

Minutes from 2012 Q2 General Assembly Meeting – May 24, 2012 – Peachtree Baptist Church Fellowship Hall

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM by Brian Bilski, WHNA President. After greeting the 30 attendees from Woodland Hills and surrounding neighborhoods as well as the invited guests, Brian updated the assembly on the MARTA Clifton Corridor light rail transit line that has been approved to travel underground between Cheshire Bridge Road and Sage Hill.

Brian then shared information about a proposal by the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management to build two 10-12 million gallon sewage overflow tanks behind The Barking Hound Village on Liddell Drive. Odor mitigation technologies are part of the project plan. Brian urged the assembly to attend upcoming community meetings regarding the project.

Attendees were also invited to sign up for a Beltline Tour planned for June 23, 2012 between 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM.

Louis Myer introduced the guests, who were each given the floor for a ten-minute overview of their involvement in issues of interest to Woodland Hills residents.

Burrell Ellis, DeKalb County CEO

Mr. Ellis provided an overview of his accomplishments, among them restoring the county's bond rating, rebuilding monetary reserves (minimum requirement of \$45 million), and improving parks and streetscapes. Even with a 26% decline in property tax revenues, he firmly believes the County needs to continue to invest in improvements. Mr. Ellis strongly supports the Transportation Referendum which he believes is vitally important for us. He spoke of the negative impact when neighborhoods within DeKalb County seek to become separate cities. These incorporations divert funds from the County while requiring the County to continue providing services, resulting in higher taxes for County residences. He requested neighborhood participation in the upcoming elections.

In response to Brad Grulke's question about CDC and Emory traffic using Woodland Hills streets, Mr. Ellis deferred to his transportation liaison, who mentioned a new fiber optics signal system and projects – including refurbishing speed humps – to discourage use of Shepherds Lane. She noted the planning for the LaVista-Briarcliff intersection improvement and the current implementation of the North Druid Hills-Briarcliff intersection. She invited Brad to participate in discussions on how to prevent commercial vehicles from using Shepherds Lane. Brad will e-mail photos of the intersections at both ends of Shepherds Lane to Mr. Ellis.

Mary Margaret Oliver, State Representative

Ms. Oliver also expressed concern about emerging county/city relationships over land use management. She noted the inadequacy of regional governance and stated that she has introduced Bill 830 which would create a new mechanism for establishing new cities in a

manner that would not impose the economic damage that accompanies the current process.

Brad communicated the neighborhood's worry over the sewage overflow tanks proposed for Liddell Drive and asked for help in navigating Atlanta/DeKalb jurisdiction issues.

Kathie Gannon, DeKalb County Commissioner for Superdistrict 6

Ms. Gannon shared her work in the area of community-based planning and green sustainable development. Her legislative activities have included the areas of developing policy, land use and zoning, setting budget and millage rates. She noted that the 2% mid-year budget cut was done to prevent a tax increase. She has been actively involved in "local" community planning, green initiatives, volunteer recycling, community gardens, green commission workshops, and "gardens in the parks." As a revenue enhancement, Ms. Gannon explained the current sale of electricity generated from landfill gas. She noted the planning of the creation of concentrated gas from the landfills for commercial sale.

In response to Brad's question about how to attract residents back inside the Perimeter, Ms. Gannon pointed out that the quality of an area's schools is the #1 factor in both the individual and business decision making processes concerning where to locate. Because 70% of county tax dollars go to the school system, Ms. Gannon encouraged residents to attend School Board meetings and to pay attention to School Board elections.

Gary Cornell, Interim DeKalb Director of Planning and Sustainability

Mr. Cornell spoke optimistically of a brighter future for DeKalb based on planning that balances jobs and housing. His vision places a high priority on walkability, access to transit, energy conservation, and incentives that encourage people to locate in DeKalb.

In response to Brad's questions about missing stretches of sidewalk, Mr. Cornell urged public involvement in the planning process, personally inviting 3-4 Woodland Hills Neighborhood Association members to sit down with him to address the need for sidewalks and bicycle lanes. In addition to "Sidewalks to School" safety program, there are additional programs that could provide funding for the neighborhood needs. Mr. Cornell's group is willing to help Woodland Hills identify those programs.

The meeting was then opened for general questions. Resident Amanda Leech explained the difficulties that the LLCC and WHNA have been having in seeking a grant for the development of the empty lot on Arnold to be developed as a green space that would provide neighborhood access to the planned Sage Hill MARTA station, Zonolite commercial area and nature trails. Ms. Gannon was unaware of this project and promised to become involved on our behalf.

A resident noted that the property assessments for neighborhoods within this area were not as severely impacted as most DeKalb neighborhoods, resulting in higher taxes than other areas of the County. He then asked how we can get additional services. Since Mr.

Ellis had already left, Ms. Gannon responded to the question. Unfortunately, county funds are allocated as needed without consideration of area revenues.

Brad noted the difficulty in accessing DeKalb county information for planning purposes and asked if there was any plan of having that information become available in a shared data system such as GIS. After a brief discussion, it was determined that no plans were currently in place for shared data access.

The meeting ended with a call to pay attention to changes in the school district budget that might affect Briar Vista's Montessori program.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Leann Logsdon, WHNA Secretary