



BUCKHEAD COUNCIL
OF NEIGHBORHOODS
www.buckheadcouncil.org

The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Board Meeting

February 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	Beth Beskin	Representative, House 54th	ebeskin@gmail.com
2	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
3	Jeff Clark	Garden Hills	jeffbclark@gmail.com
4	Joe Earle	Buckhead Reporter	joeearle@reporternewspapers.net
5	Jim Elgar	Loring Heights- Ceasar Mitchell's office	jimelgar@gmail.com
6	Dieter Franz	North Buckhead	cdf Franz@comcast.net
7	Robert Helget	Peachtree Heights West	bbhelget@bellsouth.net
8	Cathy Helms	Collier Hills North	cahelms1@gmail.com
9	Ken Hoogs	Paces	khoogs@CommerceCapitalAtl.com
10	Ben Howard	Buckhead Condo Alliance	benhoward@gatech.edu
11	Brad Kaplan	Pine Hills	kaplanbr@yahoo.com
12	Walda Lavroff	North Buckhead	waldalavroff@gmail.com
13	Erica Long	Sylvan Hills/APS	erica.long@atlantaga.gov
14	Mary Norwood	Atlanta City Council, Post 2	mnorwood@atlantaga.gov
15	Garth Peters	Memorial Park & Buckhead Coalition	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
16	Buff Quillian	Peachtree Heights West	buffquillianphw@gmail.com
17	Jennifer Rose	Mt. Paran-Northside	jenprose@gmail.com
18	Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
19	Major James Shaw	APD Zone 2 Commander	jbshaw@atlantaga.gov
20	Tom Tidwell	West Paces Northside	tom@tidwell-law.com
21	Alex Wan	Atlanta City Council, District 6	awan@atlantaga.gov
22	Price Williams	Garden Hills	pricewilliams@pswj.com

Attendees included at least 20 others, including a large delegation from the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Attendance by Neighborhood

	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Attendees</u>
1	Buckhead Condo Alliance	Ben Howard
2	Collier Hills North	Cathy Helms
3	Garden Hills	Jeff Clark, Price Williams
4	Loring Heights	Jim Elgar
5	Memorial Park	Garth Peters
6	Mt. Paran-Northside	Jennifer Rose
7	North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Walda Lavroff, Dieter Franz
8	Paces	Ken Hoogs
9	Peachtree Heights West	Buff Quillian, Robert Helget
10	Pine Hills	Brad Kaplan
11	Sylvan Hills	Erica Long
12	Tuxedo Park	Mercy Sandberg-Wright
13	West Paces Northside	Tom Tidwell

BCN Board Meeting Minutes – February 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.

A large contingent (about a dozen) from the **Republic of Kazakhstan** (a central Asia country) attended the meeting. They have attended City Council meetings in Atlanta and Sandy Springs and other civic and quasi-governmental organization meetings. They were hosted by five Metro residents belonging to the Friendship Force. The Kazakhstan is visiting as part of the Open World initiative which was organized by the US Government to introduce officials from the former Soviet Union to understand how we do things. They want to understand how local governments get input from the citizens and other interests.

Alex Wan, Atlanta City Council, District 6, attended. Alex is running for the City Council President position.

Mary Norwood, currently serving as Post 2 City Council member, also attended. She is running for Mayor of Atlanta.

Major James B. "Barry" Shaw, the new Zone 2 Precinct Commander was introduced. **Garth Peters** noted that Shaw had come from a long line of Atlanta police officers and that he had graduated at the top of his at the police academy in 1990 and, having the choice of an assignment, had taken a very tough assignment in Zone 1.

Shaw outlined some of the changes he has made since arriving in Zone 2:

- Shaw said every police zone has a team of officers with a discretionary role. In Zone 2, these officers had been used as a traffic squad that had been moved into crime hot spots so they could write a lot of tickets with blue lights flashing to make the police presence more visible in those areas. Shaw redeployed these officers to be a "crime suppression team"; dressed in plain clothes they do surveillance, trying to catch people who come into Buckhead to steal cars and to break into houses and cars. He said most of the people who are arrested in Zone 2 don't live there. He said the team has been very successful, particularly befitting from the many security cameras deployed in Buckhead. He reported that just this afternoon they caught the driver of a car stolen in Decatur who was already wanted on another charge. He said they are catching people almost every day.

BCN Board Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2017

- He said another change was the burglary team, though he didn't specify the nature of the change, and they are seeing some big reductions. He said they caught the "the silver thief" who was caught due to the camera system. He was charged with 25 burglaries, all in Buckhead, which Shaw suggested means he probably did 100 burglaries. He was a career criminal, but he was silly enough to rent the car he used using in his real name. He said they put a tracker on his rental car and caught him in the act during a burglary. Since then, the burglary rate has "really gone down".

Tom Tidwell asked if all the security cameras that were budgeted had been installed. Shaw said that there were lots of cameras still being worked on and yet to be installed.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the January meeting were approved.

III. Admit New Member Neighborhoods

No neighborhoods asked to be considered for BCN membership. BCN membership dues are now payable for 2017. The amount is \$100 per neighborhood.

IV. Speaker - Beth Beskin, State House Representative, District 54

Beth is the Republican Georgia House of Representatives member from the 54th District which includes much of Buckhead. She serves on the Education, Judiciary and Regulated Industries (alcohol, tobacco, gambling, etc.) Committees of the Georgia House.

When Beth made her report, it was the 15th day of the session, half way to "Crossover Day". Crossover Day happens on the 28th day of the 40-day legislative session. Beth said that bills that have not been introduced by Crossover Day, when the two houses of the legislature exchange their proposed legislation, are bills that are not going to happen this year. Beth prepared a list of bills for BCN that are being considered in the Georgia House:

Gambling: She thinks after several years of discussion, t's going to be voted on this year. She identified SB79 and HB158 as being considered. She said it is important, if you have an opinion, to let her know what you think. She thinks there will be bipartisan support for the legislation. Among the factors driving a decision are that the Hope Scholarship is running out of funds. The Democrats want money for Need-Based Aid. She said Lottery funds were to be allocated 70% to Hope and 30% to Need-Based Aid but now that allocation is being reconsidered. She said that rural healthcare is in crisis and that 20% of Hope's funds may go to rural healthcare – the proposed split would be 50% to HOPE, 30% to need-based college aid and 20% to rural healthcare. Casinos could fill that gap. Two casinos are now being considered: one, a \$2 billion investment in Fulton County and a smaller casino probably in Savannah (or perhaps Columbus). Some people think casinos would be good for the state but others do not, so be sure to share your opinion. If the Fulton casino were in Atlanta, we would benefit from sales tax revenues. This benefit would need to be balanced with other tolls it might take.

Beer: Brewpubs are popular. But in Georgia, there is a three-tiered alcohol distribution system: brewers, distributors, and retailers. Under last year's legislation, brewers have a limited ability to sell directly to consumers – they can provide "tours" of their facilities and tour participants can leave with a certain amount of beer. This I not always popular because some just want to skip the tour and just get the beer. She said Senator **Hunter Hill** (Republican, District 006, which includes Buckhead) has proposed a compromise that would let breweries sell 3,000 barrels of beer and consumers can but 288 ounces (24 bottles) per visit.

Hospital "Provider Fees": This fee was instituted several years ago, to help fund hospitals. Hospitals pay a per bed fee. The legislation this year would extend the fees through 2020. Each fee dollar is matched by two Federal dollars, and would raise \$900 million to help Medicaid. She

BCN Board Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2017

said a vote on the legislation would be on held on February 10 (it passed and was sent to Governor Deal).

Hospital "Certificate of Need": More controversial than previously discussed, this bill would eliminate "certificates of need". This bill would affect all Georgia medical providers, including all new medical facilities to be built and others expanded that are currently not able to do so because of the CON requirement. Cancer Treatment Centers of America, which opened a 50-bed hospital under the limitation that only 35% of the patients would be from Georgia, is one of the those providers which would benefit. She said the provision of medical services is not a market-based issue and "there is a lot of tension" related to it.

Optometry Bill: This bill would have allowed optometrists do limited surgery (injections into the eye). It was contentious issue with a tie vote broken by the Chair of the Health Committee, recommending approval. The ultimate outcome of the bill is unclear.

Fulton Industrial Annexation by South Fulton: In the Fulton Delegation, an issue came up with changes sought be the City of South Fulton, which was approved in a ballot initiative last year. South Fulton, Beth said, "needed and wanted" the Fulton Industrial Boulevard District, which by Constitution, no city has been allowed to annex. A bill was passed to permit that annexation and a resolution was introduced to repeal the Constitutional provision that blocks the annexation.

Guns: Beth said she voted against "Campus Carry" last year. That bill passed last year but the Governor vetoed it. Apparently, that bill is coming back, this time possibly with a provision to block guns in child care facilities on college campuses.

Campus Sexual Assault: Sexual assault happens on college campuses and they are sometimes reported. When reported, they are handled on the campus in a way that has resulted in claims by the accused males that they have been denied due process. Some were kicked out of school, derailing their careers. There is tension about who is the proper authority to handle such cases: the college administration or the police. A bill is being considered which would require that the identity of the assault victim be protected, require a campus procedure, and require that the assault be reported to the police.

Judicial Qualifications: The Judicial Qualification Commission (JQC) is the entity approved by voters last November. It is to oversee the process of determining whether candidates are fit to be judges. There is a turf battle about who would appoint members of this commission. The most significant way in which the new JQC differs from the prior is that the State Bar of Georgia will no longer have the power to appoint any members, whereas it previously did have such right. Under the newly-constituted JQC, the State Bar still retains the right to recommend appointees to those who actually make the JQC appointments, but does not itself have the power of appointment. A bill passed the House empowering the State Bar to appoint the commission's members. She thinks the bill will be approved this year.

Cancer Insurance for Fire Fighters: A bill which Beth voted against last year was also vetoed by the Governor. Her vote was based on her belief that Workman's Compensation wasn't the right vehicle for such coverage. The bill passed by the House this year includes both cancer insurance and life insurance. She thought that was something firefighters needed.

Taxes to Rural Healthcare: Beth briefly mentioned a provision passed last year that would let taxpayers designate some state taxes to benefit rural hospitals, a number of which have gone out of business. A bill under consideration this year proposes modifications to last years' bill establishing a tax credit for donations to rural healthcare organizations would increase last year's 70% deduction rate of such contribution to 90%.

Puppy Mills: HB144 is a bill she is getting the most mail about.

BCN Board Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2017

Pet Medical Privacy: A bill was sponsored to provide privacy to pet's medical records – it is thought that some people take their pet meds!

Front-end Car License Plates: An issue with police operated license tag readers, at least in states like Georgia, is that car tags are just on the rear. That means that in order to screen traffic in both directions of a road means two cameras are required. Beth is considering a bill that would require front end tags in Georgia. Because cars already sold her in Georgia may not have a tag bracket on the front end, she is thinking that the requirement be imposed only on newly sold cars, a provision that would give dealers to make sure those cars are appropriately equipped. She doesn't want to require that people have to drill holes in their front bumpers to install the additional tags.

An attendee commented that transparent car tag covers are available online for \$35 that make tags unreadable by tag reader cameras – it's a hologram that, depending on the viewing angle, blocks out one or another of the tag's digits. He said this would render useless the city's sizable investment in such cameras since the cameras are incredibly easy to fool. *[Secretary's comment: This "major problem" is easily overcome. #1. Make use of holographic tag covers illegal. #2. Then, simply reprogram tag reader systems to alert police to every tag which has missing tag digits so the police can immediately find and cite those drivers for using an illegal tag cover. #3. Also reprogram tag reader systems to alert police when a tag is read with all but one of its digits matching the number being sought. #4. Impose additional sentences on those who possess illegal tag covers while committing a felony.]*

School Bus Seatbelts: Beth said she has always thought that school buses should have seatbelts. While others think this requirement could cause major problems (making bus drivers latch and unlatch seatbelts of every small child on the bus), she still thinks is a good idea. She said new Fulton County buses are all being equipped with seatbelts. She has a bill that would require that all new school buses be equipped with seatbelts. That might add eight percent to the cost of a new bus.

Income Tax Credit For Houses Bought Near Low-performing Schools: Tom Tidwell asked Beth about her bill to grant an income tax credit for buying a home near a low-performing school. A hearing in the Ways and Means Committee on Beth's bill was held on February 8. It will provide a \$3,000 tax credit a year for up to five years for anyone who buys a home and lives in it when bought in attendance areas of schools in a low performing (lowest 5%) school.

Beth said she didn't mention it because she didn't know if it was going anywhere. Her motivation is that typically, low-performing schools are located in areas with low population. Such schools typically have small enrollments. The credit would encourage new homeowners. **Alex Wan** thought that the credit would be more effective if it were only granted to new homeowners whose children were actually attending the school. Beth said that some of those buying would have children and would attend the public schools. Some might buy before having children. She said it is unlikely that those with enough money to send their child to a private school at \$25,000 a year would be unlikely to be incentivized by a \$3,000 tax credit. Tom Tidwell commented that the main problem is not to revitalize the schools, it is to revitalize the low-population neighborhoods. Beth agreed that without sufficient population in a neighborhood, there will not be a nice grocery or drugstore there. **Mary Norwood** pointed out than many of these low-population neighborhoods were built at the same time and by the same developers and with the same homes who built in neighborhoods like Garden Hills and Collier Hills. We need to get people back into them.

Another attendee thought the credit should be based on property tax incentives rather than income tax incentives. Mary responded that in those areas with low population, the total property tax bill might be just \$50, an amount far too small to incentivize home buying.

Erica Long, an APS employee, offered a different perspective. She agreed with Alex Wan's thought that the tax benefit should be granted only to those whose children attended the

BCN Board Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2017

challenged schools. She thought that one of the critical goals was to get more children into the low-population areas and to generate a broad sense of commitment of those in that area to having their children attend the same public schools. She said that commitment is what has made public schools in the northern part of the city so successful, especially in the lower grades.

She said she lives in Sylvan Hills and that her child attends (and is doing quite well in) a low-performing school. But when they go to neighborhood social events, there are many children there that her child wonders why they are not in his class because they all attend private schools elsewhere. She said there is a disconnect when you talk about community building but there is no "hook" (incentive to go to school together) to get them living and working together side-by-side. She thinks that it is not full community building if some of the children attend private or public charter schools. She believes shared neighborhood experiences should include children going to school together. It would help APS marketing if the tax incentives were given to those attending APS schools. Beth felt that her proposal would strengthen the communities and that when couples of child-bearing age moved in, motivated by the tax incentive, they would ultimately have children and that those children would go to public kindergarten and that ultimately, the same experiences that caused the ground-swell of kids in North Atlanta wanting to go to Sutton. Erica said that she had heard about that happening when a "critical mass" was met and they stayed in APS. Erica said that has not happened yet in East Atlanta, or Kirkwood, or the areas in the Maynard Jackson Cluster. She said they see the young couples coming in and see them on the Beltline, but when they get to the four/five age range, that neighborhood school is not yet the choice for them. She is worried about the "unintended consequences" of what is clearly a bill intended to do good. Beth responded saying that as we strengthen these neighborhoods with new residents, they will be paying local property taxes and contributing to locales taxes, actions that will benefit and strengthen APS and an overall sense of community.

V. Mayoral Candidate Forum

At the last meeting, a mayoral candidate forum was proposed to be held by BCN. In 2009, BCN organized a forum for Atlanta mayoral candidates. That BCN forum was the most heavily attended of any held in the city that year. Jeff Clark is leading this effort for BCN this year. He organized a meeting attended by four BCN reps and a proposal was the result which was handed out to this BCN meeting. Jeff's goal in tonight's board meeting was to get BCN approval that proposal after making any needed changes.

Since there are a very large number of candidates for mayor this year, we need to reduce the number who are invited to make the meeting's length reasonable. While polls were considered as a basis for slimming down the list of candidates invited, choosing a poll that would be broadly recognized as unbiased is probably impossible. The alternative supported at the meeting was the ability of a candidate to raise campaign contributions – only those who were high fundraisers would be invited.

Each BCN member neighborhood s to come up with a short list of questions to be posed to the candidates. All questions, identified by neighborhood, would be given in advance to all candidates so they would know what issues most concerned Buckhead's neighborhoods. Before the forum is held, a short list of questions would be selected and distributed. Each participating candidate would be asked to respond to that short list of questions. Participating candidates would be selected based of August's fundraising reports submitted by each candidate.

Timing of the forum was discussed. It needed to avoid the public and private school breaks and happen before early voting begins. The location of the forum will be North Atlanta High School. It is an impressive site with ample seating capacity and lots of parking.

In addition to the mayoral race, important at-large City Council races are also under way which affect Buckhead. Therefore, a second forum was planned. Attendees would include candidates for City Council President, Council At-Large Posts 1 and 2.

The **City Council Forum** will be held on Wednesday, **September 27**, at NAHS at 7pm. The **Mayoral Forum** will be held on Wednesday, **October 18**, at NAHS at 7pm. Two documents providing the details about each forum are available [here](#).

BCN Board Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2017

VI. Community Concerns I New Business I Announcements

VII. Next Meeting Thursday, March 9, 2017

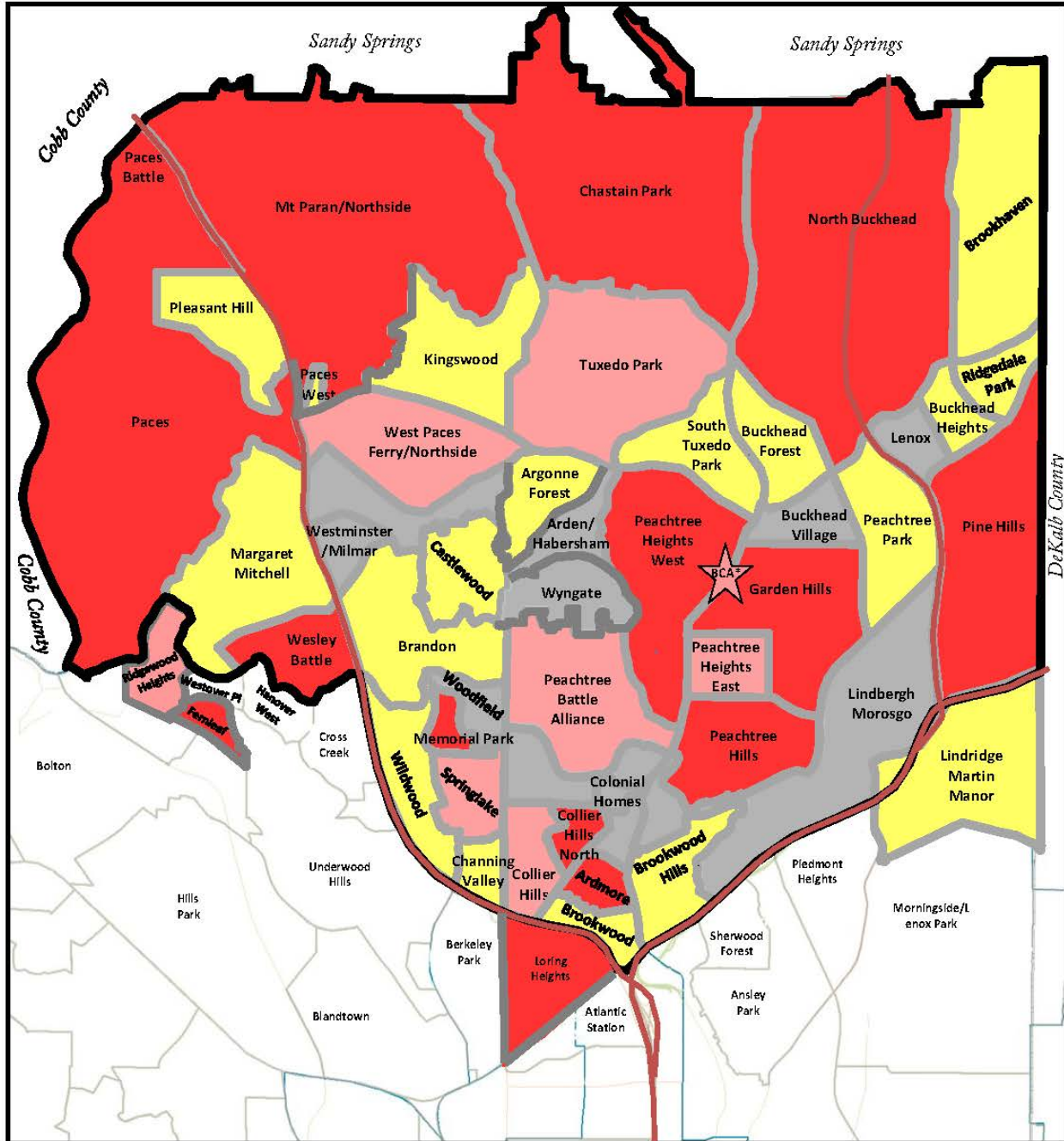
IX. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at about 8:00 PM.

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
February 13, 2017

BCN's web page is at www.BuckheadCouncil.org.

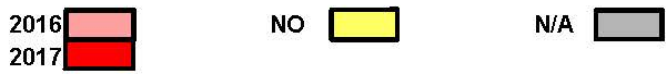
Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods



* BCA = Buckhead Condo Alliance

LEGEND

Paid Membership as of 02/09/17



BCN Board Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2017

BCN Status as of February 9, 2017																								
Neighborhood		Dues		Data	Neighborhood Representation at Board Meetings																			
		2016	2017	2017 Census	2015	2016	2017																	
					10 meeting s	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				0%																			
5	Brookwood																							
6	Brookwood Hills				10%																			
7	BuckheadCondoAlliance	✓			90%	77%	✓	✓																
8	Buckhead Forest				0%																			
9	Buckhead Heights																							
10	Buckhead Village				20%	44%																		
11	Castlewood																							
12	Channing Valley				0%																			
13	Chastain Park		✓	✓	10%	44%	✓																	
14	Collier Hills	✓			30%	33%																		
15	Collier Hills North	✓	✓	✓	20%	55%		✓																
16	Fernleaf		✓		0%																			
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	Peachtree Battle Alliance	✓			40%	33%																		
30	Peachtree Heights East	✓			60%																			
31	Peachtree Heights West	✓	✓		80%	55%		✓																
32	Peachtree Hills		✓		10%		✓																	
33	Peachtree Park				10%																			
34	Pine Hills	✓	✓	✓	60%	55%	✓	✓																
35	Pleasant Hill																							
36	Ridgedale Park					11%																		
37	Ridgewood Heights				20%	11%																		
38	Springlake	✓			20%	11%																		
39	Tuxedo Park	✓			50%	55%		✓																
40	Wesley Battle		✓		10%																			
41	West Paces Northside	✓			100%	88%	✓	✓																
42	Wildwood																							
43	Wyngate																							
Totals		18	14	5	Avg:10	Avg:12	12	12																