



THE BUCKHEAD
COUNCIL OF
NEIGHBORHOODS
P.O. Box 11934, Atlanta, GA 30355

The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Board Meeting

September 9, 2010

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

	Full Name	Neighborhood/Organization	Email Address
1	Yolanda Adrean	City Council District 8	yadrean@atlantaga.gov
2	Andrea Bennett	North Buckhead	andrea0599@gmail.com
3	Laura Braddick	Northside Neighbor	lbraddick@mdjonline.com
4	Major Robert Browning	APD Zone 2	rbrowning@atlantaGA.gov
5	Lt. J D Cantin	APD Zone 2	Jcantin@AtlantaGa.gov
6	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
7	Hannah Chung	Zone 2 Community Prosecutor	Hannah.Chung@FultonCountyGA.gov
8	Diane Cox	Brookwood	DianeCox41@gmail.com
9	Chloe Dallaire	Candidate - Fulton Superior Court Judge	chloe@chloeforjudge.com
10	Glenn Delk	Historic Brookhaven	glennedelk@mindspring.com
11	Debra Fowler	Mt. Paran-Northside	debrarfowler@bellsouth.net
12	Tom Gordon	Ardmore Park	tgordon@mindspring.com
13	Jack Hellriegel	West Paces Northside	jehellriegel@gmail.com
14	Tony Johnson	Fulton County Residential Appraiser	-
15	Kim Kahwach	Buckhead Forest	kajensen@bellsouth.net
16	Barbara Kennedy	Collier Hills	bar2010@aol.com
17	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
18	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@comcast.net
19	Bill Lucas	Wildwood	BillJLucas@comcast.net
20	Will Mack	Peachtree Presbyterian Church	-
21	Reuben Mann	Peachtree Hills	mannra24@hotmail.com
22	Burt Manning	Fulton County Chief Appraiser	Burt.Manning@FultonCountyGa.Gov
23	Greg Mauldin	Springlake	greg.mauldin@alston.com
24	George Mirgorod	Pine Hills	gMirgorod@comcast.net
25	Roger Moister	Collier Hills North	Moisters2@yahoo.com
26	Jennifer Moyers	Whitewater Creek	jennifermoyers@beacham.com
27	Mary Norwood	Tuxedo Park	Mary@Marynorwood.com
28	Kirk Oppenlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
29	Garth Peters	Memorial Park & Buckhead Coalition	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
30	Elizabeth Pritchard	Peachtree Battle Alliance	elizpritchard@bellsouth.net
31	Buff Quillian	Peachtree Heights West	buffquillianphw@gmail.com
32	Loulie Reese	Memorial Park	Loulie_tarbutton_reese@yahoo.com
33	Shelitha Robertson	Candidate Fulton Co. Superior Court Judge	ShelithaForJudge@gmail.com
34	Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
35	John Schaffner	Buckhead Reporter	johnschaffner@reporternewspapers.net
36	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bschneider@gardenhills.net
37	Charles Sheron	-	csheron@sheronCprop.com
38	Bob Stasiowski	Peachtree Park	rstasiowski@yahoo.com
39	Unknown female	With Chloe Dellaire for Superior Ct Judge	-
40	Debra Wathen	Paces	6wathens@bellsouth.net
41	Kerry Witt	Pine Hills	kerrywitt@mindspring.com
42	Henry Wyche	Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	hwyche@valleycap.com

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Representation by Neighborhood:

Neighborhood	Name(s)
1 Ardmore Park	Tom Gordon
2 Brookwood	Diane Cox
3 Buckhead Forest	Kim Kahwach
4 Chastain Park	Jim King, Kirk Oppenlander
5 Collier Hills	Barbara Kennedy
6 Collier Hills North	Roger Moister
7 Garden Hills	Bob Schneider, Chloe Dallaire
8 Grant Estates/South Tuxedo Park	Henry Wyche
9 Historic Brookhaven	Glenn Delk
10 Memorial Park	Loulie Reese, Garth Peters
11 Mt. Paran-Northside	Debra Fowler, Yolanda Adrean
12 North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Andrea Bennett, Walda Lavroff
13 Paces	Debra Wathen
14 Peachtree Battle Alliance	Elizabeth Pritchard
15 Peachtree Heights West	Buff Quillian
16 Peachtree Hills	Reuben Mann
17 Peachtree Park	Bob Stasiowski
18 Pine Hills	George Mirgorod, Kerry Witt
19 Springlake	Greg Mauldin
20 Tuxedo Park	Mercy Sandberg-Wright, Mary Norwood
21 West Paces Northside	Jack Hellriegel
22 Whitewater Creek	Jennifer Moyers
23 Wildwood	Bill Lucas

I. Welcome

Jim King called the meeting to order at around 6:40 PM.

II. Introductions

The attendees introduced themselves.

III. Approval of Minutes & New Members

Minutes for the August meeting were approved. Elizabeth Prichard asked for amendments to clarify the Development and Infrastructure report. Collier Hills North expressed some interest in joining BCN and may join in the future.

IV. Committee Updates (alphabetical, not meeting sequence)

Communications (Jennifer Moyers, Chair) – No report.

Development and Infrastructure **Elizabeth Pritchard (Chair)** – The City Council voted to oppose the proposed rezoning of Colonial Homes. The applicants may appeal this decision or will have to wait for two years to reapply.

Diane Cox of Brookwood thanked Yolanda Adrean for helping address a long-standing code enforcement issue.

Councilwoman Yolanda Adrean announced that Mt. Paran Road was to be repaved from I-75 to its end in the next two weeks.

Education (Glenn Delk, Chair) – Glenn thanked Hannah Chung for her effort in getting the DA office's to consider investigating the CRCT scandal (see Public Safety, below). He said that compared to the possible criminal aspects of the case, "there is a far more important issue for us and that is we that are paying far too



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much money for a public school system that is inefficient and unproductive, at best.” Glenn mentioned his recent editorial in the 9/8/10 AJC (“It’s time now to bring parent revolution here” at www.ajc.com/opinion/its-time-now-to-608581.html.) In his article, Glenn spoke about a “parent-taxpayer trigger” which is patterned after a similar mechanism instituted in July 2009 in Los Angeles, California and made statewide by Governor Schwarzenegger’s initiative in January.

Glenn went on: “What I am asking this group to do, as we did in asking Hannah to investigate, I’m asking the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods to ask Nancy Meister and Courtney English from the Atlanta Board of Education to submit a motion to the board asking for a parent-taxpayer trigger as a result of the cheating scandal. The question is, why do we need to do that?”

- “Well, first of all we have the parents of those 58 schools where the cheating is alleged and they have no remedy. They have no option. Most of those parents and children are low income minority students who cannot afford to go someplace else. So they are required to stay with a system which has admitted that they have serious cheating problems.
- “The second reason, from your perspective is a financial reason. ... I believe we can save a significant amount of money which could be used, if we wanted, to pay for the police, to fix the water problem, etc. According to the APS’ budget, they spend \$13, 277 per pupil in operating expenses. What they don’t tell you, though, is what they spend in facilities and overall costs. If you go their web site and you get their comprehensive financial annual report, what you find is that, if you add in facilities cost, they are spending \$888 million a year or almost \$18,000 per pupil. And, what are you getting for that \$18,000 per pupil? Well, obviously there is some question about the strength of Dr. Hall’s increase in test scores but I will just cite you one [example]:

“You all have heard the stories about the graduation rates and the CRCT test scores, but a recent study by the American Institutes for Research compared the states and eleven cities’ scores in the eighth grade in math with international standards and they gave Atlanta a D+ grade for its eighth grade math performance. Now, again, keep in mind that part of what I’m advocating is that we force the Atlanta Board of Education to put out for competitive bid the education services. And the reason is that there are people who are able to deliver far better quality education services for far less money. You all have heard me talk about the charter school that has opened in DeKalb County, they are spending \$9,000 per pupil, including facilities cost.

“Now, if APS were to put it out for bid and you had folks bid in at that price, the savings on annual basis, depending on whether you just look at operating expenses or the total cost, are anywhere from \$200 to \$400 million a year, enough to hire a whole lot more police, fix the water problem, etc., without a tax increase, without an increase in tax digest.

“So, from my perspective, we have two reasons why we need to ask our representatives to pass this motion. The first is, from a fairness and equality standpoint – the parents of those kids who are forced to attend a system in which has admitted widespread cheating – they need to be given an opportunity to choose somebody else, if they want to. But from a personal, selfish perspective, you guys can save a whole lot in property taxes. I think most of you know that the school’s portion of property tax is 55% to 60%, far more than Yolanda’s portion, and we are talking about savings on a typical house of say \$500,000 of anywhere from \$1,500 to \$3,000 a year in taxes.

“I’ve got some information if you want to look at it. I will be happy to answer any questions. I don’t want to take up any more time, because Mr. Manning is supposed to be the chief speaker.”

A very long, sometimes divided discussion followed. *[For those interested in the blow-by-blow discussion leading to this conclusion, see [Appendix A: Education Committee Detailed Discussion – Creation of “BCN Educational Roundtable”](#).]*

Glenn never made a formal request get to a second for his motion which had previously been distributed, so it was not voted on. (See www.nbca.org/bcn/APS/MotionWavings.pdf. The last page of this document is not part of the motion – it is school costs and savings projections made by Glenn.)

After many iterations of proposed alternative motions, Jim King’s motion as follows was seconded. Except for one abstention (Certain), the motion to establish a “BCN Educational Roundtable, chaired by Glenn Delk” passed unanimously.

Yolanda Adrean suggested that BCN consider inviting the three candidates for the State School Superintendent. She thought we might be able to “tag on” with a forum organized by another group. Glenn agreed to look into the feasibility of this suggestion.

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Parks (Gordon Certain, Chair) – No report.

Property Taxes (George Mirgorod, Chair) – No report.

Public Safety (Kim Kahwach, Chair) – Kim reported that APD has a new unit in APD called COPS. Major Browning explained that the program started recently which is funded by a three-year federal grant. Fifty (50) seasoned officers will go to the COPS unit. The unit will start operating in January, after officers are selected and replacements for them are hired. The COPS' crime prevention philosophy follows that of William Bratton's in New York who promulgated the "broken windows" theory of enforcement. The City Council has committed to fund the new unit when the grant expires.

Browning talked about burglary problems in Buckhead. He suspects that burglars are watching residents to see when they come and go. He said it was important that residents notice things that are "not right" and let the police know via 911. "Even if a guy has a 'Joe's Cable Company' sign on his truck and he is on a ladder up a pole, if it doesn't look like it is legitimate, call us and let us know." He said they are challenging people to establish that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Browning asked that residents be "attentive". He said that they are getting more calls from neighbors concerned about suspicious events – that is good.

In responding to questions, Browning commented to a previous request of distribution of photos of suspects – they are willing to support that except in cases of pending lineups to identify suspects. He also described three recent armed robberies in Buckhead. He also described a case where an individual impersonating a contractor had stolen property from several construction sites.

In conclusion, he said, "Don't feel bad about calling 911" about suspicious people.

Hannah Chung, the Zone 2 Community Prosecutor, talked about two burglary cases the DA's office is handling. One suspect was very young (17) and as a result of his conviction will be on probation with very restricted mobility for the first year. Regarding the case of the "Chastain Burglar", Mr. Dixon, he has some more court dates over six months before they know about a trial calendar for him. She is looking at five additional cases identified by Zone 2 for which Dixon may be responsible. Browning said Dixon is still in jail.

Hannah also spoke regarding the BCN request to the DA's office to conduct an investigation of the APS CRCT cheating situation. DA Paul Howard has decided, in light of Governor Perdue's initiatives in this case, to wait to see if any criminal charges arose from the state investigation.

Transportation (John Haliburton, Chair) – No report.

Watershed Management Coordination (Kristy Gillman, Chair) – Yolanda Adrean reported that Commissioner Hunter had submitted his resignation, but will be retained for technical work related to the Consent Decree. Four deputy commissioners have also resigned. The mayor and chief operating officer are interested in the handling of complaints, as is the City Council. There is no answer yet about why high water bills were experienced. The Council is doing a work session on water bills.

Yolanda said customers have a right to dispute bills and don't have to pay the "spiked" amount while the appeal is pending. If the appeal is not satisfactory, customers have the right to go before the Sewage and Arbitrage Board and after that, to retain council. If we believe these procedures are not being followed, call her office at 404-330-6051. When calling the water department, write down the time and the name of the person contacted – all calls are recorded and this information will enable review of complaint handling.

- One issue the Council is looking at is the brief time allotted between bill mailing and payment due dates. (Yolanda commented that the \$100+ million "loan" from the water department to the general fund was originally the result of an "enormous accounting mistake", not a loan.)
- The city is also reviewing the possibility of providing customers real time visibility of water usage as was formerly available looking at the meter's dials.
- Smaller units of billing were suggested – in the current units, one CCF equals 700 gallons.
- The city is looking at making sure that water workers who respond on site to problem calls are qualified "problem solvers".

Bill Lucas of Wildwood, who has been instrumental in recent months in getting the city to respond to recent water bill problems, spoke next. He reported about meetings held with senior administration officials

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including COO Peter Aman. He feels that very positive steps are being taken. He provided a printout to help us understand the city's water billing rates. (See www.nbca.org/bcn/flyers/WaterRates.pdf.)

V. Speakers

Note: Councilman Michael Bond, previously scheduled to speak, was ill and unable to attend. He will be included as a speaker in a future BCN meeting.

Burt Manning, Chief Appraiser, Fulton County Board of Assessors

(Note: A copy of Manning's business card is at <http://www.nbca.org/bcn/flyers/Manning.pdf>.)

Manning said they literally have nothing to do with the amount of property taxes we pay, but he and his staff have a lot to do with the fairness and distribution of that tax, based on property values.

Burt's employer, the Board of Assessors, are five Fulton County citizens nominated or appointed by the County Commission. The board members serve staggered four-year terms. The Board of Assessors does three main things:

- They set office policies.
- They hire a chief appraiser – their only employee.
- They work with the county to secure funding for their department.

The mission is simple: they attempt to create and maintain a fair and equitable tax digest, based on the laws and statutes and the market. They appraise real property (residential and commercial), business personal property (office equipment to aircraft) for all of Fulton County, all 14 cities county-wide.

The county tax digest includes the entire taxable market value of all taxable real and business personal property in the county. For 2010, they have approximately 342,000 parcels, 32,000 business personal property accounts, with a value of about \$142 billion.

A number of entities are involved in the county's property tax system:

- The Board of Assessors.
- The elected Tax Commissioner.
- The Boards of Equalizations
- Arbitration is an option.
- Superior Court handles appeals.
- The General Assembly.
- The school boards and the cities.

Manning's office is divided into several divisions:

- Administration
- Commercial Real Estate Appraisal
- Residential Real Estate Appraisal
- Mapping or GIS
- Quality control
- Business Personal Property Appraisal
- Homestead exemption
- Field book (recording titles and addresses)

Manning introduced Tony Johnson, a residential appraisal manager. Tony reports to Deputy Chief Appraiser Tony Kirkpatrick. Tony is over most if not all Buckhead neighborhoods.

The Tax Commissioner, Arthur Ferdinand in the case of Fulton, is an elected official in each Georgia county. The tax commissioner handles tax bills, collections, and tax distribution to the taxing entities (cities, school systems and county). The tax commissioner is barred by state law from changing appraised/assessed values. The Tax Commissioner's office is completely separate from the Board of Assessors.

Property is appraised at 100% of its fair market value. It is assessed for tax billing purposes at 40%, per state law. The increase in the value of the total tax digest slowed in 2008 and dropped in 2010 and will likely drop more in 2011. Commercial properties are experiencing vacancies and reduced rents, so while there have been relatively few sales, there are many pending appeals and the commercial digest is likely to decline

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from values currently being reported (which do not yet reflect a downturn). Normally, Manning's appraisers do not enter properties to do an appraisal unless invited or during construction.

There is a right to appeal an assessment. Next year the state law changes and everybody is going to get an assessment notice every year and everyone will have 45 days to appeal. The old rule of having to prepare a tax return to make sure you get an assessment notice will be gone. Appeals must be filed in writing (not e-mail). The courts have overridden the requirement that the appeal must identify the grounds for appeal – simply identify the property and say you are appealing. The standard reasons for an appeal are:

- Taxability (churches, etc. are exempt)
- Uniformity of valuation
- Value

Historically, they have been staffed for about 11 to 12 thousand property tax appeals a year. Appeal levels have grown to 18 thousand in 2010 with a prior-year backlog of 4 thousand – they will be able to handle 12 thousand in the next 12 months. They do not have adequate office technology equipment and are missing key software modules from what Manning says is their otherwise excellent software systems. He has asked for funding for the needed software for the last three years. Now SB 346 has added extra burdens on the county (sending assessment notices to everybody each year), so they have increased needs for funding from the county.

Manning's staff bases their appraisals on low-level "neighborhoods". They have 2,200 separate residential neighborhoods and 600 commercial areas (which use land use codes, not neighborhoods). They try to develop homogenous neighborhoods which they use for analysis. They used to have 65,000 property transfers a year, 30,000 of which were "arm's-length", spread out among these neighborhoods, they were comfortable with the resultant valuations. They always averaged 3% to 5% below the 100% median. They intentionally aimed at the 94% to 98% range with.

They are tested on three statistics each year:

- Median level of assessment
- Uniformity (on the coefficient dispersion)
- Lack of bias (on price-related differential)

As long as they meet those statistics, they have a defensible tax digest. The 65,000 transfers in 2004-6 have dwindled down to 30,000 now. And, instead of almost half being arm's-length, "way more than half are definitely distress sales." He feels that there are many areas (including many in Buckhead) where they believe they are "slightly undervalued now". HB 233 put a moratorium on reassessment through 2011. There are areas in Buckhead and to the north where sales are still going on at prices higher than they have appraised for. But there are not that many and even in those areas, there are distressed properties. South of I-20, a major portion of Atlanta is in financial trouble.

Fulton County lowered 110 thousand residential values in 2008 out of 300+ thousand. In 2009 and again in 2010 they lowered over 130 thousand residential properties. The 2008 reductions were 2% to 3%; the later reductions were 12% to 18% in the areas that were really distressed. South of I-20, reductions were even greater.

A payment of 85% of the tax bill is required during an appeal. This, Yolanda Adrean noted, affects the tax revenue cash flow for the cities. She said that Atlanta's property tax revenue was \$209 million last year; this year they are budgeting \$185 million. In 2012 she thinks it will be even worse.

Manning discussed criticism from taxpayers' groups about property tax levels after north Fulton cities were established. Property taxes were expected to drop markedly, but didn't. He said the reason was that concurrent with the creation of the cities, sales tax collections declined greatly because of the economy. So, property taxes needed to be kept at a higher level to keep total tax revenues at a needed level. In the past three years, the amount of property tax revenue has gone from 70% of total county government revenue to 80%.

Gordon Certain showed Manning a map of North Buckhead upon which seven different property tax "neighborhoods" had been colored in. Gordon said he understood from Manning that the 2,200 neighborhood codes were the framework of their estimating system. Gordon noted that for some areas of North Buckhead, "it is like polka dots". He asked if there was some sort of official document that defines the characteristics of each of the 2,200 tax neighborhoods. Manning: "When they are drawing a neighborhood,

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they are drawing it based on homogeneity. What's happened too many times and it is still a problem with our database, we are very proud that we are working on our database, but there are clean-ups. ... One thing about GIS is now we can run these colors and we can find these isles that don't relate to each other and we have been slowly improving those. We have been improving those primarily in neighborhoods where we had the most appeals, the most problems." Gordon: "Is there a document, though, for neighborhood 1712, that says this is what it is? Manning: "No. It is a combination of, over time, the lines have been drawn like this and these parcels are included in that neighborhood until the next time it gets revised – the biggest revision we've had, with an upgrade in our mapping is to find what I call "ghost parcels" because if you go out here sometimes and you pull up a neighborhood like this blue one you have and you check all those and say it's good, well, if you erase that item with GIS, all the sudden there's a pink one in the middle, which should have gone over here. So we are constantly trying to clean those up. And it does make a difference in the valuation because the land tables, the cost table, and the neighborhood multiplier factor are meant to be specific to a homogenous area. Constantly trying to clean it up. It is not perfect. A long way to go."

Kim Kahwach asked what to do about a mapping error. Manning said that if there is a mapping error, contact Blair White, who is in charge of mapping. Mapping changes, however, cannot be made retroactively.

VI. Neighborhood Concerns

Barbara Kennedy reported that Park Atlanta is "in love" with the Collier Hills neighborhood. They have gotten a lot of tickets on their cars parked in front of their homes. So, warn resident to follow all parking laws, particularly about parking in the wrong direction.

Garth Peters reported that Fulton County has sent out a flyer warning residents about west Nile fever. See www.nbca.org/bcn/flyers/Nile.pdf.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting is October 14.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 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
October 12, 2010

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BCN Organizational Status as of 09/09/10																											
		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	Aug	Sep	
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 Northside	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
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	20	23	

Appendix A

Education Committee Detailed Discussion – Creation of “BCN Educational Roundtable”

Jim King agreed with the sentiment that these kids are being cheated and that money is being wasted. But Jim worried, though, that if the school system reduced its millage rate, the city and county would “up” their rate to make their ends meet. So, we might have more services rather than more savings. Glenn didn’t agree that that would happen – “that’s a different battle”, said Glenn. “The issue right now is whether you are getting a good value for your tax dollars for schools.”

Mary Norwood commented: “I have a recommendation. Dr. Orr Cook, and I’ll give you the phone number, is the professor, PhD, who is the catalyst in getting a charter school in southwest Atlanta. And I was there and very involved. I think it would be great if the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods, if you all decide to get involved in this, is to reach out to somebody like that who is already frustrated with the school system, who lives near Fort McPherson, and get that crosscurrent going.” Jim King asked what charter school it was. Mary answered that the name was “The KIPP Way.”

Kim Kahwach asked if we had some statistics about the success rates of charter schools nationally. Glenn responded that some succeed, some fail. “The ones that succeed, succeed spectacularly. The one that Mary just talked about, KIPP, their success rate nationally is phenomenal. They have somewhere between a 90% and 95% graduation rate and 100% of them go to college. What we’re talking about doing is what LA and now the entire state of California is doing and that is putting out for bid all of the schools to enable the school board, with input from the taxpayers, to choose the highest quality performance. So, if Dr. Hall is the chosen provider for 30 schools, so be it. But if the folks who are running the charter school that I am involved with, or KIPP, are prepared to do it and they can do it for \$9,000 or \$10,000 and deliver a higher academic performance, then I’m all for that. That’s all this is attempting to do is to force the public school system to compete.” Glenn added that charter schools are in 39 states.

Kim asked Glenn to speak to the latest Obama initiative, the “Race to the Top”. She said she thought that included expansion of charter schools. Glenn said that one of the reasons that Georgia recently won the second round grant for \$400 million for four years was because up to a third of the funds are going to be dedicated to charter schools. The second reason is that the General Assembly passed HB 881 which allows charter petitioners who get turned down by the local district (“i.e. Atlanta or DeKalb County”), to go to the state commission. It’s called the alternative authorizer bill. Without that bill, we would not have won the most recent Race to the Top competition.

Kim said, “I did find my statistics here. The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University in 2009 – the first detailed national assessment of 70% of US students attending charter schools. It found that 17% of charter schools reported academic gains, only 17% that were significantly better. 46% showed no difference. And 37% were significantly worse than the public schools.” [The CREDO report, a rebuttal and a counter-rebuttal are available at <http://credo.stanford.edu/> -- GC.]

Glenn responded, “That study was debunked by professors from Harvard, Stanford and all over the country...” **Kim:** “It was done by Stanford.” **Glenn:** “Yes, but there were also professors at Stanford who debunked that study. The problem with that study is that it is a one-year study and what it finds is that when they test charter school students, the same result that we’re seeing in DeKalb County – if you tested our charter school right now, our students would perform two years behind the regular schools because that’s what happened to them. What other studies have shown is that over time the increase in academic performance in charter schools far surpasses the traditional public schools. But, the point, again Kim, is this: I don’t think that it is our place to tell the parents of the kids who are now forced to attend one of the 58 schools in which there have been allegations of rampant cheating, that the only choice you have is that school system.”

Kim: “Have you looked into the Chicago school board education reform act that was done in 1988?” **Glenn:** “Are you talking about the Renaissance School Program? The one that Mayor Daley started? ... It’s called the Renaissance School Program. He started, with help from the business community, one hundred charter schools in the last ten years.” **Kim:** “That’s not it. This one was the Chicago school reform act that was passed through the state legislature and actually was brought up through the Reagan administration, through Bill Bennett. ... the result of that was a local school council and it was created across the district and it turned the entire school system around to a positive. And it basically gave those smaller school districts the ability to manage their own funds, hire their own teachers, hire their own principals, without tenure, four year terms, ...” **Glenn:** “All that is is an earlier version of charter schools.” **Kim:** “No sir. It is pro-public schools.” **Glenn:** “A charter school is a public school.” **Kim:** “I understand but it is not a privately funded operation.” **Glenn:** “Neither are charter schools. They are all publically funded.” **Kim:** “I think that is misleading.”

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Gordon Certain: "I think you're saying 'government operated' and he's saying 'non-profit operated'." **Kim:** "I think that to say that charter schools are all 100% publicly funded is misleading." **Glenn:** "How so?" **Kim:** "Well, how much money do you get from the taxpayers on a charter school?" **Glenn:** "Well, under my proposal you get \$9,000." **Kim:** "Percentagewise for the student, you get no public funds going into that school?" **Glenn:** "That is public funds." **Kim:** "No, you have no private funds going into that school?" **Glenn:** "They don't need it. ... You can talk to many of the operators and they can operate for \$9,000 all day long and pay for facilities too. Now remember, we're comparing apples to apples, it's \$9,000 to \$18,000 (what we're paying for APS). We have spent in the last ten years \$1.2 billion on facilities. And they plan to continue spending \$150 million a year for facilities. So all I'm suggesting is, and if folks don't like it, fine, but all I'm suggesting is to make Dr. Hall and everybody else who is in the public sector compete with these folks. What's wrong with competition?"

Kim: "What I'm seeing is money competition, we're not talking about students, we're not talking about teachers being held accountable. And again, while I have three children in APS I care about this thing. And while we can shift money around here and there we're not addressing some issues that are clearly the problem. And leadership is one of those. APS has not shown us any sign that they are able to show leadership in what they are doing." **Glenn:** "So why are you supporting continuing the government monopoly?" **Kim:** "I'm not supporting APS." **Glenn:** "You're supporting continuing the current system." **Kim:** "There are other options. We can go into a lot of different ways of governing our schools. But the leadership at this time is not working. It needs to either be changed ..." **Glenn:** "So you should be supporting throwing it out for bid. If you want to come and run a school, fine." **Gordon:** "You can hire another person to manage the thing. You can get someone more qualified than ..." **Kim:** "Why are we going to change our entire structure because they can't fire Beverly Hall? And we can't fire the school board. Why would we do that?" **Glenn:** "Because we are spending \$900 million of taxpayer money a year to turn out 10% of the eighth graders who are proficient in any subject and graduate 45% of them. If you want to continue with that, fine." **Kim:** "If you are running my company and you are misusing funds, I'd fire you."

Gordon commented: "Of the 58 schools that were mentioned, none of them are in Buckhead. Our mission is Buckhead. This is important, but it is outside our charter."

Jim King commented that he thought that Garden Hills was on the list of 58. [Note: According to the 2009 CRCT Erasures Investigation Report, www.atlef.org/crct/report/2009_crct_erasure_investigation_report.pdf, Garden Hills was not listed as one of the 58 schools. --GC]

Glenn disagreed with Gordon, saying we pay 50% of our property taxes to APS.

Jim said he thought the tax amounts made it relevant to Buckhead. He added that at the last meeting people from the other side of Atlanta had reached out to us because their kids were not being educated and deserved to be educated. Plus, our school cluster could even be better. And we should always strive to do better. "Glenn is trying to show us that his is a way to do better; Kim is trying to show that hers is a way to do better."

Jim added: "Glenn, where I have a little confusion is, we talked before the meeting briefly, he wrote an op-ed in the AJC to make his point on the trigger. He also did the analysis on the money that is very helpful. There is also this motion distributed to the board and others from the last meeting which is six pages and actually it's a suggestion to Nancy Meister and Courtney English – I don't know if they have actually seen it ..."

Glenn: "No they haven't because first I wanted to bring it to ..." **Jim:** "Right. And it's a pretty long document. How many voting members have had an opportunity to read it? ... So, not quite everybody. Well, the gist of it is telling ..." **Glenn:** "That is the LA resolution that passed the trigger in July of 2009. All I did was change the dates." **Jim:** "Did you modify it or improve it?" **Glenn:** "No, I took it exactly as it is." **Jim:** "So what we're trying to do here is to find a mechanism to get the school board to take an action that will enable the trigger."

Glenn: "Yes, because my point is this: if we want to fire Dr. Hall, we could do that right now. If you fire Dr. Hall, it is going to take a year to find somebody else to replace her, and you're going to have the exact same system for 12 to 24 months. How many superintendents have we had since we put our kids in APS? At least five. And here we are now, twenty years later, talking about the same problem and we're spending \$900 million and getting the same results."

Jim: "We need to keep in mind that probably have the folks in this room have their children either in or have gone through the Atlanta Public Schools and the others in private schools. So we have a different environment here. I don't know if anybody in here actually has had their kids go through a charter school. I don't think so. Charter schools have been around a long time. Kathy Ashe was the first one that initiated one years ago – she led or co-sponsored legislation many, many years ago. There are at least two people in the room that I know, my family being one, who have a relationship with KIPP; Elizabeth is the other. What I would like to do, Glenn, is figure out a way that this can be explored with Nancy. You haven't called her?"

Glenn: "No, because I wanted to give you guys a chance to ... If you don't want to do it, we ..." **Jim:** "No, it's

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up to the board what we do. Kim is passionate, you're passionate. We know that there's a problem, it's just how do we fix it?"

Jim: "Does anybody else have any other insights? Or has anybody read this document and have any issue with the document?"

Gordon: "To me, to set out a 90-day plan on how you are going to spend a billion dollars is not real good. If you had a two-year plan to spend a billion dollars, it might make some sense. But you can only have six weekly meetings in 90 days. You can't do what you are talking about doing." **Glenn:** "I didn't understand."

Gordon: "You cannot have a meaningful, detailed analysis of how you are going to spend a billion dollars in 90 days."

Glenn: "I'm not asking that you do that. What I am suggesting is that the board issue an RFP, just like City Council for many items, issue an RFP that says 'come one, come all and make a bid on one, ten, all of the schools, none of the schools'. And if they bid \$10,000 and you choose them, that's ..."

Gordon: "But (looking at the text of the motion), on October 30th you're going to have 'transparent process for plans to be submitted that are reviewed and evaluated by the staff' – I don't think you can do that. I have worked with billion dollar contracts and I know damn well you can't do it."

Glenn: "Well, somehow, Los Angeles did it, because that's taken exactly from Los Angeles' schedule a year ago." **Kim:** "Los Angeles isn't Atlanta. I wouldn't use Los Angeles as an example."

Mary: "Having been involved city-wide for twenty years, I think there needs to be a task force, not a big, long, exhaustive one, but an informal gathering of two or three people from this group who are involved, the southwest concerned citizens, who is Dr. Orr Cook, the people who were involved in the Grant Park charter elementary school and middle school, just the people who have really taken this on – there are about five areas of the city, got representatives of those areas, so you are not the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods who is telling the school system what to do, you have got some allies. I will help identify who those people who you ought to consider."

Jim: "We made a similar offer to Lonnie King when he was here last month and he said he would reach out to some folks. I have not heard back from him." **Glenn:** "He plans to do that. I think he is working on getting the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP to support this." **Jim:** "I understand that he has a similar motion but I haven't seen it. Everybody is on the same page, with pretty much the same goals -- it is about the methods we don't seem to agree upon just yet."

Jim: "Glenn, does a task force or a ... would that be a viable next step?" **Glenn:** "Sure." **Jim:** "I think I'd like to make a motion that Glenn chair that, since he provides the leadership on this issue and that we accept volunteers, Kim..." **Kim:** "I'd love to be a part of it." **Jim:** "So I'd like to make a motion that we create a.. Glenn, what would you prefer to call it?" **Glenn:** "I think you just call it a City-wide Education Task Force. Because, regardless of what the governor decides to do or [unintelligible] office decides to do, that doesn't solve the two problems of academic quality and exorbitant spending."

Jim: "I am going to make a motion that we create the ..."

Bob Stasiowski: "Peachtree Park is organized as a 501(c)(3). Under our bylaws, I couldn't take a vote today. ... How does that affect the BCN charter? This is a politically-charged issue." **Jim:** "We [BCN] are organized as a 501(c)(4). That's just an advocacy group. And we're just trying to find answers and make recommendations. ... So, in your case, if you are a non-profit, I suggest that you abstain." **Bob:** "That is exactly what we will do."

Kim: "I would like to add to what Bob said and Gordon mentioned earlier, we are a Buckhead council of neighborhoods. So I would suggest that our task force be made up of Buckhead neighborhoods and that we make a suggestion based on our school system in our neighborhoods."

Henry Wyche: "I disagree. Our taxes are spread around the city. Why should we limit what we do? And I think that Mary made a very good point, without a constituency base to work with, we are not going to get anywhere."

Jim: "Let me make the motion and if there is a second, we can discuss it. The motion is to create a city-wide education task force, chaired by Glenn Delk."

Gordon: "It is not our charter to do something city wide. We can recommend that a city-wide task force be created. I think that is what Mary was talking about. But we cannot act to create one."

Glenn: "Well then why were we one of the sponsors of the mayoral debate? We should have just selected a mayor of Buckhead."

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Gordon: “I think the wording of your motion could be better.”

Mary: “What about this: The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods reaches out to other constituencies to discuss the issue...”

Jim: “OK. I’m amenable to change. A BCN Educational Task Force, chaired by Glenn Delk. And then he can invite people to it as he sees fit.” **Gordon:** “But that’s not what Mary was talking about.” **Jim:** “Yes it is.”

Mary: “I want us to get inclusive with some people that I already know who desperately want better education. So I just want us to reach out to those guys. It would make a stronger statement, if coming back here, this group decides to take action, with or without those other areas.”

Kim: “Well, I would go further, then. If you have names and numbers, and that maybe we could suggest that they form their own group too and do what we’re doing.”

Glenn: “But that defeats the purpose of what we’re trying to do. Either we are taxpayers and resident of the City of Atlanta or we’re not. Either we care about these people who aren’t getting the education or we don’t. We care about our taxes or we don’t.” **Kim:** “I’m not saying we don’t care about other people getting education.” **Glenn:** “Well, if you are going to leave them to their own devices, you are.” **Kim:** “Why, are you saying that they are incapable of making decisions?” **Glenn:** “No. I’m saying as Mary said, they want to join with you but we’re going to slap them in the face and say, no, we just want to worry about Buckhead.” **Kim:** “They are welcome to come to any meeting if they want to join.” **Gordon:** “Why don’t we propose to have representatives from the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods work with Mary’s people? You know, we don’t have to run the thing.” **Unintelligible:** [many people talking at same time]

Unidentified male voice: BCN could be a member of another group, much like our neighborhoods are members of BCN. I think that that’s all that’s being said. I think we are putting the cart before the horse, looking down the road, what may or may not be. We don’t know what that is yet. Let’s just deal with today and start talking to people. That’s all that’s being presented.”

Glenn: “I have a suggestion. Rather than asking BCN to take a position which obviously is somewhat controversial, we just let individuals who want to form the task force and if they want to talk to their representatives in the General Assembly ... The General Assembly, in my view, is going to pass something like this whether we ever investigate it, form a task force or not, and they are going to give people the right to do this whether we want them to or not.

Jim: “Alright, let’s try this again. Let’s have a Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods Educational Roundtable and anybody can be invited to it, so we can learn from each other and then see what comes from it. Is that a little more amenable to people? The reality is we are watchdogs for the homeowners and our tax dollars being squandered and kids are not being educated to the best they can be and that makes it relevant whether it is in Buckhead or throughout the city. **Gordon:** “But we also said we are not going to try to duplicate the functions and responsibilities of the [Fulton County] Taxpayers Association [Foundation].” **Jim:** “Is the Taxpayers Association going to take on this issue? Not to the best of my knowledge.”

Unidentified female voice: “I think that if we just start with exploring. I think we’re putting the cart before the horse. If Glenn contacts some of the people that Mary knows that are involved in other areas and starts talking to explore and not really create a task force right off the bat just to see where it could go.”

Mary: “I like your educational roundtable.”

Jim: “It is just a sub-group that brings people together want to learn or know something that we don’t. So you bring people together.”

Jim: “OK, so we call it a BCN Educational Roundtable, chaired by Glenn Delk. That’s the motion as it stands.”

Except for an abstention by Gordon Certain, the motion passed unanimously.