

**Minutes of NPU-B regular monthly meeting  
Tuesday, August 4, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Nancy Bliwise, NPU-B Chairperson.

**\*\*This meeting was held by Zoom\*\***

Present: 19

Proxies: Mandi Gibson to Abbie Shephard (\*Mandi left early)

Nancy welcomed John Bagwell as a special appointment to NPU B, specializing on issues related to access and transportation.

\*1 member joined following the approval of the minutes

John Ruch with the Buckhead Reporter participated.

**1. OPENING REMARKS / CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS**

Welcome, mission of NPU-B, and introductory remarks

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**NPU-B Action: A motion to approve the revised minutes from the previous regular monthly meeting (June) of the NPU-B passed by vote of 18-0-0.**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**NPU-B Action: A motion to approve the agenda of the NPU-B passed by vote of 19-0-0.**

**4. REPORTS FROM CITY DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND OTHERS IN AUDIENCE**

Atlanta Police Department (APD) Zone 2

Major Senzer, Commander Zone 2, [asenzer@atlantaga.gov](mailto:asenzer@atlantaga.gov) ; 404-624-0674.

No Report.

Atlanta Fire Rescue Department (AFRD)

404-546-4400 (or dial 404-546-4421 to reach station 21)

Battalion Chief Mitchell from Battalion 6 on Roswell Road presented that there were 566 total fire related emergencies for April through June. About 1/3 of the calls were fires and about 2/3 of the calls were false alarms. There were 468 EMS emergencies during this quarter.

The department just completed the hydrant tour and has forwarded requests to Watershed for any hydrants in need of service.

There is an “adopt a station” program through the Atlanta Fire Foundation. Fire Station #3 Phipps Plaza, #21 Roswell Road, and #26 on Howell Mill/ Moores Mill, and #27 Northside Drive near Blackland.

Safety tip for the day – Learn at least two means of egress from your home and have a designated meeting area outside. Your family should have drills to practice your exit in the case of emergency.

A board member asked about the fire trucks at the Peachtree Battle shopping center a few weeks ago. Chief Mitchell noted that it could have been a suspicious package call or a gas leak, but he is not familiar with the specific event.

There was a question about the shape of the fire stations and whether there was a list of needs that the neighborhood could help fill. Chief Mitchell noted that facility condition and equipment is a concern to the department and through the Adopt-A-Station program, you can contribute to filling the needs.

There was a request to provide support for the physically challenged and elderly in order to help them develop an escape plan. Chief Mitchell noted that he could help with that. The fire education department can help with this (404-546-7000).

Livable Buckhead and Buckhead Rotary did a cookout with the Battalion and Denise Starling commented how wonderful the staff at the location were to get to know. It was great to provide them with the attention that they deserve.

#### Atlanta Office of the Solicitors

Judge Sylvia J Lee; 404-932-5566, sjlee@atlantaga.gov

Hala Carey, Senior Assistant Solicitor, 404-658-6003, hcarey@atlantaga.gov

Ms. Carey noted that she participated in the public safety meeting. She noted that she forwarded the complaints and will follow up on the responses. Major Senzer noted that the licensing and permits department was opening an investigation into Copper Cove and Blue. Ms. Carey asked for an update on the status of the investigation, but she does not have any developments to share at the moment.

A board member asked how long it will likely take to perform the investigation. Ms. Carey noted that her department reacts to charges and does not actually perform the investigation. The timeframe really depends on the type of investigation.

#### Fulton County District Attorney Community Prosecutor’s Office

Megan McCulloch, Zone 2 Community Prosecutor (megan.mcculloch@fultoncountyga.gov, 678-362-1855)

Ms. McCulloch attended the August NPU B public safety meeting to discuss potential gun violence reduction programs, as distributed by email.

MARTA Police Department (MPD) North Precinct (404-848-3902) [www.itsmarta.com](http://www.itsmarta.com)  
Major Matthew Carrier; [mcarrier@itsmarta.com](mailto:mcarrier@itsmarta.com), 404-848-4813

No report.

Department of Watershed Management (DWM) (404-982-1480) [www.atlantawatershed.org](http://www.atlantawatershed.org)  
Vacant, Office of Safety, Security, & Emergency Management (404-546-3374)

No report.

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) (404-546-6813)

[www.atlantaga.gov/iparcs](http://www.atlantaga.gov/iparcs)

Erica Collins, Manager, Peachtree Hills Recreation Center (PHRC), 308 Peachtree Hills Ave.  
eknox@atlantaga.gov

Erica Collins is the new Manager for the PHRC. The facility is operating under Phase I Covid limitations but the golf courses, lap swim, and tennis courts are opened at some locations. During Phase III, small groups such as after school may open for up to 9 kids per room. During Phase III, outdoor pools would also open up as well as opening up the facility for services. Playgrounds and outdoor sporting will open in Phase IV. In Phase V, contact sports will open up. The virtual programs are at 9am daily on Facebook live and there are other streaming options. PHRC is working on after school program protocols.

A board member commented that the afterschool program was so strong. She asked if there was a plan to open up at some point soon. Erica still noted that the City is still planning on virtual programs and trying to plan how to operate moving forward. PHRC has reached out to students to confirm that the families have the technology needed to support distance learning.

A board member asked when pets were allowed at the parks. Ericka responded that the park is opened for the community to get fresh air. Pets are allowed at the park, on leash and off of athletic space.

Department of Public Works

Marcus McGaw (404-865-8743) [mlmcgaw@atlantaga.gov](mailto:mlmcgaw@atlantaga.gov)

Verna Singleton, [VSingleton@AtlantaGA.gov](mailto:VSingleton@AtlantaGA.gov)

Officer O (404-807-2610)

Sama 404-865-8621 [samakoi@atlantaga.gov](mailto:samakoi@atlantaga.gov)

Officer McLendon, [amclendon@atlantaga.gov](mailto:amclendon@atlantaga.gov), 404-273-0865

No report. Members were disappointed that there was no report regarding yard waste pickup.

Atlanta Department of Transportation

Josh Rowan, [jrowan@atlantaga.gov](mailto:jrowan@atlantaga.gov)

Josh Rowan shared that safety in our streets is the top priority for Atlanta DOT. He noted that the top three priorities for the department are: (1) Atlanta DOT wants to promote safety of our City streets (Project ZERO, reducing speed limits to 25mph and work with GDOT to reduce the classification level of roads), (2) condition and resurface roads as well as rehabilitate sidewalks, (3) transit within the region and how do we get people from the northern suburbs into the commercial Buckhead core. He added that if the ARC is right and there are 3 million people coming to Atlanta by 2050, the question is where we want them to live.

The Department was legislatively created one year ago. Josh noted that in the first year, people have been reassigned from other departments and the policies and procedures have been written.

The group has worked well during COVID and seen an increase in productivity from maintenance crews.

Jason Kendall shared NPU-Bs thoughts on two (2) recent legislations; one reducing the speed limit to 25mph, and the other to turn streets into pedestrian only corridors. NPU-B members were concerned that when main corridors get slow and sluggish the traffic jumps to the neighborhood streets. Many NPU-B board members felt that a more researched and precise assessment of individual streets would yield a better result than the holistic speed limit reduction. NPU-B members were similarly concerned about closing streets and particularly concerned that the legislation did not specify how community input would be collected prior to the street closing.

Josh noted that the primary cause of traffic congestion on the main arterials is that the high number of car crashes. Slower speeds will produce fewer crashes, which will increase overall throughput. Slower speeds also increase the likelihood of survival in a crash. Traffic needs to stay on the main arterials and get out of the neighborhoods. Josh Rowan is hoping to work on simplifying the laser list to make enforcement more efficient.

Josh responded that there was a lot of push to close streets to traffic so that they could be used for recreation during covid. Josh rejected the idea and didn't think the notion of closing streets to everyone but those in the neighborhood was a good one. The City is instead looking at reducing width to create "tactical sidewalks" and reduce speed by reducing the lane width.

Jason noted that the D&T committee discusses CDP changes, but it is difficult to discuss the impact of these large complexes on traffic. Jason asked if this was something the Department was researching. Josh noted that he was looking at both City projects and state projects and their impacts. There are some impact fees that have been collected but not spent in the local area to reduce impacts.

A board member was thankful that ADOT crews were finally resurfacing Lenox Road but wanted to know why there were gaps between some of the paving. Josh shared that there is a townhouse development on Lenox where the lane widths change. A staff member noted that there were going to be rear ends in that area without a turn lane. The City is working on adding the turn lane in October timeframe and will resurface that section after the turn lane is added.

Sally Silver noted that Josh is greatly appreciated by everyone in City Council. Sally appreciated that the staff was trouble shooting issues as well as maintaining roads. Sally suggested that Josh or someone in the Department should come to a D&T meeting and help a more holistic view of traffic in the region. Josh noted that he would be happy to participate. Josh is really trying to build a community engagement team to work with different areas within the City. Impact fees are way behind and they will be increased but they need to stay in the area where they are generated.

A board member noted that on Grandview Avenue/N Fulton/Pharr the fiber is continually being laid and the street continues to be cut and poor repair work is done. The lines are buried 3 feet down because Renew Atlanta is paving all of the street. Josh asked for an email with location information so that he can look into the concern.

Josh is concerned that Google is destroying the asphalt as they microtrenching to lay the fiber in the pavement. Atlanta DOT has been requiring them to install the fiber correctly. Josh will confirm that they are following requirements. Nurid Deen is the permits leader and has been

instructed to treat ROW permittees as “small children”. Several utilities have been called into the principal’s office. They are going to pull permits for the bad actors.

A board member noted that stormwater is a huge issue and wanted to confirm that streets will be milled prior to paving. Josh confirmed that was the case. The board member also asked whether ADOT has any responsibility for stormwater management or maintenance. Josh shared that stormwater is the public works orphan. He confirmed that the Department of Watershed Management receives funds from Transportation to maintain the stormwater system. Solid waste does the street sweeping. DOT is responsible for roads and bridges. Culverts are the responsibility of watershed at the moment, but DOT is having discussions in order to address the issues with responsibilities.

Code Enforcement Section, APD Community Services Division  
[CodesRequests@AtlantaGA.gov](mailto:CodesRequests@AtlantaGA.gov) 404-546-3800 (call to report an issue)

No report. The spreadsheet was delivered by email

Buckhead Business Association  
Bob Gibeling, VP, Community Alliance, BBA office: 404-467-7607

No report.

Buckhead Coalition  
Jim Durrett noted that the supplemental patrols started in mid-July. The police cruiser is outfitted and branded. The supplemental patrols are from 6pm to 2am on Tuesday through Sunday nights. There was a request to extend the shift to 3:30am. The patrols are focused on the 2.5 miles within the CID boundary and are looking at the “hot spots” including the Pharr Road corridor.

The CID is working with a consortium trying to address the water boys and trying to get the kids into entrepreneurial programs. There was a board comment that some of the boys who have been arrested were carrying guns, which is not entrepreneurial. The City is working on both training and enforcement. There was a question about the age of the water boys. Jim responded that most of the water boys are juveniles. The comment was that opening schools or pools or recreational opportunities may help reduce the issues related to water boys. Major Senzer and Captain Singh are aware of the seriousness of these issues and addressing them.

Livable Buckhead, Inc (LBI) - Denise Starling, Executive Director  
[www.livablebuckhead.org](http://www.livablebuckhead.org)

Denise noted that LBI is working on a project in North Buckhead that will provide connectivity to Path 400. The segment from Peachtree Park to Miami Circle is waiting for back-ordered gates to arrive and will likely open in September. Denise asked for the neighbors to stay off the path until it is officially opened as it is expensive to repair damage.

Buckhead Community Improvement District (CID)  
[www.buckheadcid.com](http://www.buckheadcid.com)

Buckhead Business Association  
Garth Peters

Dana Dodds with Michael Julian Bond's office; [DDodds@atlantaga.gov](mailto:DDodds@atlantaga.gov) 404-330-6770  
Ms. Dodds offered to collect questions and pass them along to the Councilman. A board member asked when yard waste would be collected again. She offered to respond via email.

## **5. COMMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS**

No report.

## **6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

APAB report was distributed via email.

### **A. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Jefferson McConkey, Vice Chair NPU-B

Below is a summary of the Public Safety Committee Meeting as it was deemed to be of high interest to all NPU-B Members.

Megan McCulloch, Zone 2 Community Prosecutor in Fulton County DA's office  
She was joined with Brittany Brown Becker and Ian Elmore-Moore (gang prevention). She was asked to address reducing gun violence in the Zone by the NPU. There were several proposals that were discussed and they want to present the concepts to determine the level of community support.

1. Establish a Gun Court – Follow the example of the Community Court that addresses issues on Fulton Industrial. This court would focus on gun issues but may not include all issues involving gun (ie, murder via a gun would not be handled in gun court). Community support would be important in gaining funding from County Commissioners for this event.
2. Gun Buy Back Event – These events have been shown to be effective in reducing gun violence, especially when combined with other events. This would require a centralized location for collection. Sometimes the City trade sports tickets instead of truly buying back the guns.
3. Pawn Shop Sales – Increase the legislation regarding guns purchased at pawn shops. That would require state level support.

Audience members were invited to participate in the discussion. A member asked if Atlanta has ever had a gun buy back program. Fulton County Sheriff's office did one annually through 2016 and they collected 300,000 guns. Gun buybacks are only successful when combined with other programs.

A member thought that a gun buyback might help with domestic violence but was concerned that this approach would not help with the issues on Pharr Road. There are three or four hot spots where gun violence is most extreme, and it seems that these areas need additional focus.

A board member noted concerns because these are high cost programs and there is concern about sustainability. Megan noted a Gun x Gun.org website that they raised \$110,000 and recovered 2,600 guns; so that is \$42/gun to purchase them back.

There was a question regarding permitting and licensing, as several of the "bad actors" are acting outside of their permits. Copper Cove and Blue and Allure are bad actors and there may be gangs operating out of these locations. There was a question as to whether the Community Prosecutor

can work with the police to assess potential for gangs and also enforce the City's permits and licenses.

Brittany Brown-Becker noted that the Prosecutors office can work and advise police, but they cannot otherwise investigate crimes or enforce local laws. The Prosecutors investigators are only for investigating cases that are migrating through the court system and not an initial investigation. Cases at Fulton County are felony level offenses, and lower level crimes will be handled locally. Minor code enforcement issues would be below the Fulton County's authority.

There is neighborhood concern regarding the local schools and the violence in the area. Megan did not know the rules regarding zones around schools.

A board member noted that the neighborhood is very concerned at the significant level of violence. The neighborhood is investigating all avenues. A board member noted that we are trying to understand how the various agencies are coordinating and what neighbors and the NPU can do to reduce the violence.

Calls from the community are helpful. Possibly an advisory panel that includes residents and multiple jurisdictions so that the issue can be attacked from several angles. A grass root effort will be the most effective.

Jim Durrett, Buckhead Coalition and Buckhead CID, noted that they are working with City Council members, police department and others in order to support a resolution. Jim and Denise Starling are working together to try to engage the community and continue dialogue. A board member noted that coordination is very critical because we don't want important resources pointed in different directions. Also, it is important that the community knows who to talk to.

Several neighborhood residents have been working hard to dive into these issues. There are very powerful people involved in these issues and they are very complicated. The neighborhood is confused by how notorious some of these facilities are and it is incomprehensible how they are allowed to continue.

There was mention of a South Fulton Task Force where lower level violations were used to create a RICO (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) violation. For a RICO violation, a person must engage in a pattern of racketeering activity. Once a RICO violation is demonstrated, Fulton County DA can shut down the facility with a temporary injunction.

## **B. DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION and SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE**

Jason Kendall, Chair

No report.

## **C. ZONING COMMITTEE**

Bill Murray, Chair

V-20-037      Piedmont Center

An Ordinance to amend SPI12 (Buckhead/Lenox Stations Special Public Interest District) to create a new Subarea Four (4) entitled Piedmont Center; to rezone certain properties listed herein

and commonly known as Piedmont Center from the PD-OC (Planned Development – Office Commercial) zoning classification to the SPI-12 SA4 (Buckhead Lenox Stations Special Public Interest District Subarea 4) zoning classification and to the Buckhead Parking Overlay District; and for other purposes.

Sally Silver noted that she has been working with the owners of Piedmont Center and Denise Starling for months. The owners would like to increase public access and connectivity to the multi-purpose trail. The opportunities would be enhanced if it was a sub-area of SPI-12. The North Buckhead Civic Association was concerned about the Old Ivy Road access. There are some concerns regarding future development once the project is in the SPI. They noted that they do not plan to develop anything in the next 10 years. They are amenable to address concerns and the legislation can possibly be tweaked to protect the long-term interest for the property. The owner is going to defer this until the issues can be discussed and resolved.

A working group met to discuss the ordinance and some modification were made to address concerns. The new regulation for the sub-area limits the height of any commercial buildings. The parking overlay and all other conditions remain intact. There is a recommendation letter of support from North Buckhead. There were concerns about the heights of the buildings and potentially limiting the height of residential towers. A board member asked if there was a master plan for the corridor that was overarching the vision for this pedestrian connection. Any proposed development would go first through the SPI which includes Sally Silver, Denise Starling, and Nancy Bliwise as well as allow for public comment.

## **7. PLANNERS REPORT**

BZA and ZRB and Tree Commission and other committees are meeting on zoom now. Go to the board pages to get the link to the zoom meetings. There is a process for providing input into the zoom meetings. There is a backlog of applications, so the ZRB and BZA are meeting weekly to catch up. In September, they will return back to their normal meeting schedule.

There are two upcoming NPU University sessions; one on election integrity and one on mobility.

## **8. MATTERS FOR VOTING (above)**

Presented in the appropriate sections above.

## **9. PRESENTATIONS**

None.

## **10. OLD BUSINESS**

Ben reminded everyone that dues are \$60 for neighborhood and business reps (non-sole proprietorship) and \$30 for sole proprietorship. Two business members have not paid and not attended.

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**



Nancy reported that there were some concerns about a pool for Carlton Ridge. The application was withdrawn and then the pool was constructed. There were revisions to the site plan that made the reasons for the variance no longer necessary. Therefore, the pool was constructed within the City's code. Watershed's Site Development team allowed them to put pervious pavers to replace the driveway and not count as impervious.

Nancy commented that water issues are paramount. There are two important water concepts: (1) Holistic review of water, trees, and everything is looked at together and in a transparent process. 2. Don't understand why there are so many allowances for stream buffer variances and other variances.

Kim attended an NPU University training on bylaws. She noted that it appears the issues that other NPUs are experiencing with bylaws are not issues in NPU-B. NPU-B will vote on the bylaws at the next meeting. All residents within NPU-B are eligible to vote on the bylaws.

Nancy attended a session on defunding the police and she noted that it was a very good discussion. It was a very good and open dialogue and Nancy shared back the thoughts of NPU-B during the session.

## **12. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next NPU meeting will be September 1, 2020.

The next BZA meetings are posted on their website.

The next ZRB meetings are posted on their website.

## **13. ADJOURNMENT**

**NPU-B action: A motion to adjourn passed by vote of 19-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM