



HAWTHORNE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Summer / July 2004

Distribution: 1400+

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Next board meeting: Sept 1

Board Meeting dates:

1st Wednesdays, 7:30 pm,
odd-numbered months.

Call Beth to attend/observe
or to propose agenda items.

Annual Dues: \$20/address

CANDIDATES FAIR

On June 29, HCA was one of 10 neighborhood associations sponsoring a "Candidates Fair" at the Greek Orthodox Church on Clairmont Road. HCA and NDHRA (North Druid Hills) did the lion's share of the organizing. We hope you heard about the event via e-mail, the few signs that were posted in the neighborhood, newspaper, or word of mouth. Seventy-two candidates for seats appearing on primary ballots in the 10 neighborhoods were invited to attend; 61 candidates or their surrogates attended, including a few not on the original list. Tables were labeled for each office; appropriate candidates clustered around each table and voters circulated among the tables, picking up literature and talking to candidates. Reactions were positive, with both candidates and voters liking the opportunity for one-on-one conversation. The event even got some coverage on the 10 pm TV news. FYI: DeKalb Registration/Elections: (404) 298-4020, <https://dklbweb.dekalbga.org/voter/>



NETWORKING The coalition of neighborhood associations (paralleling I-85) that worked together on both the in-fill housing forum and on the candidates fair are going to try meeting regularly (over Thursday dinner, maybe twice a month) to discuss issues of common interest. A topic will be set in advance. While it is assumed that a board member or two from each of the participating associations will be present, general members who are interested in a particular topic could also attend. We'll be announcing the dates, topics and locations via HCA's "News" mailing list. In other networking, board member Dave Markus has taken on the role of HCA liaison to Northlake Community Alliance.

NEXT YEAR'S BOARD. Every year HCA needs to locate association members who are willing and able to serve on its board. If you have fire-in-your-belly about a neighborhood issue, legal or political skills or contacts, administrative experience, experience from another neighborhood, interpersonal/mediation abilities, or just a heartfelt desire to better the neighborhood, you could be a good board member. Overall, the best board would also exhibit all the forms of diversity present in our community (geographic, gender, age, race, politics, etc). Nominate yourself or a neighbor for the HCA board by contacting a current board member. Next year's board will be elected at the **HCA ANNUAL MEETING, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19.** We'd like to publish a list of candidates in the October newsletter. An HCA board member's term of volunteer service is a year, though there are no term limits.

Metro Atlanta is expected to grow from 4+ million to 6.3+ million by 2030. Of the top 15 metros, Atlanta is the least densely populated (2.3 persons/acre), has the largest median single family lot size (3/4 acre), and the highest percentage of residents on septic (26%). The region's demographics and market choices are changing. Infrastructure and development regulations are not aligned for best outcomes. **Quality Growth** Task Force recommendations are published at www.metroatlantachamber.com. Where is Hawthorne headed? *Let's talk about it at the HCA Annual Meeting.*

EVENT PUBLICITY. The HCA board regularly announces events via the "News" mailing list, but that method doesn't reach everyone. The board has voted to design and purchase durable, re-usable signs to be strategically placed for no longer than a week at a time for HCA-sponsored events. The board will ask property owners' permission. Please help us protect and retain the initial set of signs (they're not cheap), so that we can re-use them time after time.

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 DeKalb Comprehensive Transportation Plan public meeting for Quadrant 1: Tues, Aug 3, 6-8 pm, Chamblee Library, 4115 Clairmont Road, 770-936-1380. See www.co.dekalb.ga.us/ctp for more info.

CODE ENFORCEMENT. Regulations to protect the established character and the social and economic well being of both public and private property are present in several sections of DeKalb's "Code of Ordinance".

Some examples of code commonly violated:

- SIGNS may not be erected in the right of way nor placed on utility poles. See the complete sign ordinance for more info.
- FENCES may only be 4' high in the front yard or 8' high in the side or rear yard. Fences are not allowed in the right of way.
- PARKING of vehicles on unpaved, untreated surface (e.g., on the grass) is prohibited. Junk vehicles and commercial vehicles may not be parked in residential zones. Boats and trailers may only be parked to the side or rear of one's house, or within a carport or garage.
- HOME BUSINESS: A business license is required. There must be no exterior evidence of the business. No outside employees are permitted. No public contact may be made on the property. No product or service may be sold on the premises other than by telephone.
- PET WASTE. You must pick up and dispose of pet droppings.
- TRASH DISPOSAL. Garbage should be placed at curbside before 8 a.m. and containers returned to storage ASAP on pickup day. Keep the size & weight to what one man can handle. Yard waste must be in paper bags (not plastic), trash cans or stacked in 4' lengths.
- NOISE. "It shall be unlawful for any person to make, continue or cause to be made or continued any loud, unnecessary or unusual sound or noise which either annoys, disturbs, injures or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace or safety of others in the county, and which is audible to a person of normal hearing ability more than fifty (50) feet from the point of origin of the sound or noise."

Right-of-way includes not only the paved street but also the county easement beyond the curb (often 15').

HCA needs a Code Enforcement point person. Contact Beth or Betty if you can help

TREES. The storms of the past few weeks have felled many of the wonderful trees that make this wooded neighborhood so special. A word to the wise ... if you hear a big branch hit your house, do inspect your roof. One local resident didn't know until the next heavy rain a week later that a 3' piece of a branch, the majority of which fell to the ground, had pierced through roofing, decking and ceiling, and was resting in the kitchen cabinet above her oven.

PDK REPORT

Several major community initiatives have been undertaken during the past several months to keep PDK Airport from increasingly allowing larger and noisier jets to fly over and disrupt our community. On May 14, with the aid of F.O.R. DeKalb, Inc. [For Our Rights in DeKalb], a lawsuit was filed under the Georgia Open Records Act, after nearly 100 open records requests for information on the types of planes using PDK Airport have been denied during the past two years. Those flight records, which the Airport is so eager to keep from the public and which are routinely released by other airports, "are expected to show that DeKalb County and its employees are engaging in on-going misconduct designed to conceal the unlawful introduction of oversized aircraft into [PDK], circumvent federal environmental laws, and evade ad valorem taxation of aircraft based at [PDK]," amounting to some \$4 million dollars per year in uncollected County revenues, primarily from owners of the largest planes. Once the flight and noise records have been secured, citizens will be empowered to put a stop to the abuses that are expected to be disclosed.

On June 17, more than 250 concerned citizens attended a Community Meeting about a number of initiatives to make PDK Airport less disruptive to the surrounding residential communities. In addition to the Open Records Lawsuit, mentioned above, other information was shared regarding: (1) the community-commissioned Report by Williams Aviation, a nationally respected aviation consulting firm, explaining in concrete detail how PDK flight paths could be changed to dramatically reduce noise disruption over adjacent residential areas; (2) community efforts to preserve two substantial areas of wooded land adjacent to the Airport that are already owned by DeKalb County as a passive

greenspace noise buffer and natural recreation area; (3) community efforts to insure that the Airport taxiway reconstruction currently being planned actually adheres to the maximum weight limits legally mandated by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, and (4) concern about the possibility of dramatic increases in the amount of international jet traffic at PDK, as part of the still quite hush-hush International Village plans.

At the Hawthorne Civic Association board's July 13 meeting, the board authorized a one-time only, donation of \$1,000 as an investment in preserving our property values and quality of life in our neighborhood against the threat of rampant airport expansion. Hawthorne homeowners who share these concerns are encouraged to contribute as generously as possible to F.O.R. DeKalb, Inc., P.O. Box 29604, Atlanta, GA 30359-0604, where 100% of volunteer-collected funds are devoted to sustaining this vital suit.

For major news reports about this PDK Open Records Lawsuit, the complete text of the lawsuit itself, and updates on the progress of the case, go to www.pdkwatch.org, as mentioned above, or contact Evelyn Brethour with F.O.R./DeKalb Inc, at fordekalb@aol.com or 404-728-0772. Also at that PDK Watch website is a detailed account of the PDK-related issues discussed at the June 17 Community Meeting, as well as a set of hard-hitting questions that are directed to the candidates running for legislative and executive positions in the July 20 primary. Included with those questions are the candidates' responses about what they would be prepared to do, if elected, to assist the estimated 80,000 homeowners who live in the area most negatively affected by PDK Airport.

Larry Foster

Corps of Engineers public workshop on Peachtree/Nancy Creeks flooding & ecosystem degradation, July 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Chamblee Public Library, 4115 Clairmont Road

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TRAFFIC CALMING

Due to many requests, Hawthorne Elementary School PTA is once again selling yard signs to promote slower driving in our neighborhood. The signs are \$15 and may be ordered by calling Simon Dodge at 770-938-3294.

GREENSPACE. A charrette (specific style of discussion meeting) on public visions for the Mary and Scott (aka Armstrong) greenspace is planned for August 14 in the neighborhood. The meeting is likely to take 4 hours and to start with a guided walk-through. The county will advertise the meeting soon. Post-charrette, a cycle of design & public comment is expected to begin. Since this spring's planning group meetings and workdays, there's been no neighborhood activity on the property. County-contracted invasive plant removal occurs in appropriate seasons.

INTERCHANGE. Spring: Clearing and planting. Summer: Weeding and mulching. Come fall, we'll collect offered plants and schedule more plantings. Debra Staton is coordinating the project for HCA; contact her at dstaton@comcast.net or 404-321-0006. Other organizations which have taken responsibility for one "corner" are DECA (Dresden East Civic Assn which worked with Publix & DOT to get this project started and to keep it moving; much credit to Nikki VanDerGrinten), St. Pius X alums, and NAGS (Northlake Alliance of Gays, Lesbians and Straights). HCA is responsible for the northbound off-ramp (closest to Shallowford Plaza). Many thanks to all the volunteers who have already provided plants and labor, especially to Dave Savage for much labor and for arranging bobcat time at the beginning of the project.