

North Briarcliff Civic Association



Summer 2009 Newsletter

2677 Flair Knoll Drive, Atlanta, GA 30345

PUBLIC SAFETY

NBCA Neighborhood Watch captains recently met with Al Fowler, Education Specialist with the DPD North Precinct to take steps to strengthen our Nwatch program under the umbrella of the NBCA Electronic Watch and deter a recent wave of crime.

We are actively seeking neighbors in the following areas to step up and help neighbors get to know each other and act as **Block Captains** -- not a lot of work -- REALLY:

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Sherbrooke | Sunset | Echo |
| Payton | Bradcliff | Upper Cravey |
| Sylvan Ramble | Lower Flair Knoll | Cosmos |

Please call myself or Sherry-Treco Jones for more info:
 Michael Gross 404-636-7887 [NBCA/Flair Knoll]
 Sherry Treco-Jones: 678-592-7780 [Brookdale/Foster Ridge]

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT --- TUESDAY, AUGUST 4

On Tuesday, August 4th neighborhoods throughout the county, state and nation are being invited to join forces with Police nationwide for the "26th ANNUAL NATIONAL NIGHT OUT" (NNO). This is a crime and drug prevention event. National Night Out is sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW) and co-sponsored locally by DeKalb County Police Crime Awareness Units and Interactive Community Policing Units. National Night out is designated to (1) Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; (2) Generate support for and participation in, local anticrime efforts; (3) Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police community partnerships; and (4) Send a message to criminals letting them know neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

From 7pm to 10pm on AUGUST 4th, residents in neighborhoods throughout the county and across the nation are asked to lock their doors, turn on outside lights and spend the evening outside with NEIGHBORS and POLICE. Use your imagination, be creative and just have some type of gathering as a show of support. When your plans are complete please let your Police Precinct Public Education Specialist know what your plans are. You may get visits (one-on-one information time) from your local Police Officers.

Known get-togethers planned: Brookdale / Foster Ridge

-- NBCA Board, 2008-09 --

- Rodney Zell 770-934-1824
president@northbriarcliff.org
 ON TEMPORARY LEAVE
- Larry Foster 678-637-9227
vp@northbriarcliff.org
pdk@northbriarcliff.org
- Harrison Rogers 404-784-5400
treasurer@northbriarcliff.org
schools@northbriarcliff.org
- Gary Powell 404-633-0189
secretary@northbriarcliff.org
- Ralph Carl 770-723-1024
schools@northbriarcliff.org
- Jon Gordon 404-235-0566
schools@northbriarcliff.org
- Michael Gross 404-636-7887
nwatch@northbriarcliff.org
- Beth Nathan 404-315-7440
parks@northbriarcliff.org
tabasco@northbriarcliff.org
editor@northbriarcliff.org
- Betty Phillips 404-634-6498
 <zoning>
 <newsletter distribution>

-- Board Meetings --

1st Wednesdays, 7:30 pm.
 Shallowford Presbyterian Church
 Open to all NBCA members
 Verify meeting details with president.



-- Off Board --

- June Buechner
gardens@northbriarcliff.org
- Linda Dahlke
database@northbriarcliff.org
- Kyle Johnson
webmaster@northbriarcliff.org
- Billie Sherrod
interchange@northbriarcliff.org

Subscribe to listservs (Watch & General) at
www.northbriarcliff.org/Comm/listjoin.htm

Send Neighborhood Watch items to
nwatch@northbriarcliff.org



PURE NIGHTCLUB LITIGATION

Sagamore Hills Civic Assn and Briarcliff Woods Civic Assn continue to await a decision from DeKalb Superior Court Judge Linda Hunter. The case is an appeal by the nightclub owners to overturn the DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals decision to revoke the club's permits. Final arguments were submitted to the Court by the parties on May 8, 2009.

SEMBLER PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

As a result of pressure from residents and elected officials, the DeKalb County Development Authority (DCDA) voted on June 18, 2009, to defer a request from the Sembler Company for an unprecedented tax break for the "Town Brookhaven" mixed use project currently under development. Citing economic downturn and financial hardship, the Sembler Company said it would have to scale back the retail part of the project unless the Authority waived all property taxes for 20 years on most of the 54-acre site in the amount of about \$52 million.

Important issues surround this proposal:

CEO Burrell Ellis sent a memo to the Authority asking them "not to approve" Sembler's request. CEO Ellis questioned the deal as an "unusual departure from policy that would increase DeKalb's exposure to market risk". He also noted that the authority had already given the company a 10-year tax abatement worth \$20 million and that he saw no evidence supporting the need for the larger abatement. He also wrote that there was no evidence Sembler would fail to complete the project if it didn't receive the tax break.

Commissioner Jeff Rader delivered a letter to the Authority signed by him and four fellow commissioners that opposed the deal.

At an earlier held public forum sponsored by Mike Jacobs (R-Chamblee), hundreds of citizens protested the tax breaks for Sembler.

Questions have been raised about the fact that Eugene Walker, who was elected to a position on the DeKalb County School Board, received \$18,000 from Sembler for his campaign last year. Eugene Walker was reappointed to the DCDA earlier this year by CEO Ellis. Walker, as Authority chairman can vote to divert money from the education budget that Walker, as School Board member, is supposed to safeguard.

On late Wednesday, prior to the Thursday, June 18 meeting, the DeKalb School Board, led by Paul Womack, went to DeKalb Superior Court to file a complaint questioning the constitutionality of the proposed tax abatement and whether the Development Authority can act without the school board's consent. The complaint also raises questions about the campaign contributions to Walker creating a probability of actual bias.

In addition, on Wednesday, June 17th, the DeKalb County Board of Ethics opened an investigation into Eugene Walker's alleged conflict of interest.

To my knowledge, the policy of the DCDA has been to use tax incentives to encourage new "start-up" development within the county, particularly in underserved blighted areas and to attract new businesses such as factories and corporate headquarters to locate within DeKalb County. The Sembler project does not appear to fit within those parameters because it is already under construction and is partially complete.

When is a tax abatement appropriate? Are those conditions different during an economic downturn? Is it appropriate to spend public dollars to help private corporations in financial trouble with an ongoing project? If so, to what extent? Would a precedent be established for other developers with similar problems?

Where is the necessity for the Authority to waive all property taxes for 20 years when Sembler has indicated that they can proceed with a scaled-down project under the existing 10-year tax abatement previously granted?

DCDA members are currently reviewing their standards and tax incentive policies as suggested by CEO Ellis and also considering possible adjustments that might be needed to reflect the current economic downturn. They have agreed to do so before revisiting a new tax break for Sembler. Upon completion of this process, there should be a decision rendered. The Development Authority has the final decision.

The hope is that the Authority weighs very carefully all aspects of this proposal and makes a fair decision that represents the best interests of the tax-paying citizens.

-- Betty Phillips

OUR "NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER"

How can you help but notice the welcome message that our clean and beautiful "INTERCHANGE GARDENS" veritably shout to motorists and pedestrians alike. Travel other nearby I-85 interchanges if you need a reminder of the incredible difference this project makes to this area. Contact interchange@northbriarcliff.org to give Billie and Nikki a **Shout Out of THANKS** for their continuing management of the area. From the project's inception, NBCA has budgeted funds for plants and materials, but this year it's also been necessary to allocate funds for labor to keep the beds weeded and dead-headed. Where have all the volunteers gone? If you've got some time to work in this "garden", especially in the fall and spring, please let Billie Sherrod (interchange@northbriarcliff.org) hear from you. There are **regular workdays** on 3rd Saturdays early (light traffic, cooler temperatures), but if some other time is better for you, let Billie know.

Editor: We're hearing rumors that pedestrian improvements at the interchange may be on their way.

WHAT MAKES A DESIRABLE VILLAGE / COMMUNITY ?

With Commissioner Jeff Rader's assistance, the TABASCO (Transform and Beautify the Shallowford Corridor) group (NBCA + DECA activists) have been planning a public meeting to take input on that question as it applies to Shallowford Road near the I-85 interchange. That meeting is now planned for this fall. The goal is to create the first draft of a Community Vision for the area in such a way that the County Planning Department and the County Commission have a document against which to evaluate future requests to rezone and redevelop in this area. Now, in this economic slowdown, we have a window of opportunity to create a document expressing our vision of our community rather than letting others who may not have the best interests of the community in mind (pure profit motive) decide what will happen where.

Prepare for this fall's meeting by thinking/talking about the following. Your input will be very important.

How important are the following features in an ideal place to live? How well is the area around the I-85 Shallowford interchange doing on each feature? What would you like to see improved/different?

- Low crime rate
- Excellent educational institutions
- Strong sense of community
- Easy access to public transit
- Roads well laid-out
- Roads well maintained
- Traffic flows smoothly
- Friendly to pedestrians
- Plenty of convenient parking
- Mix of residential/commercial/office
- Harmony of building sizes (scale)
- A mix of housing sizes/costs
- Housing well-kept
- Nearby shops – variety, quality, etc
- Nearby places of employment
- Nearby places of entertainment
- Unique "destination" places/events
- Nearby art centers
- Nearby athletic/exercise centers
- Nearby places of worship
- Natural streams and wildlife
- Plantings in commercial areas
- Plantings in residential areas
- Good runoff water management
- Quiet, clean airspace
- What else is important ?

"If this place becomes the place you'd like it to be, what pictures will the media take of it and what will they write about it?"

-- Beth Nathan

TWO SUBDIVISION SIGNS DESTROYED

Vandals destroyed two subdivision entrance signs along Shallowford Road overnight Saturday/Sunday, June 13/14, one for Sherbrooke Forest and one for Flair Forest (one end of Lake Flair Circle). Both incidents were reported to the police. If you have any information on the perpetrators of these senseless acts, please contact the police. The Flair Forest sign vandalism is case # 09077945. Donations to replace the Flair Forest sign are being accepted by the Flair Forest Garden Club, 2510 Cosmos Dr, Atlanta 30345.

MARY SCOTT NATURE PRESERVE

On April 28, Commissioners Rader and Gannon hosted a public meeting at Shallowford Presbyterian Church to discuss the status and future of Mary Scott Nature Preserve. While this writer has been unable to determine what changed as a result of that meeting, the following summarizes what happened that evening. Commissioners indicated that the results of the meeting would be taken into account in deciding whether the MSNP development contract should be re-bid and/or how it should be re-worked.



Technical drawings that had gone out and/or come back as a result of the Request for Bids were on display and contained some surprises to many of the attendees who had also attended the initial Master Plan meeting, called a charrette, held August 25, 2004.

Attendees were told that trails are a given, as well as some sort of parking area. Questions and answers reflected a strong keep-it-simple-and-natural attitude. Parking should be minimal; trails should be no wider or more expensive than absolutely necessary. Attendees were asked to put dots on a copy of the MSNP Master Plan to indicate features they wanted to see emphasized. Attendees said that they wanted emphasis on neighborhood walking access off both sides of Overlook, the plantings (less invasive plants, more native plants), the play area (especially for pre-school-age), a sitdown area near the back, and stream access. [editor: It should be noted that existing stream buffer ordinances, designed to protect our waterways, will have to be obeyed in the MSNP design.]

Commissioner Gannon spoke about Friends-of-the-Park groups coming together throughout DeKalb County. Anyone interested in helping to organize a Friends-of-MSNP and to interact with similar groups?

-- Beth Nathan

NO PARKING ON THE GRASS

Parking shall not be permitted within the front yard in any R district except within a driveway or in a carport or garage. Within any R district not more than thirty-five (35) percent of the total area between the street right-of-way line and the front of the principal building shall be paved. On any lot where adequate width exists so as meet the geometric design standards of the Institute of Traffic Engineers, a circular driveway shall be permitted, subject to the total driveway coverage herein. However, no parking spaces or parking bays shall be established within any such front yard. (from DeKalb Code section 27-766)

Contact the Code Enforcement department of the DeKalb Police to report complaints:
(770) 724-7940 phone (770) 724-7963 fax
codeenforce@co.dekalb.ga.us

After reporting an infraction below are the suggested procedures to follow-up on the complaint.

- When initially reporting infractions request an officer to provide an update after the inspection.
- Contact the office via telephone, email, fax or mail to request an update after a complaint has been reported.

R U unknowingly FEEDING COYOTES ?

Is leaving a flimsy plastic trash bag containing food packaging or food scraps at the street overnight ...

- (a) prohibited by sanitation department procedures ?
- (b) an invitation to night-dwelling scavengers ?
- (c) a mess to clean up after it gets broken into ?

The answer is ALL OF THE ABOVE.

Please seal all trash bags that contain food scraps within sturdy metal or plastic containers if you put them out the night before your pickup.

The Sanitation Department's procedures flyer says that each 20-32 gallon durable metal or plastic container must have "two durable handles with a detachable lid" and that bags within the containers "must be securely tied". "Containers may not stay at the curb for more than 24 hours for any reason."

Coyotes have been regular inhabitants of this area for approximately the past 5 years. Small outdoor pets are at significant risk. Some residents have had stare-downs with coyotes. Foxes, opossums and raccoons also live in our natural wooded areas as they would have for centuries. Don't leave pet food outdoors.

SCHOOLS / EDUCATION / KIDS

Lakeside High School -- Newsweek Rankings Slip-up and a New Principal

Newsweek's ranking of the 1,500 best public high schools in America placed Lakeside #195 in the nation last year. That was the highest ranking for any high school in DeKalb County and one of the highest in the state of Georgia. This year, however, Lakeside did not even appear in Newsweek's rankings at all! To find out why, I met with Ms. Cindy Mosley, LHS's vice principal for instruction, on Thursday morning, June 26. She indicated that the reason Lakeside didn't appear in the Newsweek rankings this year was simple: Lakeside's outgoing principal, Ms. Angela Moton, who was responsible for submitting the necessary data to Newsweek, failed to do so this year.



Ms. Mosley further informed me that the necessary information had now been sent to Newsweek. **Based upon that submission, Newsweek indicates that Lakeside would have ranked #315 in the country and seventh in Georgia this year** if its information had been properly submitted. Although this ranking does represent a drop compared to Lakeside's relative standing last year, note that within DeKalb County Lakeside still places a strong second to first-ranked Chamblee High School (#215) and ahead of what would have been the third-ranked DeKalb School of the Arts (#370).

After the front-page article on high school rankings appeared in the *DeKalb Neighbor* on June 24, many readers might easily have jumped to the false conclusion that a catastrophic meltdown had occurred at Lakeside. That is emphatically not the case. Despite some slippage in the rankings this past year, Lakeside remains one of the very best public high schools in Georgia, with a stellar record of achievement overall and strong prospects for even greater accomplishments in the future. Under the effective leadership of its new principal, Mr. Joe Reed, himself a Lakeside graduate and former Lakeside teacher and track coach with deep commitment to the school--and with active involvement and support of concerned parents and friends of Lakeside--LHS appears poised once again to resume the upward trajectory of achievement it was experiencing prior to the removal of Wayne Chelf as principal two years ago.

Please spread the word that Lakeside remains an outstanding high school and--but for an unfortunate administrative slipup this year--would have been officially ranked second in DeKalb County and seventh in the entire state of Georgia! Lakeside's overall programs remain excellent, and with our active support they will become even better in the future.

Plans for Proposed Marine Corps High School at Heritage School Deferred

Following a standing-room-only meeting on April 14 at the Heritage Education Center (south of Echo Lake on Heritage Drive), as well as the receipt of more than two thousand e-mail messages of concern from the public, plans to open a proposed year-round Marine Corps public high school that would eventually serve 650 students were deferred in May. According to Dr. Crawford Lewis, DeKalb Superintendent of Education, who spoke at the April 14 meeting, the proposal for the new public high school had been received in February 2009 and had been put on a fast track to open in August 2009. Public concern about the proposed high school, which had been unanimously approved by the DeKalb Board of Education at its March meeting, focused not on the idea of the school itself but on its proposed location, since Heritage School had been built to hold two hundred students, lacked adequate parking and outdoor sports facilities, was in the midst of densely settled residential neighborhood, and was less than a mile away from another public high school at Lakeside. The Marine Corps indicates that it remains interested in opening a school in DeKalb County and considers the deferral a positive development that allows time to explore additional options.

-- Larry Foster

WATER RESTRICTIONS

Watering restrictions changed on June 10, 2009.

from www.dekalbwatershed.com/water_restrictions2.html:

Under a non-drought schedule, outdoor water use is allowed three days a week on assigned days using odd and even-numbered addresses.

- **Odd-numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.**
- **Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.**

Water use may occur at any time of the day on the assigned days, but to be water efficient, landscape watering should NOT occur between 10 am and 4 pm.

OFFERINGS

Briarcliff United Methodist Church, 4105 Briarcliff Road NE, hosts support groups and yoga classes that are open to the public ...

- Atlanta Area Multiple Myeloma Support Group meets the 1st Saturday of each month. Contact Nancy Bruno for information at 404-374-9020.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets Thursday's & Saturday's each week. Contact John Shires at 770-851-0160 for information.
- Community YOGA classes offered 3 days a week. All are welcome. Classes resume in July. Contact Mariam Gilmer, 770-496-0136 or 770-656-4728.

If you want to travel fast, go alone. If you want to travel far, go together.

Googled references say this is an African proverb.

NEXT YEAR'S NBCA BOARD CALL for Nominations

NBCA always needs the services of association members 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. The ideal 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 NBCA board by contacting a current board member** (*contact info on page 1*). Next year's board will be elected at the **NBCA ANNUAL MEETING this fall**. A list of candidates will be published in the fall newsletter. An NBCA board member's term of volunteer service is a year, though there are no term limits. Board officers are elected by the board from among themselves.

North Briarcliff REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS as of 6/23/09

| | | Bedrooms | Baths | List Price | Sale Price | Days on Market |
|------------------------|-----|----------|-------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Active Listings | Min | 2 | 1 | \$199,500 | | |
| | Avg | 4 | 3 | \$439,261 | | |
| | Max | 7 | 6.5 | \$1,299,000 | | |
| Sales Pending | Min | 3 | 2 | \$300,000 | | 10 |
| | Avg | 4 | 3 | \$466,333 | | 80 |
| | Max | 6 | 5 | \$750,000 | | 117 |
| Sold since Jan 1, 2009 | Min | 3 | 2 | \$199,000 | \$183,000 | 5 |
| | Avg | 4 | 3 | \$327,506 | \$310,350 | 126 |
| | Max | 5 | 4.5 | \$529,000 | \$515,000 | 363 |

Thanks to realtor Harrison Rogers for these statistics.

If your mailing label doesn't indicate that you're a paid member , please join NOW !!

**Mail the form below with your check – – – OR (new !!) –
pay via credit card on the Membership page at www.northbriarcliff.org**

North Briarcliff Civic Association membership. Enclosed is my check for \$_____ covering 2009 annual dues for my household (\$25) plus a donation of \$_____.

I can help with *(please circle):*

Newsletter or Website Layout/Design

Member recruitment/benefits

Issue/Concern: _____

If you'd like to receive NBCA e-mails about General News and/or Neighborhood Watch alerts, go to www.northbriarcliff.org, click on the "starburst" and fill in the requested information. You can "unsubscribe" in the same way.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Atlanta, GA 30345

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

E-Mail(s): _____

Phone #s and e-addresses are used only for NBCA purposes. Providing your e-address here does NOT subscribe you to NBCA e-mail lists (see above).

Membership in the North Briarcliff Civic Association, Inc. may include all residents and owners of property within the Hawthorne Elementary School district and such other residents on bordering streets as may request inclusion. Neither dues nor donations are tax deductible.

Where do you live?

You live in a great neighborhood. Nice homes. Good neighbors. Easy access to the entire metro area. Relatively low crime rate. Responsive county services. Excellent schools.

But, where do you live? Sometimes that's a tough question to answer.

You probably have friends and co-workers that have quick answers: Dunwoody, Buckhead, Vinings, Virginia-Highlands, Morningside, Little Five Points, East Atlanta, etc. These names have been branded, marketed, and widely adopted. They have some panache. The names add value to the homes within their boundaries.

For many years, our neighborhood had an identity crisis. We've all fumbled with coming up with an answer. Northlake? Tucker? Chamblee? Inside the Perimeter at two o'clock? Unincorporated DeKalb County at Exit 93? Lakeside? None of these really come close, literally or figuratively. Even if the person asking the "where do you live" question knew the area, we still were not describing our neighborhood. And try telling somebody you live near Shallowford Road . . . the next question is, "Which one?"

There is, though, one street that almost everyone in Atlanta knows. It's known for gentle hills and curves. Getting to my neighborhood means driving through a canyon of trees surrounded by quiet neighborhoods. It's Briarcliff Road.

You live in North Briarcliff. Your civic association is the North Briarcliff Civic Association. Over 1,000 homes strong.

North Briarcliff is a great neighborhood. We still may not be as well known as the Dunwoodys and Buckheads of the world, but it's only a matter of time. With our street sign toppers, this newsletter, and our web site, we are getting the word out.

Where do I live? I'm proud to tell the world: North Briarcliff. I live in North Briarcliff.

-- Gary Powell

If your mailing label is incorrect, please notify database@northbriarcliff.org or Harrison Rogers at 404-784-5400. The "or current resident" designation on the second address line is necessary to insure proper delivery of all newsletters.

printing by: Fast Printing

mailing by: Tucker Mailing

Signed articles in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the North Briarcliff Civic Association.

Inside this newsletter

- PUBLIC SAFETY 1
- PURE NIGHTCLUB LITIGATION..... 2
- SEMBLER TAX ABATEMENT..... 2
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER 3
- SIGNVANDALISM 3
- MARY SCOTT NATURE PRESERVE 4
- PARKING RESTRICTIONS 4
- TRASH / COYOTES..... 4
- LAKESIDE HIGH SCHOOL 5
- USMC HIGH SCHOOL 5
- WATERING RESTRICTIONS 6
- OFFERINGS..... 6
- CALL FOR BOARD NOMINATIONS 6
- REAL ESTATE PRICES 6
- MEMBERSHIP FORM..... 7
- WHERE DO YOU LIVE? 7
- CALENDAR..... 8

Community Calendar



| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1 st Wednesdays | NBCA Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, Shallowford Presbyterian |
| 3 rd Saturdays | Interchange Workday, 8:30 am, Shallowford @ I-85 |
| August 4 | NATIONAL NIGHT OUT, 7-10 pm |
| August 10 | DeKalb school system resumes classes |
| Fall | Public meeting on re-envisioning our community (tentative) |
| Fall | If you would be willing to open your garden to your NBCA neighbors (not the general public) in the fall, please contact June Buechner (gardens@northbriarcliff.org , 770-938-5550) and tell her when your garden is usually at its best. |

If there's a neighborhood issue that has you concerned, e.g. traffic, sidewalks, litter, etc, please contact the NBCA board. Let's work together !