



The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Board Meeting

May 11, 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	Evelyn Andrews	Reporter Newspapers	evelyn@reporterNewspapers.net
2	Martin Becker	Paces West HOA	Martin_Becker@Prodigy.net
3	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
4	Jeff Clark	Garden Hills	jeffbclark@gmail.com
5	Paul DeNard	GDOT	pdenard@dot.ga.gov
6	"Eduardo"	Bush Morgan	
7	Jim Elgar	Loring Heights- Ceasar Mitchell's office	jimelgar@gmail.com
8	Dieter Franz	North Buckhead	cdf Franz@comcast.net
9	Jim Garcia	North Buckhead	jim.g@reagan.com
10	David Gylfe	Collier Hills	dcgylfe@bellsouth.net
11	Ken Hoogs	Paces	khoogs@CommerceCapitalAtl.com
12	Ben Howard	Buckhead Condo Alliance	benhoward@gatech.edu
13	Nursef Kadir	City of Atlanta	nkdir@atlantaga.gov
14	Stacey Keys	GDOT	
15	Francine Lowe	Pine Hills	Francine@lowetravel.net
16	Mercy Sandberg-Wright	Tuxedo Park	mercywright@msn.com
17	Ron Sifen	Cobb County	Rsifen@aol.com
18	Tom Tidwell	West Paces Northside	tom@tidwell-law.com
19	Charles Wilson	Peachtree Heights West	
20	Jane Wilson	Peachtree Heights West	jjwilson@mindspring.com

Attendance by Neighborhood

	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Attendees</u>
1	Buckhead Condo Alliance	Ben Howard
2	Collier Hills	David Gylfe
3	Garden Hills	Jeff Clark
4	Loring Heights	Jim Elgar
5	North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Dieter Franz, Jim Garcia
6	Paces	Ken Hoogs
7	Paces West HOA	Martin Becker
8	Peachtree Heights West	Charles Wilson, Jane Wilson
9	Pine Hills	Francine Lowe
10	Tuxedo Park	Mercy Sandberg-Wright
11	West Paces Northside	Tom Tidwell

BCN 2017/18 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

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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.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the April meeting were approved.

III. Admit New Member Neighborhoods

No neighborhoods asked to be considered for BCN membership.

IV. Reminder About Candidate Forum- Questions for Forums

- **Mayoral Candidate Forum**, Wednesday, **October 18, 2017**
- **City Council Candidate Forum**, Wednesday, **September 27, 2017**
- Both will start at 7 :00 p.m. at **North Atlanta High School**

Tom reminded attendees that 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. Neighborhood question lists for the forums are due by August 10. Candidates will be provided the questions submitted by the neighborhoods. From this master list including all neighborhood inputs, a curated list of four to 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. Topic: Cobb Braves Stadium Traffic and Atlanta Traffic in General

Speakers:

Paul DeNard, GDOT
Nursef Kadir, City of Atlanta Senior Traffic Manager
Stacey Keys, GDOT
Ron Sifen, Cobb County Transportation Committee
(Jim Wilgus, Director of Cobb DOT could not attend)

Tom Tidwell introduced this session by saying that the topics originally planned were a discussion of how disruptive the Braves traffic had been with the opening of the stadium in Cobb County and how the I-85 repairs were coming along. As it turned out, the Braves stadium opened with very few traffic problems and the I-85 repairs, rather than being about a third completed, were already essentially done. Thus, tonight's discussion was more oriented to traffic issues in general.

Stacey Keys, GDOT, said work on repairing the fire damage to I-85 was 95% done. The missing bridge components have been replaced and minor patching is under way. The repairs will be completed an extraordinary five weeks early. GDOT has also taken the opportunity with the expressway closed to repave segments of I-85 which were to be repaved later.

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GDOT is reviewing policies and procedures related to storage of materials under expressways and related uses. Stacy believes that this transportation catastrophe has highlighted the need to emphasize transit and expects that the issue will get serious attention in the upcoming session of the Georgia Legislature. She speculated that Metro counties which have not bought into the need for public transit, Gwinnett and Cobb, will now “get it”.

Nursef Kedir, in response to a question, said that the temporary signs related to the expressway closure will be coming down.

Gordon Certain asked about improving Cobb to Buckhead commuter transportation. Currently, passengers of the Cobb Community Transit (CCT) buses must travel down I-75 to Downtown, and then get on MARTA to reach their jobs in Buckhead. No Cobb buses go directly to Buckhead. That doesn't make sense, and as a result, we have West Paces Ferry Road and other residential streets clogged with commuter traffic. What would it take to get a direct Cobb to Buckhead route for those buses? **Ron Sifen**, who's on the CCT Advisory Board, said such a link would require an agreement between Cobb County and the City of Atlanta to reach an agreement to allow CCT buses to travel on City of Atlanta Roads and to stop at the agreed-upon stops. Such an agreement is required for CCT to operate in Buckhead legally. He added that he heads a committee organized by Mike Boyce, Cobb County Commission. The committee is exploring the expansion of CCT operations to more destinations, including Buckhead and Perimeter Center.

Another questioner asked when Cobb was going to get on board with rail, rather than clogging our streets with buses. She added that in the afternoon, Downtown is clogged by CCT buses. Ron said rail was on their radar but he can't say it will happen tomorrow. They have recently gone through a bus rapid transit project study which was ultimately rejected. Initially, they considered a system using light rail, but that project's cost was projected to be \$4 billion to build and \$30 million a year to operate. CCT's annual operating budget is currently only around \$20 million and Cobb determined that no plausible funding sources existed for the light rail system. Instead, a \$500 million fixed guideway bus rapid transit proposal was substituted. Ron was on the advisory committee for that bus project, advocating a focus on overall Cobb mobility. However, others on the advisory committee believed the focus should be on economic development and they prevailed. It was later determined that the resulting development-oriented system, if built, would have made Cobb traffic worse than if nothing were done. He added that project's outcome will make Cobb reluctant to do anything in the near term.

Gordon asked if they had looked at tunnels. Ron said that Cobb is not proposing any tunnels. **Dieter Franz** commented that GDOT is exploring a tunnel from the end of 400 to I-675. [See, for instance, <http://politics.blog.ajc.com/2017/05/06/a-campaign-topic-sending-metro-atlantas-traffic-underground/>.] Stacey commented that she wasn't aware that it was a formal project though it might be a discussion item.

Jeff Clark asked Stacey how the I-85 repair project would impact other projects that had been previously planned. Stacey said she was not aware of any funding changes, but project schedules may have changed. **Tom Tidwell** asked about the project at Northside Parkway at Moore's Mil, which seemed to shut down with the I-85 collapse. Stacey said some projects were temporarily stopped to minimize their impact of traffic flow resulting from I-85 detours. Nursef agreed, saying projects affecting traffic in Atlanta were suspended because of the collapse.

A very long discussion followed about the need for transit throughout the Metro area. Additional action is needed but unfortunately, few/no specific solutions are on the horizon. Hopefully the Georgia Legislature will address this issue in 2018. Added “managed lanes” on existing expressways is getting emphasis from Governor Deal but some questioned how that approach would help. The new two-lane toll road paralleling I-75 and I-575 is an example of what is meant by managed lanes. Ron speculated that in 15 to 20 years, there will be enough autonomous vehicles in use, routed onto the managed lanes, that the need for added road building may actually be eliminated.

Currently, CCT buses are stuck in traffic with everyone else. Ron said they seek more express bus service on Cobb's managed lanes since trip times will be faster due to the variable tolls which are

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intended to provide a minimum 45 MPH speed. With dependably quicker trip times, CCT buses should get higher ridership.

Ron also reported that a state law now prohibits the conversion of free car pool lanes to toll lanes, as happened on I-85.

Ron said that if a broad Metro transit system were to be developed, the Legislature would have to clarify whether it would be run by MARTA, or more likely, by GRETA (Georgia Regional Transportation Authority). Stacey said GDOT would not be involved, since they are responsible only for roads and bridges.

A discussion of the coordination of permitting of developments along state routes such as Peachtree Road followed. **Ben Howard** asked how the status of such permits could be determined. Nursef suggested that the 311 service be contacted to learn the status of such permits.

A roundabout is being considered by the City for the Wieuca Road/Phipps Boulevard intersection. Some nearby intersections providing access to the roundabout, such as the Peachtree Road/Wieuca Road intersection are under the control of GDOT, while others and the roundabout itself would be under the control of the City. A roundabout operates well when there is a balanced flow of traffic into and through it. When that balance is disrupted, due, for example, to a traffic accident, traffic may back up into the roundabout, causing it to gridlock, stopping roundabout traffic in all directions. The current design for the roundabout includes the potential use of metering signals (like expressway ramp signals) to control the flow of traffic into the roundabout. The metering system may also need to modify the operation of traffic signals at nearby intersections. Gordon asked Stacey if GDOT would be willing to work with the City to permit the roundabout's traffic metering system to temporarily adjust GDOT signal timing to help avoid gridlocks. Stacey repeatedly said that GDOT would work with the City to establish mutually agreed *schedules* for GDOT traffic signals along Peachtree Road. She did not address whether GDOT would permit a city-operated roundabout control system to update the operation of GDOT's Wieuca/Peachtree signal. After several attempts at clarification, it was pretty clear that GDOT would probably not permit the City's systems to interact with GDOT signals. **Paul DeNard** also commented that as part of a new state-wide program, they will be able to actively manage signal timing dynamically from their control center. This, however, would not be the same as having an integrated traffic management system at the roundabout. Since the Wieuca/Peachtree intersection is most likely to have traffic congestion which would degrade the roundabout's operation, this GDOT position is significant. In any case, since GDOT does permit off-duty police officers hired by BCID to direct traffic at the Wieuca/Peachtree intersection, there may be other means of addressing this issue.

As for Braves Stadium traffic, Tom said he works at the Galleria and lives near West Paces Road and Northside Drive and he hasn't noticed any problems. The stadium traffic system seems to be working great. Ron said the stadium has 14 access points, which is part of the reason the system works so well. Another reason is that game start times were shifted so there is less competition with rush hour traffic. Further, more than half of the game attendees are coming from a reverse-commute direction. Whereas the Atlanta stadium concentrated all the parking on the north side of the stadium, which concentrated traffic, the Cobb site has a 360 degree parking lot distribution around the stadium. Another factor improving traffic is the availability and use of pedestrian bridges: one over I-285, one over I-75. Ron said the Cobb Braves stadium will be a traffic management model for other cities.

VI. Community Concerns - New Business - Announcements

"Party House" - **Gordon Certain** spoke briefly about the city issuing a cease and desist order for a house on residential Peachtree Dunwoody Road which had been rented basically as a hotel. Neighbors in Historic Brookhaven and North Buckhead have been disturbed by this activity for the past two years.

"Monster House" - Mercy Sandberg-Wright spoke about tree loss resulting from residential redevelopment in her Tuxedo Park neighborhood. She said that five properties near her home have clear-cut a total of 25 acres of trees. They do so without a permit and then pay a very small penalty (small compared to the house and land value). Most recently, they have what they call "The Monster House" at 3540 Woodhaven Road –

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the house has 56,000 square feet of interior space, larger than the White House and twice as large as the Governor's Mansion. The owner has three children and one on the way and wants to include 18 other relatives as residents. There will be a ballroom, a full-size basketball court, bowling lanes, a sports equipment area, and a parking lot for 10 cars. The complex will be surrounded by a wall 30 feet high. Two neighbors have put their homes up for sale and a third had to re-sod their lawn because it all got washed away by runoff from the Monster House. She asked, what do we do?

While the Tree Protection Ordinance has some teeth, the "recompense" fees are the same throughout the city, which means they have little effect on the northside. The tree ordinance is to be revised next year and cases like this should be considered in the revision. Tom said, we must go to the City Council for help. **Ron Grunwald** said this is exactly the kind of issue BCN ought to fight for as an important policy issue. Many attendees agreed that tree loss in Buckhead is an important issue.

VII. Next Meeting Thursday, August 10, 2017

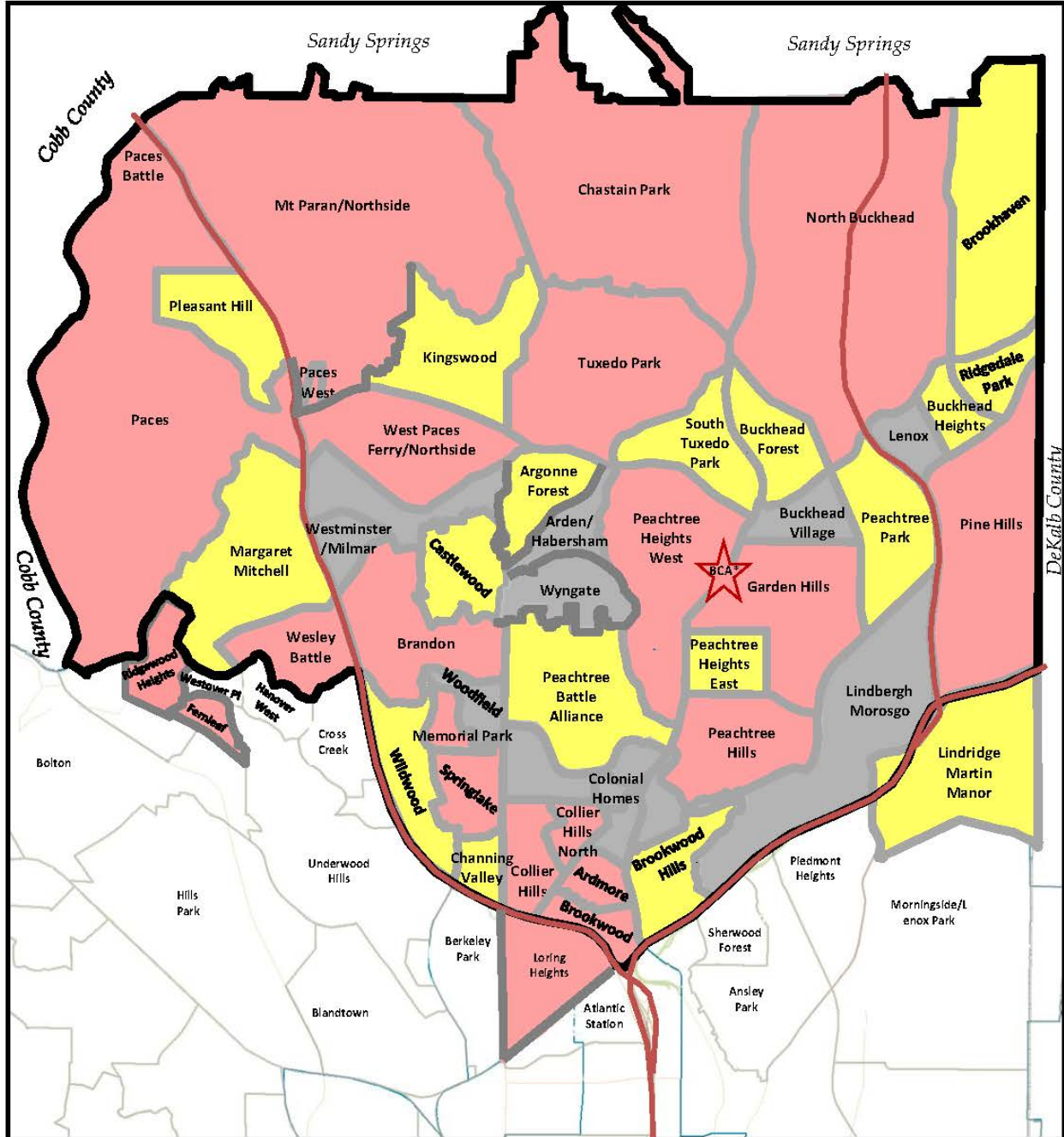
IX. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at about 8:20 PM.

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 August 7, 2017 by Gordon Certain, BCN Secretary

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

Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods



* BCA = Buckhead Condo Alliance

LEGEND

Paid Membership as of 08/06/17

YES NO N/A

8/6/2017

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BCN Status as of May 6, 2017																	
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	PeachtreeBattle 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																
Totals		19	21	9	Avg:10	Avg:12	12	12	13	13	11						