



# The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

## Board Meeting

September 13, 2012

Peachtree Presbyterian Church, Room 2315

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

### Attendees

	<b>Full Name</b>	<b>Neighborhood/Organization</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
1	Yolanda Adrean	City Council District 8	yadrean@atlantaga.gov
2	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
3	Lindsey Churchill	Fernleaf	lindseychurchill@gmail.com
4	Noreen Cochran	Northside Neighbor	ncochran@mdjonline.com
5	Kathy Collura	Peachtree Heights East	KathyCollura@bellsouth.net
6	Joe Earle	Buckhead Reporter	joeearle@reporternewspapers.net
7	Ron Grunwald	Loring Heights	Rgrunwald@bellsouth.net
8	Tiffany Harlow	Zone 2 Community Prosecutor	tiffany.harlow@fultoncountyga.gov
9	Mary Hunter	Peachtree Heights East	mhunter2000@aol.com
10	Brad Kaplan	Pine Hills	kaplanemail@yahoo.com
11	Barbara Kennedy	Collier Hills	bar2010@aol.com
12	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
13	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@comcast.net
14	Francine Lowe	Pine Hills	Francine@lowetravel.net
15	Sam Massell	Buckhead Coalition	unknown
16	George Mirgorod	Pine Hills	gmirg@me.com
17	Ann O'Connell	Mt. Paran-Northside	annoconnell1@bellsouth.net
18	Kirk Openlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
19	Garth Peters	Memorial Park & Buckhead Coalition	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
20	Ken Piernik	Peachtree Park	kenneth.piernik@alere.com
21	Jane Rawlings	President NPU-F	Chair@npufatlanra.org
22	Loulie Reese	Memorial Park	Loulie_tarbutton_reese@yahoo.com
23	Cristi Row	North Buckhead	christirroe@aol.com
24	John Schaffner	Buckhead View	jfschaffner@gmail.com
25	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bobschneider@me.com
26	Marsha Sims	Argonne Forest	tomandmarsha@comcast.net
27	Alex Smith	Wildwood	asmithconsulting@earthlink.net
28	Katie Tolleson	Collier Hills North	ktolleon1@aol.com
29	Debra Wathen	Paces	6wathens@bellsouth.net
30	Jody Collins Weatherly	Peachtree Heights West	jody@weatherly.com
31	Patrick Thompson	Candidate for Congress, 11th Dist.	jpatrickthompson@yahoo.com
32	Matt Tolleson	Brookwood Hills	matt.tolleson@turner.com
33	Jason Ulseth	Chattahoochee Riverkeeper	julseth@chattahoochee.org
34	Dan Whisenhunt	Buckhead Reporter	danwhisenhunt@reporternewspapers.net
35	Caroline Young	Northside Neighbor	cyoung@neighbornewspapers.com

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## Representation by Neighborhood

	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
1	Argonne Forest	Marsha Sims
2	Chastain Park	Jim King, Kirk Oppenlander
3	Collier Hills	Barbara Kennedy
4	Collier Hills North	Katie Tolleson
5	Fernleaf	Lindsey Churchill
6	Garden Hills	Bob Schneider
7	Loring Heights	Ron Grunwald
8	Memorial Park	Loulie Reese, Garth Peters
9	Mt. Paran-Northside	Ann O'Connell
10	North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff, Cristi Row
11	NPU-F	Jane Rawlings
12	Paces	Debra Wathen
13	Peachtree Heights East	Kathy Collura, Mary Hunter
14	Peachtree Heights West	Jody Collins Weatherly
15	Peachtree Park	Ken Piernik
16	Pine Hills	George Mirgorod, Brad Kaplan, Francine Lowe
17	Wildwood	Alex Smith

## BCN 2011/12 Officers (Executive Committee)

<b>Office</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Chairman	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
Vice-Chairman	Elizabeth Pritchard	Peachtree Battle Alliance	eliz@epritcharddesigns.com
Secretary	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
Treasurer	Barbara Kennedy	Collier Hills	bar2010@aol.com
Communications	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bschneider@gardenhills.net
Member at Large	George Mirgorod	Pine Hills	gmirgorod@comcast.net
Member at Large	Ann O'Connell	Mt. Paran Northside	annoconnell1@bellsouth.net

## BCN Standing Committees

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Executive Committee	Jim King	jimking@mindspring.com
Communications Committee	Bob Schneider	bschneider@gardenhills.net

## BCN 2011/12 Liaisons

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Liaison</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Education	Leslie Churchill	lschurhill@bellsouth.net
Membership	Elizabeth Pritchard	eliz@epritcharddesigns.com
Neighborhood Governance/Topics	Kathy Collura	KathyCollura@bellsouth.net
Parks	Gordon Certain	gcertain@comcast.net
Property Taxes	George Mirgorod	gmirg@me.com
Public Safety	Barbara Kennedy	bar2010@aol.com
	Tad Linder	tlinder@lindersecurity.com
	Kim Kahwach	KAJensen@bellsouth.net
Redistricting	Jim King	jimking@mindspring.com
Transportation, Development and Infrastructure	Diane Cox	brookwoodcivic@gmail.com
	Ron Grunwald	rgrunwald@bellsouth.net
	Deborah Wathen	6wathens@bellsouth.net
	Kristy Gillmann	kristygillmann@gmail.com

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## **I. Welcome & Introductions**

**Jim King** called the meeting to order at about 6:35 PM. The attendees introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

## **II. Approval of August Minutes**

Minutes for the August meeting were approved.

## **III. Admit New Member Neighborhoods**

As of this September meeting, 31 neighborhoods had paid 2012 dues. No new neighborhoods requested membership.

## **IV. Neighborhood Governance Issues**

No report this month.

## **V. Guest Speaker – Honorable Sam Massell, President of the Buckhead Coalition**

Sam Massell, former Mayor of Atlanta and President of the Buckhead Coalition, started by commending BCN for what it is doing, speaking for the 78,000 residents of Buckhead. The Coalition was formed 25 years ago as a supplement for government, waiting in the shadows until needed. Charlie Loudermilk was the person behind the Coalition concept. He said their mission is to nurture the quality of life for those who work, visit, live and play here in Buckhead. He said there were two things they don't do: they don't get involved in any zoning issues and they don't get involved in any partisan politics. They do have a political action committee that addresses city elections: the mayor, city council and board of education. He said they created a community improvement district which now raises over \$5 million a year, money that goes to mobility, mainly the Peachtree Boulevard project. He said to "keep your eyes open—in a few years they are going to have lots of money and no project."

He said that there have been two issues in which the Coalition and neighborhoods were at odds. They lobbied for the extension of GA 400. He said in hindsight he thought they did the right thing. He said it was a bitter fight that has taken years to try to heal. The other issue involved traffic and the Peachtree Park neighborhood. He said it made a lot of sense (to them) to connect Pharr Road to Lenox Road. The connection was to "be airborne so it wouldn't go into the neighborhood." The neighborhood and Mayor Jackson was against it. He said those were the two big differences over 24 years.

Sam said that other than traffic and crime, the major issue we are all concerned about is the economy. He said their thinking had been "that a luxury market like Buckhead would be the last to feel it and the first to come out of it." He said that we are definitely coming out of it. Enumerating the projects, he said Buckhead had 2,683 apartment units either currently under construction or planned by reputable developers. He said then the recession started 3½ years ago, there was not a single unit planned. None the next year, or the one after that. Now, we are looking at a 21% increase in Buckhead's apartments!

People are moving into Buckhead. He said four years ago the country was laughing at us because we had four new office buildings, totaling two million square feet, empty. He said the Coalition ran two full page ads in the Wall Street Journal saying to the world that those who had wanted to move to Buckhead could now afford to. It was an issue of supply and demand. Now the demand is coming back. He said two of those buildings are 90% occupied. Eight hundred thousand square feet of additional office space is planned or underway. A \$100 million North Atlanta high school is under way. A missing ramp connecting GA 400 and I-85 is under construction which will greatly reduce surface street traffic. \$30 million is being spent to complete the second phase of the Peachtree Boulevard project. And the 2010 Census showed that while the City of Atlanta grew by 0.8%, Buckhead grew by 17.8% -- all of Atlanta's growth took place in Buckhead.

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Massell said the growth occurred because of leadership. Forty neighborhood associations with leaders, 34 church congregations with leaders, seven school PTAs with leaders, five service clubs, etc. Buckhead's success is not luck, it's leadership. And the Buckhead Coalition is part of it. Massell went on to say, "If I weren't the president of the Buckhead Coalition, I would say that your organization was the most important organization in Buckhead. You are really a fine, important group and I can't brag enough about you".

Massell announced a new program, the "Buckhead Ambassador" program. The goal is to create some new young leadership. It will involve about two dozen Buckhead men and women age 20 to 30. He wants nominations. They will receive a booklet on places they could serve as volunteers and a list of elective offices they might be qualified to run for. Business training seminars would also be provided.

**Jane Rawlings** asked, given the failure of the TSPLOST, what can be done to improve transportation? He said that businesses supported the TSPLOST vote but not enough emphasis was paid to the neighborhoods and residents. He spoke of the success of the MARTA vote he championed years before as a potential mode. He said a different plan involving the grass roots was needed.

In conclusion, Massell said he would like the neighborhoods and the Coalition to each consider the other as partners.

### VI. Committee and Liaison Updates

- **Communications Committee** – No report.
- **Education** – There were comments about a Nancy Meister meeting. Mark MyGrant has been brought back to be temporary principal of North Atlanta.
- **Executive Committee** – No report.
- **Membership** – No Report.
- **Parks** – **Gordon Certain** said that a briefing was made to the Parks Department about the "Mountain Way Common" park. Also, a fund raiser, a wine tasting event, was planned for the park on October 6.

**Barbara Kennedy** encouraged neighborhoods to stay involved in Park Pride meetings and the quarterly Parks Commissioner meetings because there is grant money available if you are involved enough to learn about it. She said that Collier Hills had received grant money for a mural for a bridge that has been covered with graffiti. *[The next quarterly Parks Commissioner's Greenspace meeting is on Wednesday, November 14 from 5:30-7:00 pm at the Civic Center.]*

**Ron Grunwald** said that Loring Heights had received a \$50,000 matching grant from Park Pride. He said neighborhoods should visit the Park Pride web site – they have \$400 thousand in grant money available for improvements to city parks. Ron also said that Trees Atlanta had a program to plant 10,000 trees in the right-of-way and in parks.

- **Property Taxes** – No Report.
- **Public Safety** – **Tiffany Harlow**, Zone 2 Community Prosecutor, said that she was creating a separate group to discuss cases the Fulton County DA is pursuing in Zone 2. She will contact BCN neighborhoods.

Tiffany said they are setting up "Neighborhood Take Backs" in reaction to gang activity. She said they are seeing a big increase in gangs, mostly juvenile gangs. She said that Major Hobbs had identified certain areas around the Lindbergh corridor where gangs are entering automobiles and doing residential and commercial burglaries.

- **Redistricting** – No Report.



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- **Transportation, Development and Infrastructure**

### Lindbergh SPI-15

**Yolanda Adrean** said that the two committees addressing the Lindbergh SPI-15 rezoning had both forwarded their respective ordinances to the full City Council “without recommendation”. The Council will consider them on Monday. She saw revised renderings presented by the developer today. A lot of work has been done to comply with the SPI, but Yolanda said the result “leaves a lot to be desired”. Yolanda wasn’t sure about the Council vote. She said emails are starting to be sent to all of the councilmembers, which she said is important. She said try to be specific in the emails.

In response to **Jane Rawling’s** question, Yolanda said the proposed seven-acre surface parking lot had been reconfigured to a roughly three-acre, two-level parking deck. Yolanda was concerned that there was not enough parking for Walmart workers. She was also concerned about the impact on already struggling nearby retail. Jane asked many other questions about the revised site plan, which Yolanda answered. Many of the proposed small retail stores have no tenants yet.

Jane read provisions of the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) which defines “Mixed Use” as buildings which have two or more uses – she said that none of the proposed buildings fit that definition and thus aren’t “mixed use”. She thus argued the proposed development wasn’t a “mixed use development”.

Yolanda encouraged neighborhoods to come to the City Council and speak. [Subsequently, the City Law Department ruled that no such comments would be allowed.]

This discussion went on and on.

### Sandy Springs Gateway Project

**Jim King** described the 21-acre proposal on Roswell Road in Sandy Springs with a driveway connecting to West Wieuca Road in Atlanta. The site plan includes a grocery store and miscellaneous retail out parcels as well as 700 apartments. The plan triggers the ARC’s DRI (development of regional importance) threshold. The development is similar to the Lindbergh proposal, though the retail component isn’t as large and no parks are proposed. Like Lindbergh, the project is called “mixed use”, though all uses are separate. The location on Roswell is problematic since Roswell is already very crowded and experiences congestion due to lack of traffic signal coordination and the lack of a street grid in the area. Traffic is likely to backup into Buckhead worse than today. The High Point and Cherokee Park neighborhoods are working with North Buckhead and Chastain Park. [Information about this project is at [www.nbca.org/SSGateway.htm](http://www.nbca.org/SSGateway.htm).]

### Deering Road/AMTRAK/Northside

**Ron Grunwald** said the City and GOT had maintained in an earlier BCN meeting that it was not possible to sequence their projects one after the other to minimize impact on the neighborhoods. Inexplicably, now everything has changed. He said they were notified today by GDOT that the AMTRAK project was being delayed to avoid impacting Deering before the holidays. Instead, they will start in January with a target completion in June. The Northside Drive/Collier project bidding documents now stipulate that the closing of Northside be delayed until Deering Road opens again. These changes were badly needed and will be appreciated. We were heard.

### Bishop Street in Loring Heights

**Ron Grunwald** said Bishop Street runs along the southeast edge of Loring Heights next to the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. Ron received a variance application from Odyssey Sports to decrease required parking from 2,500 spaces to 1,000. Odyssey is proposing a 550,000 square foot campus for training in team sports: a full-size Olympic pool, full-size soccer field, full-size Lacrosse field, 16 tennis courts, a hockey rink, all on about six acres. He said the existing zoning

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is industrial, so there may not be much the neighborhoods can do about it. Traffic will be an issue. He said the project would be designated a DRI. Everything right now is preliminary.

### **Mountain Way Court Case**

Gordon Certain reported on a case in North Buckhead involving a case of violations of building permit and watershed permit requirements and stop work orders. After a number of court appearances, the defendant finally signed a plea deal and agreed to fines and other conditions. Among the conditions were that unless all improvements that have been made in the past two years are removed within 60 days, the defendant will have to serve 360 days in jail. The City did a great job supporting the neighbors, and the neighbors did a great service to the city in being willing to testify. *[As of this writing on the 64<sup>th</sup> day, no demolition has happened.]*

### **VII. Community Concerns / New Business**

No report.

### **VIII. Announcements**

### **IX. Next Meeting** – October 11, 2012

**X. 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  
November 2, 2012



