



BUCKHEAD COUNCIL  
OF NEIGHBORHOODS  
[www.buckheadcouncil.org](http://www.buckheadcouncil.org)

# The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

## Board Meeting

March 9, 2017

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:45 – 8:15 PM

Meeting Minutes

### Attendees

	<u>Full Name</u>	<u>Neighborhood/Organization</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
1	Yolanda Adrean	City Council District 8	yadrean@atlantaga.gov
2	Peter Aman	N Buckhead/Candidate for Mayor	Peter@peterAman.com
3	Martin Becker	Paces West HOA	Martin_Becker@Prodigy.net
4	Elizabeth Bibby	North Buckhead	e.bibby@comcast.net
5	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
6	Jim Garcia	North Buckhead	jim.g@reagan.com
7	David Gylfe	Collier Hills	dcgylfe@bellsouth.net
8	Robert Helget	Peachtree Heights West	bbhelget@bellsouth.net
9	Ben Howard	Buckhead Condo Alliance	benhoward@gatech.edu
10	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@gmail.com
11	Francine Lowe	Pine Hills	Francine@lowetravel.net
12	Tony Lucadamo	Peter Aman for Mayor	Tony@PeterAman.com
13	Michael Mendolara	North Buckhead	MichaelMendolara@gmail.com
14	Kathleen Moriarty	Peachtree Hills	katatl@comcast.net
15	Mary Norwood	City Council; Candidate for Mayor	mnorwood@atlantaga.gov
16	Jennifer Rose	Mt. Paran-Northside	jenprose@gmail.com
17	Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
18	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bobschneider@me.com
19	Anne Taylor	Peachtree Heights West	AnnVTaylor@yahoo.com
20	Tom Tidwell	West Paces Northside	tom@tidwell-law.com
21	Frank Toye	Chastain Park	ftoye@bellsouth.net
22	Debra Wathen	Paces	6wathens@bellsouth.net
23	James Wells	North Buckhead	drjwells@earthlink.net
24	Matt Westmoreland	Atlanta Public Schools	MattWestmoreland@gmal.com
25	Robin Wilson	Paces	

### Attendance by Neighborhood

	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Attendees</u>
1	Buckhead Condo Alliance	Ben Howard
2	Chastain Park	Frank Toye
3	Collier Hills	David Gylfe
4	Garden Hills	Bob Schneider
5	Mt. Paran-Northside	Jennifer Rose
6	North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff, Peter Aman, Elizabeth Bibby, Jim Garcia, Michael Mendolara, James Wells
7	Paces	Debra Wathen, Robin Wilson
8	Paces West HOA	Martin Becker
9	Peachtree Heights West	Robert Helget, Anne Taylor
10	Peachtree Hills	Kathleen Moriarty
11	Pine Hills	Francine Lowe
12	Tuxedo Park	Mercy Sandberg-Wright
13	West Paces Northside	Tom Tidwell

# BCN Board Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2017

## BCN 2016/17 Officers (Executive Committee)

<u>Office</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Email</u>
Chairman	Tom Tidwell	West Paces Northside	tom@tidwell-law.com
Vice-Chairman	Ron Grunwald	Loring Heights	rgrunwald@bellsouth.net
Secretary	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
Treasurer	Debra Wathen	Paces	6wathens@bellsouth.net
Communications	Jeff Clark	Garden Hills	jeffbclark@gmail.com

## BCN Standing Committees

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Email</u>
Executive Committee	Tom Tidwell	tom@tidwell-law.com
Education	Tom Tidwell	tom@tidwell-law.com
Development and Infrastructure	Ron Grunwald	rgrunwald@bellsouth.net
Transportation	Debra Wathen Elizabeth Scattergood	6wathens@bellsouth.net betsy.scattergood@gmail.com

**Other** (Legislative, NPU, Parks, Voter Education/Registration, etc.)

## I. Welcome & Introductions

**Chair Tom Tidwell** called the meeting to order at about 6:45 PM. A quorum was present.

Special guests included **Peter Aman**, who is running for Mayor of Atlanta; **Matt Westmoreland**, currently with the Atlanta Public Schools, who is running for the City Council Post 2; and **Mary Norwood**, running for Mayor of Atlanta and currently serving as Post 2 City Council member. She joined the meeting well after it started.

## II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the February meeting were approved.

## III. Admit New Member Neighborhoods

No neighborhoods asked to be considered for BCN membership. Martin Becker, representing the Paces West HOA, said that his neighborhood would be active in BCN again. BCN membership dues are now payable for 2017. The dues amount is \$100 per neighborhood.

## IV. Mayoral Candidate Forum, October 18, 2017 at North Atlanta H.S.

Tom reminded attendees that in addition to tonight's meeting agenda, BCN's most recent email included a proposal for the **BCN Mayoral Forum** on October 18. [Since that proposal has been revised since the meeting that emailed version is not included in these minutes.] The moderator for the Mayoral Forum will be Jim Galloway, Political Columnist for the Atlanta Journal Constitution.

A similar **BCN City Council Forum** is planned for September 27. In that forum, each council office (City Council President, Post 1, and Post 2) will be allocated 30 minutes. The moderator for the City Council Forum had not been selected as of meeting time.

Both forums will be held at North Atlanta High School. As part of the agenda for those meetings, each neighborhood is asked to prepare a list of the five issues that are most important to them. Candidates will be provided the questions submitted by neighborhood. From this master list, a curated list of four to

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eight questions will be selected and also provided to all candidates. The shortened list will include the questions each candidate is expected to be ready to answer during the forum.

### V. Speaker - William M. Johnson, Commissioner of Public Works

**Councilmember Yolanda Adrean** introduced William Johnson as a Deputy Chief Operating Officer and now Commissioner of Public Works.



Johnson has been in Atlanta for nine months. He was hired as Deputy Chief Operating Officer. During part of that time, he served for five months as Watershed Commissioner. He has also been involved in transportation and 311. He recently took over Public Works on a fulltime basis. He said Public Works deals with just about everything in the right of way: roads, drainage, sidewalks, streetlights, pedestrian lights (in some cases), bridges, overpasses, maintenance, repair, solid waste collection, recycling, yard waste collection, and fleet maintenance for the entire city. Fleet maintenance involves four to five thousand vehicles, ranging from fire engines, waste trucks, watershed equipment, airport equipment – pretty diverse. He said if he can't answer our questions tonight he will get back to us with answers.

The remainder of Johnson's presentation was a question and answer format.

### **Waze, Google Maps & Cut-through traffic:**

**Robin Wilson** (Paces Civic Association Executive Board Member) Cut-through traffic invading neighborhood streets caused by Waze and Google Maps, a problem everywhere. What can be done to minimize congestion in totally residential neighborhoods and can it be enforced? Would cutting the speed limit help? Johnson said as they make changes to the city's streets (for instance, making them one-way) they are constantly providing updates to Google Maps and Waze. He said they can sometimes make it less convenient for people to go through neighborhoods, for instance, slower or more of a hassle. We can't tell people they can't use the streets. He thinks they need to look at the area, do a traffic study, and come back with recommendations on what can be done. He asked for the limits of the area and streets impacted. Robin mentioned Ridgeway, West Paces Ferry. She will provide him with a list.

Yolanda Adrean mentioned her neighborhood has a problem with cut-through traffic, too. She said the city is rewriting its transportation plan. She said it is a struggle because neighborhoods surround the core areas and drivers don't recognize municipal boundaries and we don't have a regional plan. Cobb County doesn't have buses taking people into Buckhead where the jobs are – they just go north and south. As a result, we have a lot of commuters coming to jobs, lots of schools bringing in traffic. MARTA mostly moves people north-south, not east-west. She said they recently did a traffic study on Peachtree Road – its rush hour lasts from 1:30 pm to 8pm. The problem was that the city wasn't designed to be the economic center it's become.

Johnson said that GRETA has worked with the city to provide express buses, about the need to provide more service. One bus might take 30 or 40 cars off the road.

**Gordon Certain** (North Buckhead) pointed out that the GRETA buses do not come to the core of Buckhead—they go Downtown. We need to route them to where the jobs are. 98% of the workers in Buckhead's core live outside the area. He said North Buckhead's population at night was about ten thousand and in the daytime, it is about forty thousand. **Peter Aman**, in response to Yolanda's question, said that every day the Buckhead population more than doubles (from eighty thousand). Yolanda said that Buckhead's population is 20% of the city, but it has a huge influx every day. The

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transportation planners need to understand that Buckhead's transportation challenges are unique in the city – their usual transportation solutions may not be applicable.

### **Problem Intersection - West Paces Ferry at Northside Parkway:**

**Martin Becker** (Paces West HOA– West Paces Ferry at Northside Parkway) The traffic signals are confusing – it takes an education to make a left turn there.

### **Erratic Water usage and billing:**

Martin Becker – Asked for a contact so he could talk to them and not 311. Johnson suggested a meeting with key department representatives. Yolanda mentioned that in 30327 and 30342 the error rate on water bills seems to be higher than in the rest of the city. She said the Commissioner has already met with the Chastain Park neighborhood and is getting ready to meet with Mt. Paran in two weeks. There seem to be a concentration of billing issues up here that are not happening in the rest of the city. Something is systemic, maybe the meter readers.

### **Minor transportation infrastructure projects – who to contact?:**

How do we get information for a neighborhood? Johnson said the best approach for now is to send it to him at [wmjohnson@atlantaga.gov](mailto:wmjohnson@atlantaga.gov).

### **Braves Stadium Related Landscaping:**

**Debra Wathen** (Paces) lives near the Chattahoochee near US41. She said the Cobb CID has done “an amazing and beautiful job of landscaping” from the river, up northward. While Atlanta should be complemented for doing a good maintenance job in the right-of-way on their side of the river, mowing and cleaning up, it will be **embarrassing** to us because people coming south from Cobb into the City of Atlanta will see **none** of that beautiful landscaping. Is there any way we can do something to make our side look better?

### **ATL311 one-stop city service hotline:**

There were audience complaints about 311. People answering the phones don't seem to be able to answer questions or make decisions, frequently put caller on hold. They sometimes are not clear what city department is responsible for what. Are they in any way empowered to delegate or make a decision? Johnson said, No. They are trained to be able to extract information from the caller. Generally, it should be clear what department is involved. Perhaps an inexperienced, less trained person had answered. Johnson said sometimes the caller doesn't understand the scope of the problem— they might say: hey, I've got a pothole, not understanding that the actual problem is a broken water main under the pavement – it may have seemed to be a Public Works issue but the solution must come from the Watershed Management Department.

Changes may be needed. A review is underway, looking at 311's people, the software they are using, and how the information collected is flowing. They are looking at the timeliness and effectiveness of responses to calls.

Another attendee said he called 311 on a business license issue and had the issue resolved within ten minutes. Another attendee also said they were very satisfied with their experience with the 311 service.

### **Traffic impact fees ignore actual traffic impact:**

Gordon Certain said that his North Buckhead neighborhood may have the worst traffic in the city. Its border includes Peachtree and Piedmont Roads and the GA400/Lenox Road expressway interchange is *inside* the neighborhood. New developments within and near North Buckhead have a very significant traffic impact because of a number of factors: the street grid is unusually limited, traffic is already extremely congested, and land values (where new or widened roads might normally be considered) are extremely high. As a result, actions required to accommodate new traffic are typically very costly or impossible. Yet, when impact fees are assessed by the city, the same impact fee rate is used

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everywhere. This single rate approach totally ignores the reality that the actual impact might be trivial in some parts of the city and enormous elsewhere, such as in North Buckhead. The word “impact” means something; different districts of the city will experience different actual traffic impacts – different districts should have different impact fee schedules. The effect of the single rate for traffic impacts is unfavorable in two ways: first, new development is discouraged in parts of the city which desperately need it because the amount of the impact fee exceeds the actual traffic impact cost; second, new development is subsidized in areas like North Buckhead where the traffic impact fees represent a fraction of actual impact costs.

Johnson responded that a Planning and Public Works team is currently discussing the issue of impact fees and how they may be changed. He said he would take that feedback to the team for their consideration. He said there may be issues with differential fees and they will be discussed with the Law Department.

### **311 Callers need to report problems and be asked not to diagnose them:**

**Anne Taylor** (Peachtree Heights West) said that she has had experience with managing public works projects in the military. She agreed that it is very important to train those answering 311 complaints to be trained to get callers to report what they have observed and not offer their non-expert diagnoses of how problems should be helped.

Johnson agreed – he said people often call and say the city needs a new turn lane at this intersection or that one – he said he didn’t know the city had so many traffic engineers. He said formal studies are needed to determine what changes, if any, are needed at an intersection.

### **Parking on sidewalks:**

**Elizabeth Bibby** (North Buckhead) asked why so many vehicles are allowed to park on sidewalks. She said when people go out for a walk in her area, at lunch hour or other times, vehicles are often parked on the sidewalk. Delivery trucks do it, landscapers do it, construction people do it along Peachtree Road. She said when she asks if they have a permit to do it, they say yes when you know they don’t. Is there someone we can call? Johnson said, yes, call his deputy Larry King, who manages the Park Atlanta contract – Park Atlanta can issue tickets. APD can also issue tickets. He said if the parked vehicle is involved in work for the city with a permit to do so, he would be shocked to see that they have a permit to park on the sidewalk – he said, “We never issue permits for parking on the sidewalk”. He said, in addition to contacting Park Atlanta, King can also review permit documents to determine if the terms of the contract are being followed.

Debra Wathen agreed with Liz that it’s a problem, often involving utility companies cable companies, Georgia Power, AT&T, Google, fiber optic people – they all think that the right of way is their property. *[Noise on the meeting recording obscured the rest of her comments.]* Johnson said utilities, in doing their job, must allow safe traffic conditions and safe access to sidewalks. Raise the issue with the utility company and if you don’t get a satisfactory response, contact Public Works.

### **Funding for sidewalks?**

**Tom Tidwell** (West Paces Northside) asked if there is any funding for sidewalks. Johnson said he couldn’t say off the top of his head how much funding was available this year city-wide for sidewalks. He said if we had specific sidewalk projects, let them know and they can determine if there is funding in the current year or if it can be done in future years. Tom asked if it would be more favorable to go through Johnson’s office or Yolanda Adrean’s. Johnson said Adrean’s. *[Laughter.]* Yolanda added that they do have some TSPLOST money to be spent on paths and sidewalks as well as discretionary money for each City Council district. She said it costs about \$600,000 per mile to build sidewalks because of trees, topography, etc.

**James Wells** (North Buckhead resident and president of the company that owns/operates Canterbury Court in Historic Brookhaven) said he lives close enough to his work in Buckhead that he is able to walk to work. He said he has been in North Buckhead for 17 months and has only had to buy gas 11 times. He uses MARTA a lot and walks a lot. He said he had encountered many sidewalk problems in the North

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Buckhead area. (The civic association has contacted him to document those problems so they can be documented and addressed.) He asked if the city had any incentive policies to encourage people to move close to their place of work. He thinks there should be a city-wide effort promote living near one's place of work and the city and employers should jointly provide a system of incentives for those who want to relocate to live near their place of work or already do. Increased bus availability plus having a lot more people walking to work could do a lot to begin resolving our traffic issues.

Johnson replied that the city is planning to implement a complete streets policy to facilitate walkability and bikeability. Traffic calming and slowing is also important, as is encouraging people to use public transit. He said Millennials want to rent and not buy homes, ride bikes and transit rather than owning cars, and want to live in neighborhoods where they can walk to work or grocery store and restaurant. He said the Planning Department is preparing an update to the City's Transportation Master Plan. He said that one of the things to be considered is whether to focus design efforts on the needs of people living in communities as opposed to the masses who are commuting in. He said the city need to focus on making the city more attractive for people to those who now live in the suburbs and commute in.

Tom Tidwell said we can already see this happening in East Atlanta, Ponce de Leon, and Virginia Highlands – people are walking and biking night and day. But it doesn't work in Buckhead with the housing prices we have. Johnson this was his first time driving into the Buckhead area and his reaction was that he had never seen so many hotel resorts so close together – then he realized they were actually private homes. *[Laughter]* He said he can see why the average person can't afford to work and live here.

### **311 needs to be geocoded:**

Johnson commented that one of the problems they have is that people will call and provide their name and address but the address is not where the problem is. They are trying to work with the people taking the calls to secure the address of where the problem actually is.

### **Contract transparency:**

In response to a question about making more information more available about city contractors and what work are they authorized to do and when, Johnson said it is something they can look into to make more information available to the public online.

### **Recycling support for large condo/apartment complexes:**

Debra Wathen said the complex she lives in, like many, depends on private solid waste and recycling service. She wondered if the city was looking at expanding into servicing those areas. Johns said that was an excellent question. He said he has talked to his solid waste people about their ability to adapt or die, from a business standpoint. In the city, we see all the new development going on – they're not building single family homes. They're building apartments, condos and multi-family units. As this continues to happen, if they don't adapt, they will find they have more people and more equipment than they have work to do. That means there will be cutbacks. They need to figure out how to provide service to multifamily complexes. He said, in answer to her question, yes, it's one of his highest priorities.

### **Recycle glass?**

Will the city start recycling glass again? Johnson said they are working on a "resource" that will allow them to recycle glass again. Glass involves many recycling issues. First, glass is the heaviest component of recycling, weighing more than any other component. He said the market right now requires that glass be sorted by color – that takes labor. Second, if glass is not recycled, the percentage of materials recycled goes way down, which is not desirable. Third, if glass breaks during the recycling collection process and contaminates recyclable paper, both the glass and the paper end up in the landfill, causing a loss in revenue. Fourth, though there's no market for it right now, the city has hopes that there will be a market and if people are told not to recycle it, when a market connection is available, people will be out of the habit. Public Works is exploring the issue and is quite hopeful that they will be able to profitably recycle glass soon.



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### **Traffic Studies – No database tracks traffic volumes for approved to-be-built projects:**

Gordon also commented that there is often a serious omission in assessing traffic for new projects. Each private development project required to do a traffic study starts with the same blank slate: they look at existing traffic around their development and add a nominal background growth percentage and use that data as a basis for figuring out what traffic volumes will be after their project is completed and their forecast traffic is added. The problem is the next developer does the same thing, totally ignoring the fact that a property next door or down the street may already have been approved to build a project that will very likely add a lot more traffic than nominal background growth. In order to have meaningful forecasts of future traffic volumes, someone, the City of the Atlanta and/or the Atlanta Regional Commission, should maintain a database of added traffic volumes that are approved and will be coming. (Those estimates of future traffic should be weighted by the likelihood that the project will actually be built.) Instead, each developer is essentially able to pretend that their project is the only one adding significant amounts of traffic. The result is, after all the projects get built, traffic turns out to be worse, often far worse, than anyone ever expected – examples: Peachtree Road between Lenox and Piedmont Roads, Lenox Road between Peachtree and Piedmont Roads; Piedmont Road between Peachtree and Roswell Roads.

### **Water intake tunnel to the Bellwood Quarry:**

The city is boring a tunnel from the Chattahoochee near the RM Clayton Plant to the Bellwood Quarry. Johnson said they started boring last year and it will be completed in 2018. The project is going well, on schedule. We will go from a three-day water supply to an amazing 30-day supply. Most cities don't have anything near that reserve capacity. This will enable future growth in the city and the Quarry will be a dual-use site, also becoming Atlanta's biggest park. He said it was also one of the biggest capital projects in the city, exceeded only by the construction at the airport.

Tom Tidwell said that he will send a list of the questions posed to Commissioner Johnson tonight with the intent of inviting him back, maybe in November or December to see what progress has been made. Johnson said that sounds great.

## **VI. Community Concerns - New Business - Announcements**

### **VII. Next Meeting** Thursday, April 13, 2017

Tom said he hopes to get the Braves traffic people to come to the next meeting so we can understand what their plan is and how it might affect Buckhead neighborhoods.

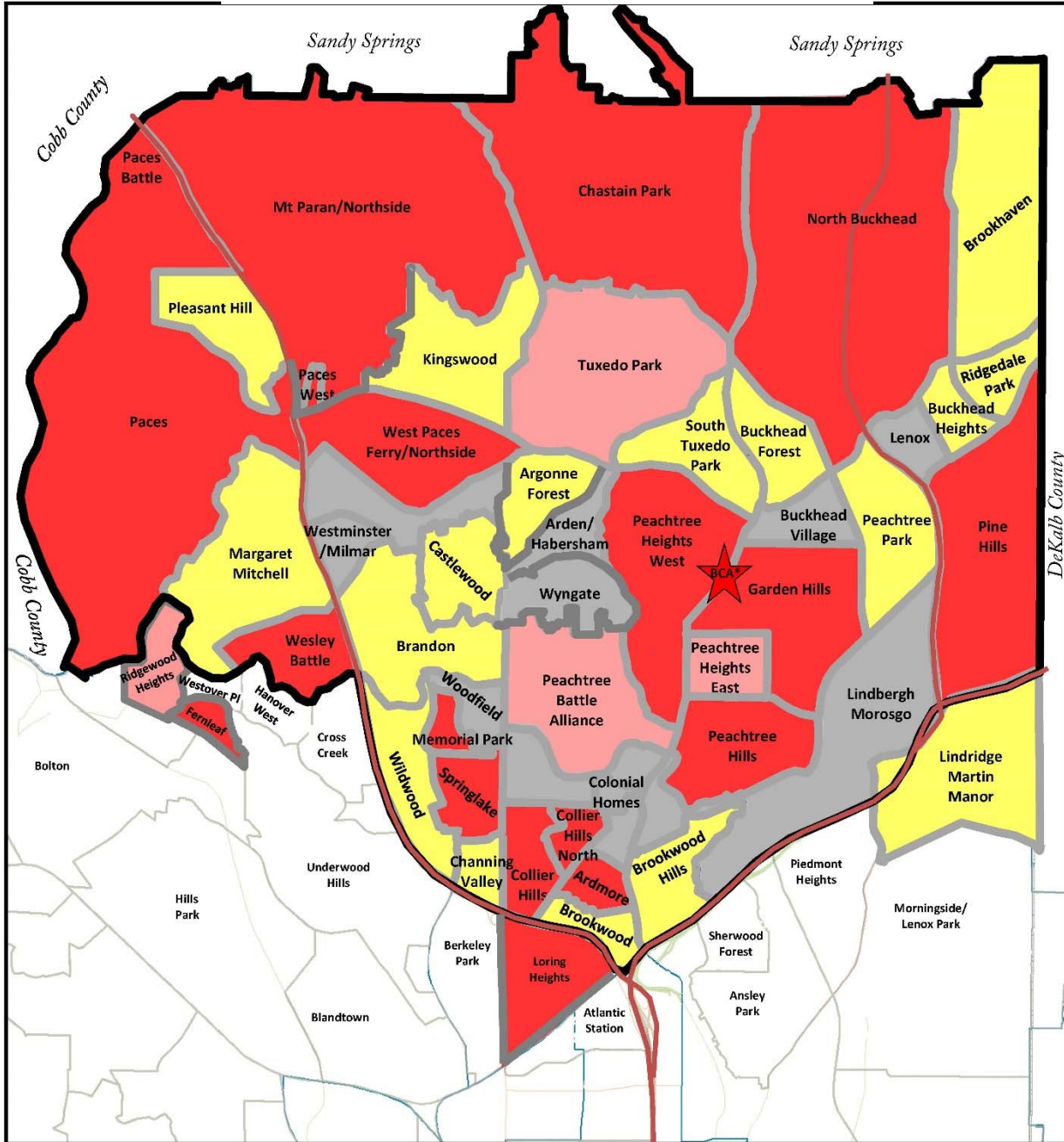
### **IX. Adjourn** - The meeting adjourned at about 8:00 PM.

***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  
March 28, 2017; Pages 1, 8 & 9 updated on April 11, 2017, Updated April 14, 2017

BCN's web page is at [www.BuckheadCouncil.org](http://www.BuckheadCouncil.org).

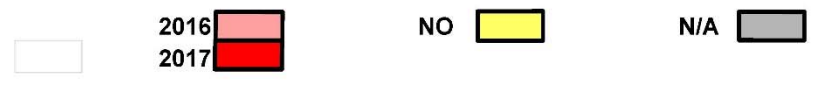
# Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods



\* BCA = Buckhead Condo Alliance

## LEGEND

Paid Membership as of 04/11/17





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<b>BCN Status as of March 28, 2017</b>																	
Neighborhood	Dues		Data	Neighborhood Representation at Board Meetings													
	2016	2017	2017 Census	2015	2016	2017											
				10 meetings	10 meetings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Arden/Habersham																
2	Ardmore Park	✓	✓		70%	55%	✓										
3	Argonne Forest				30%												
4	Brandon																
5	Brookwood																
6	Brookwood Hills				10%												
7	BuckheadCondoAlliance	✓			90%	77%	✓	✓	✓								
8	Buckhead Forest																
9	Buckhead Heights																
10	Buckhead Village				20%	44%											
11	Castlewood																
12	Channing Valley																
13	Chastain Park		✓	✓	10%	44%	✓		✓								
14	Collier Hills	✓	✓		30%	33%			✓								
15	Collier Hills North	✓	✓	✓	20%	55%		✓									
16	Fernleaf		✓														
17	Garden Hills	✓	✓		80%	44%	✓	✓	✓								
18	Grant Estates				20%												
19	Historic Brookhaven				10%	33%											
20	Kingswood				20%												
21	Lindbergh																
22	Lindridge Martin Manor				10%	11%											
23	Loring Heights	✓	✓		70%	77%	✓	✓									
24	Margaret Mitchell				20%												
25	Memorial Park	✓	✓	✓	50%	44%	✓	✓									
26	Mt. Paran-Northside	✓	✓		20%	88%	✓	✓	✓								
27	North Buckhead	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%	✓	✓	✓								
28	Paces	✓	✓		60%	77%	✓	✓	✓								
29	Paces West		✓	✓					✓								
30	Peachtree Battle Alliance	✓			40%	33%											
31	Peachtree Heights East	✓			60%												
32	Peachtree Heights West	✓	✓		80%	55%		✓	✓								
33	Peachtree Hills		✓		10%		✓		✓								
34	Peachtree Park				10%												
35	Pine Hills	✓	✓	✓	60%	55%	✓	✓	✓								
36	Pleasant Hill																
37	Ridgedale Park					11%											
38	Ridgewood Heights				20%	11%											
39	Springlake	✓	✓		20%	11%											
40	Tuxedo Park	✓			50%	55%		✓	✓								
41	Wesley Battle		✓		10%												
42	West Paces Northside	✓	✓		100%	88%	✓	✓	✓								
43	Wildwood																
44	Wyngate																
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Avg:10</b>	<b>Avg:12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>									