCA	george@parkpride.org
8	Tom Gordon	Ardmore Park	tgordon@mindspring.cokm
9	Freda Harris	Buckhead	
10	Harriet Harris	North Buckhead	harhar@mindspring.com
11	Jack Hellriegel	West Paces Northside	jehellriegel@gmail.com
12	Phillips Jones	Tuxedo Park	gpjatl@bellsouth.net
13	Kim Kahwach	Buckhead Forest	kajensen@bellsouth.net
14	Bill Langley	Ridgedale Park	langleybill@comcast.net
15	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@comcast.net
16	Kelly Lee	Morningside - Candidate for Judge	
17	Greg Mauldin	Springlake	greg.mauldin@alston.com
18	George Mirgorod	Pine Hills	gMirgorod@comcast.net
19	Kirk Oppenlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
20	Garth Peters	Memorial Park & Buckhead Coalition	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
21	Elizabeth Pritchard	Peachtree Battle Alliance	elizpritchard@bellsouth.net
22	Buff Quillian	Peachtree Heights West	buffquillianphw@gmail.com
23	Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
24	John Schaffner	Buckhead Reporter	johnschaffner@reporternewspapers.net
25	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bschneider@gardenhills.net
26	Bob Stasiowski	Peachtree Park	rstasiowski@yahoo.com
27	Chief George Turner	Acting Chief of Police	gturner@atlantaga.gov
28	Debra Wathen	Paces	6wathens@bellsouth.net
29	Jackson Wilson	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	president@grantestates.org
30	Henry Wyche	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	hwyche@valleycap.com

Representation by Neighborhood:

	Neighborhood/Organization	Name(s)
1	Ardmore Park	Tom Gordon
2	Brookwood	Diane Cox
3	Buckhead Forest	Kim Kahwach
4	Chastain Park	Kirk Oppenlander
5	Garden Hills	Bob Schneider
6	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Henry Wyche, Jackson Wilson
7	Historic Brookhaven	Glenn Delk
8	Memorial Park	Garth Peters
9	North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff, Harriet Harris
10	Paces	Debra Wathen
11	Peachtree Battle Alliance	Elizabeth Pritchard
12	Peachtree Heights West	Buff Quillian
13	Peachtree Park	Bob Stasiowski
14	Pine Hills	George Mirgorod
15	Ridgedale Park	Bill Langley
16	Springlake	Greg Mauldin
17	Tuxedo Park	Phillips Jones, Mercy Sandberg-Wright
18	West Paces Northside	Jack Hellriegel

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I. Welcome

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

II. Introductions

The attendees introduced themselves. Current (June) dues payment status is shown in red in the map to the right. Twenty-eight (28) neighborhoods have paid 2010 dues, an increase of two over 2009. Kingswood is shown in this corrected map as a member through its association with the Mount Paran/Northside neighborhood. (A larger version of the map is shown on page 8 of this document.)



III. Approval of Minutes & New Members

Minutes for the May meeting were approved as were minutes for March and April which were not previously approved because of the lack of a quorum. A quorum was present prior to admitting new members Brookwood, Pine Hills and Springlake to BCN.

IV. Committee Updates

Treasurer (Henry Wyche, Treasurer) – No report.

Communications (Jennifer Moyers, Chair) – No report.

Development and Infrastructure (Elizabeth Pritchard, Chair) – Peachtree Battle and NPU-C has been working with the Planning Department and developer Pope and Land about the rezoning of Colonial Homes to high density, and if so, in what configuration. The Colonial Homes tract abuts Bobby Jones Golf Course and much of it is in the floodplain. So far the neighborhoods have not been able to reach agreement with the developer though several configurations have been proposed. Concerns include the limited traffic infrastructure and storm water runoff in the flood-prone Peachtree Creek basin.

Education (Glenn Delk, Chair) – The CRCT test report is due soon. A review of technology contracts is being conducted.

Parks (Gordon Certain, Chair) – The proposed site plan for the Little Nancy Creek Park passed around in an earlier BCN meeting is being revised to incorporate Parks Department feedback.

Property Taxes (George Mirgorod, Chair) – The subject of creating this new committee was considered. George is very familiar with the tax process. Jim King said we should avoid duplicating the activities of the Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation but it would be wise to be aware of issues relevant to BCN. The committee was approved unanimously.

Public Safety (Kim Kahwach, Chair) – Gordon Certain was contacted by Janet Martin of the Court Watch program. They are going to have training at the Sandy Springs City Hall on July 22.

Transportation (John Haliburton, Chair) – Crosswalk projects were underway for E. Rivers and planned for Sutton schools. Opposition to new sidewalks for Margaret Mitchell school was encountered and overcome. Jim King indicated we need to follow up with the GA 400 interchange.

Watershed Management Coordination (Kristy Gillman, Chair) – Gordon Certain commented that there were reports that while Sandy Springs had republished FEMA flood maps, Atlanta had decided to look at, but not republish, their (badly outdated) FEMA maps. Gordon suggested BCN write a letter asking for an explanation. Gordon commented that the existing FEMA maps do not show GA 400, Phipps Boulevard, the Buckhead Loop and many of the hard surfaces built in the urban part of Buckhead in the past 20 years. Gordon planned to draft the letter for BCN.

V. Speakers

Interim Chief George Turner, Atlanta Police Department

George Turner is a 29 year veteran of APD and an Atlanta native and is serving as Interim Police Chief. He said he has worked in every APD department and division. There are three finalists in the race for permanent chief, including Turner and two non-Atlantans.

Turner reported that the mayor's budget includes funding to increase the police staffing by 100 officers. It also includes a "step" pay increase of 3.5% for officers who have not topped out in their pay scale. Turner said that Atlanta's attrition is double that of comparable cities (St. Louis, Denver, Memphis, Baltimore) which have an attrition rate of 4.2% to 5.5%. Atlanta's rate last year was 10%. Considering the training costs of over \$100,000 per officer, this is a big drain. The pay increase should help stem this trend. The city currently has 176 trainees, including 65 who are in the field and providing at least some benefit to the city. The remaining 111 trainees are providing no current benefit to the city. We must reduce the number of trainees who are lost after the city invests in them.

Q. A big issue for taxpayers is the unfunded pension obligation. The improvements in pension benefits passed years ago were supposed to stem the attrition. But it didn't. We are paying an extra \$100 million for the pension and while we need more police but we don't have any more money to pay pensions and hire more police. **A.** In the mayor's budget, there is a proposal to do an initial fix to the pensions. We need to stabilize pension costs to have a viable city. All area police departments have a step increase program. Our officers start at \$39,000 to \$41,000. The scale tops out at \$56,000. But without steps, after five years officers are still at entry pay. So there is no way to get to that \$56,000 and we have to do something about that. The pension is something the administration and council will be working on. It needs to be stabilized – but Turner says he needs a pension.

Turner says the mayor is in "decision mode" for selecting a permanent chief and will have a decision soon. Turner said he would love to be able to continue to serve as chief. He believes that it is critical to have someone who understands the issues. Our crime is moving in the right direction with the current leadership the department has in place, such as Major Browning here in Zone 2. In Zone 6 we have moved from a precinct that had nothing but crime increases to one that is leading in percentage decreases in crime, simply because of leadership that has been put in place and holding officers accountable at every level. He hopes he can continue as the leader.

Q. Help us understand the important issues that an outside candidate is not going to know about Atlanta that makes a difference. **A.** The first thing is just knowing where everything is. Knowing the terrain of this city is a very challenging task. Not just knowing but having a passion about this city is important. It is also critical to understand where the players are, who are the leaders in our community, and to make sure to get solid information (as opposed to one-sided information that would be favorable to just one side of town as opposed to looking at the whole). Also, we are behind the eight ball when it comes to technology. We are working on a surveillance system that other cities our size have already implemented. "Predictive analysis", the technology to predict where crime is going to occur, as opposed to mere reacting, is something we need to work toward implementing. What would an outsider need to learn? The people, the officers. Other candidates talked of doing a 120-day assessment of the department – you cannot understand the dynamics of a department that quickly.

Q. What's been going on at Piedmont Park and what is being done about it? **A.** APD is extremely concerned about "Screen on the Green". Let me explain what happens with any permitted event: A sponsor petitions the city to have an event. The sponsor is totally responsible for all activities related to that event. The event permit requires the sponsor be responsible not only for the event but for what happens three blocks in every direction of the event. They have to provide off-duty police officers for the complete event without drawing on City resources. The Screen on the Green had a permit for 2,000 people, but at least 20,000 attended. So their resources were overwhelmed. Worse, they didn't have all of the officers they were scheduled to have for the event. Also, communications was an issue -- the off-duty officers were not Atlanta officers – they were Fulton County sheriffs and state patrol officers. In the future the officers working this event will be off-duty Atlanta police officers. Turner has met with the event sponsors and has designated an on-duty incident commander for every large scale outdoor event that will be working with the planning organization. For this event, APD will augment the off-duty officers in the park with some on-duty resources so we won't be caught

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short. They will also have the horse patrol there for crowd control which will be charged to the promoters.

Q. I have watched the technology being implemented at City Hall. In the case of the Bureau of Building, it has been devastating. Is there a task force to review any technology the city might buy for the police department? **A.** Turner thinks APD is better off than any other city department because they work with the Atlanta Police Foundation. APF does necessary research. APF will play an important role in the decision making.

Q. How do you train officers in changes in state law? **A.** Every year, they have a "roll call training" update which is sent out to all precincts. The sergeants read the information and officers sign that they have received the training. All officers in the state must receive 24 hours of training annually, including changes in the law.

Q. How big of an issue are gangs in the city? **A.** Turner started the city's gang unit in 1994 in response to gang activity around Underground and some neighborhoods in southwest and northwest Atlanta. As APD assesses the situation, we do not have the traditional black gangs: the Cripps and Bloods, the Disciple gangs, etc. However, we do have a prevalent national gang presence in the Hispanic areas around Buford Highway and near the Penitentiary where there are large Hispanic communities. We do see a large number of "upstart" gangs, neighborhood gangs. A gang is defined by the state as two or three people who gather together in a criminal enterprise. APD is tracking about 35 gangs and has about 500 gang members in their database in the city. They work closely with other police departments. The size of our gang unit has been tripled since it was started.

Q. Atlanta is reportedly a regional transfer point for drug smuggling. What is going on? **A.** This is absolutely correct. The Atlanta Metro area is one of the largest drug distribution centers, but it is not occurring inside the City of Atlanta – it is controlled by Hispanic gangs in Gwinnett and other northern portions of Metro. Drugs are being sold in the city but regional distribution isn't happening here.

Q. Is the citizenship status of people committing crimes in Atlanta checked? If you find out they are illegal aliens, is that reported to immigration authorities? **A.** When a person is arrested, their citizenship is checked as is their criminal history as a repeat offender. **Q.** In other states, there have been stories in the press about illegal immigrants committing repeated crimes. Do you keep that kind of statistics? **A.** We keep statistics about every kind of repeat offender. **Q.** Can you tell us how many crimes were committed in the city by illegal aliens? **A.** We have arrested more than 300 people for burglary and we can tell you that of those people, they have been charged more than 2,000 times for burglary. **Q.** I don't understand the answer. If you check and find they are here illegally, what action do you take? **A.** We partner with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and that information is turned over to them. But it is not our role to kick them out. **Q.** Does ICE do anything? **A.** Absolutely they do. They are constantly deporting people for being here illegally. But APD does not do that.

Q. After the Catherine Johnson shooting a few years ago, a Citizens Review Board was established. What's your plan for working with them and do you like them looking over your shoulder? **A.** The CRB was established because the city lost trust in the leadership of the police department. The CRB as it exists today is not adequately staffed to accomplish their stated objectives (their operating model). There are similar boards all over the country. Turner has looked at 30 cities of similar size to see how they did the police review function. There were two models reviewed: an investigative model (the one presently used in Atlanta) and an audit model. In an audit model, when the police department concludes an investigation, the review board takes the resultant file prepared by internal affairs and reviews it, asking questions and making recommendations as they see warranted. In an investigative model, the board conducts its own review of citizen complaints – our CRB simply doesn't have the resources to do that in Turner's opinion. With CRB, an officer perceives that he is being investigated twice for the same incident. Officers believe they have a constitutional right not to speak to an outside entity and their union attorneys are recommending that they not speak. A recent ordinance requires the chief to discipline officers who do not speak to the board. Turner says he will abide by the ordinance. But he believes there will be a constitutional challenge to this ordinance.

Q. What is the next technology you would like to tackle (given the chance) and do you need anything from us? **A.** This is the 76th community meeting Turner has spoken to since becoming interim chief. Everywhere, people want police officers who are professional, accountable to the citizens, and have needed technology. When a citizen makes a complaint against an officer, they should not have to

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wait six months for a response. Regarding technology, we have to do several things. We need appropriate surveillance equipment – when such video surveillance has been implemented, crime has been reduced by 10% to 20%. Second, none of our vehicles have automatic vehicle locators. The dispatcher needs to be able to send the closest unit to the call, but today, we can't do that. We need to be able to do that. New vehicles are being delivered with that capability. That will improve response time and save money. If you want to help, support the Atlanta Police Foundation.

Q. What can be done to get more "feet on the street" in the neighborhoods? Also, we are seeing more graffiti – is it gang-related? **A.** Turner hopes citizens have already seen a change in the way they police. Turner's management style is about dispersed leadership – holding everyone accountable at the level at which they are responsible. Officers have the responsibility to patrol their beat and being present to talk to the people. Regarding gangs and graffiti: the amount of graffiti in the city is horrible, but the majority is not gang-related; it is due to graffiti artists. APD is working on a plan to eradicate graffiti.

Q. There has been talk of reconfiguring the APD precinct zones. Is that being considered? **A.** A beat/zone redesign is under way for the entire city. He anticipates a presentation to the City Council by the end of June.

George Dusenbury, Incoming Commissioner, Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

George Dusenbury, currently executive director of Park Pride, will assume the office of Parks Commissioner on June 21. George said that the mayor has a priority on Centers of Hope. There is \$3 to \$4 million in the budget to reopen all of the recreation centers and pools. Another priority is supporting the Beltline.

[Note: George indicated that he wasn't DPRCA commissioner yet and wasn't fully briefed on the department's policies and positions. So, in most cases, his answers were stated as his personal opinions and not those of DPRCA.]

Q. Trees in the city's right-of-way were under the jurisdiction of the Parks Department arborists in the past. Is that still the case? **A.** Yes. **Q.** There is a case in our neighborhood where someone has planted big bushes so close to the street that they interfere with traffic visibility. Can the Parks Department help with that? **A.** George did not know the answer. Contact Parks Customer Service and ask. It could be Code Enforcement that is responsible.

Q. Buckhead has been underserved in park space. We hope the department will review where money has been spent and would love to see more greenspace on the Northside. **A.** The city has done a comprehensive greenspace plan which outlined the acquisition of space along creeks. Little Nancy Creek Park has been recently created in Buckhead. George understands that Councilman Shook has an initiative with BCID and BATMA to do a greenspace plan for the 7th district. It all comes down to funding and we all know that the city is in a tight situation. George wants to understand the budget before he makes any recommendations. He does recognize that the city's park maintenance has been inadequate, not only in Buckhead, but everywhere. He will look into it, recognizing that much of Buckhead is a park desert.

Q. One of the impediments of doing anything for parks in Buckhead is the price of land. The city has a policy that parks must be at least two acres. Could George please look at relaxing that two acre limit, **A.** He will look at that. He recognizes that there are areas with denser development where that is an issue. There are other areas where homes are spread out where that is not so much an issue. **Q.** Even in existing neighborhoods with spread out homes, there are large areas that don't have parks and don't have two acre parcels available. **A.** The reason the city has the two acre policy is that a lot of the cost of maintaining a park is getting the equipment out to it. The city actually has 350 parks, 250 of which are less than an acre in size. It takes a lot of time to take care of small parks. On the other hand, he believes that everyone should be able to walk to a park. If the only way to meet that objective is to have a park smaller than that, he thinks there should be a way to make an exception. He is not promising, but will look into it.

Q. How do you look at public/private partnerships in managing parks? **A.** He is not against them. Pools are a perfect example in which the city didn't have the resources and groups in Chastain and

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Garden Hills did. But, care must be taken so that a public asset does not become a private asset. The city spends more than \$100,000 on each pool it operates, so there is an opportunity to save money with private involvement. Same with tennis centers.

Q. Trees in parks in some areas are nearing the end of their lives. We are interested in reforestation planning but park land operators (a golf course) is concerned that this will increase their maintenance costs. As owner of the land, how does the Parks Department feel about planting new trees? **A.** He will look into it.

Q. You mentioned using areas around creeks as greenspace. After the floods last year, FEMA has said these areas are not really supposed to be used for parks, that there shouldn't be facilities built there. How do you deal with this? **A.** Memorial Park is a great example – it has a playground that is flooded every time. A properly designed walking trail might work fine. In Candler Park, they daylighted the stream and used the golf course as the floodplain. So you can find appropriate uses along creeks.

VI. Neighborhood Concerns

Zoning Enforcement: "We have problems with zoning enforcement and we get absolutely no response from the city. ... We also have issues with alleys, whether they belong to the city or to the homeowners." Jim King suggested that it seemed like a Code Enforcement issue. Walda Lavroff commented that "Code Enforcement barely exists." Someone else commented that they had had success with Code Enforcement recently. Jim suggested that Katie in Yolanda Adrean's office should be contacted for help.

Security Patrols: There was a brief discussion about setting up and operating security patrols. Jim King asked that Kim Kahwach be contacted to set up a discussion group.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting date was to be determined by e-mail survey. (August 12 was selected.)

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at about 8:15 PM.

Note: *The opinions expressed by the speakers and individual neighborhood representatives in these minutes do not necessarily represent those of BCN or its member neighborhoods.*

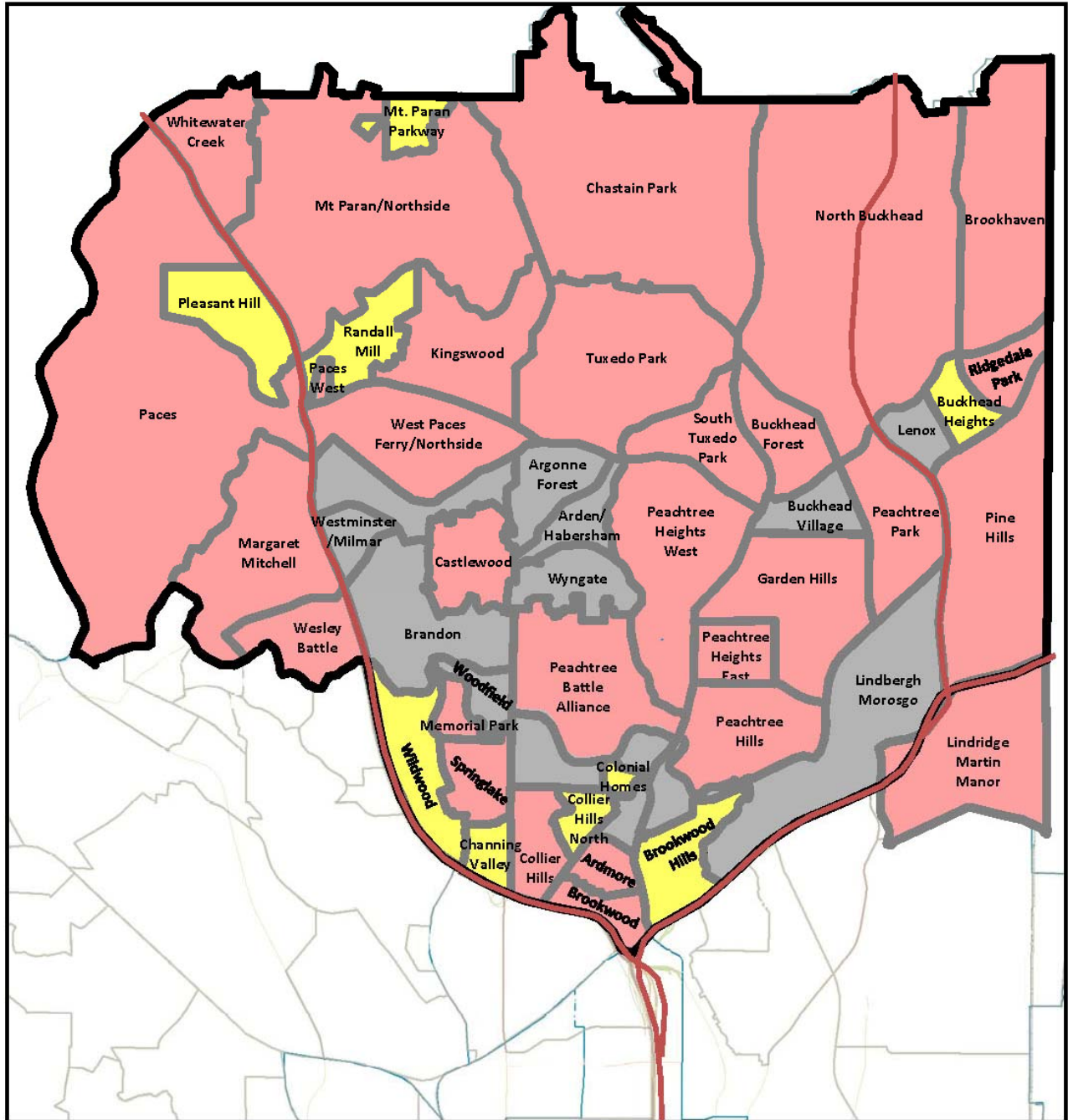
Prepared by Gordon Certain
BCN Secretary
July 30, 2010

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BCN Organizational Status as of 06/10/10																								
		Represented at BCN Board Meeting?																						
Neighborhood	BCN Dues		2008			2009												2010						
	2009	2010	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
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 Pkwy																							
19	Mt. Paran-N'side	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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 N'side	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
36	Whitewater Creek	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓				
37	Wildwood			✓																✓				
Count		26	28	17	13	18	14	20	17	12	14	18	17	15	17	11	18	16	17	24	20	10	13	18

Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Membership as of 4/19/10



LEGEND

Membership as of 4/19/10

YES

NO

N/A