

**Minutes of NPU-B regular monthly meeting
Tuesday, January 5, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Nancy Bliwise, NPU-B Chairperson.

****This meeting was held via Zoom****

Present: 25

Proxies: Jefferson McConkey to Mandi Gibson (leaving early)
Juan Calle to Kim Wachtel

Kevin Glass joined us as a new Business Representative. He has lived in Garden Hills for 12 years and is the head of Atlanta International School.

1. OPENING REMARKS / CHAIRPERSON’S COMMENTS

Welcome, mission of NPU-B, and introductory remarks. Dr. Bliwise thanked everyone for their patience as we got a slow start to the meeting, allowing the licensing committee to finish their subcommittee meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

NPU-B Action: A motion to approve the minutes from the previous regular monthly meeting (December) of the NPU-B passed by vote of 14-0-0.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

NPU-B Action: A motion to approve the agenda of the NPU-B passed by vote of 12-0-0.

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 ; 404-624-0674.

Major Senzer, attending on behalf of Zone 2.

Major Senzer reported that Captain Singh has been promoted and is moving to the community-oriented policing group within the APD. A new captain will be starting in Zone 2 soon and will bring a lot of experience as a focused crime fighter. Crime statistics increased in 2020; murders increased (9 versus 6), aggravated assault increased 30%, and auto thefts increased 32%. The increased crime rates were also seen in neighboring Zone 5 and 6. These zones have similar establishments that attract unwanted behaviors. Major Senzer noted that he is committed to fighting crime in Zone 2 and working with all partners. He emphasized the importance of opening the courts to curtail the criminal activities. The Atlanta Police Department is only one component in the criminal justice system and change will require everyone working together.

In 2021, the zone will continue to focus on ending street racing and enforcing compliance at establishments presenting as restaurants operating outside of their licenses.

A board member noted that homes near Grandview Avenue are moving their kids to sleep in the back side of the home as they are afraid of accidental shootings. The continued gun violence is very scary for families. The board member noted that there are local efforts to better protect the neighborhood, but the neighbors want APD to patrol the interior of the neighborhood and not just Pharr Road. Major Senzer noted that many of the criminals are coming from outside of the City. He added that the officers try to patrol as many areas as possible, but they focus on the main roads and areas where the street racing, shootings, and other crimes occur. There are 11 beats in Zone 2 and there are some manpower issues. Sometimes, Major Senzer is unable to fill all 11 beats.

Supplemental patrols that are part of the Buckhead security plan will really help increase patrols in the Pharr Road corridor and along Peachtree. Zone 2 is also partnering with the extra officers at private establishments.

Major Senzer shared that additional patrols don't always deter crime. During the most recent shooting, there was one officer working an extra job at the establishment where the shooting took place, another off-duty officer across the street, and 2 officers working in the vicinity. Major Senzer noted that the officer presence was not a deterrent. APD has good video footage as the suspect parked in front of the camera, so APD has the vehicle registration information. The investigators are going to interview the vehicle owner and do cell phone search warrants to see if there is any connectivity. Information was also obtained from neighborhood videos (ring, nest, etc.) along with private security cameras at hotels and other commercial properties, as well as the Atlanta Police Foundation footage.

A board member noted that neighbors have stunning footage from recent crimes. After the recent shooting of the 7-year-old girl who was killed by a stray bullet, Councilman Shook spoke of leadership issues in the Mayor's office. Despite the efforts of Zone 2, Buckhead is an economic hub with many public and private schools and there appear to be limited resources applied to crime prevention in this hot spot. The board member asked what NPU-B can do to apply pressure to leadership. Major Senzer noted that everyone is short-staffed, and everyone is scrambling for the same limited resources. Although our zone has experienced an increase in crime, our crime pales in comparison to other zones. For example, Zone 5 (midtown) has had a huge increase in crime.

Major Senzer noted that opening the courts would be very helpful.

A board member asked whether the number of officers in Zone 2 was lower than in previous years. Major Senzer noted that Buckhead has grown 40-percent, therefore more officers are needed now than in previous years. A board member asked if there was a recruitment campaign to secure additional officers. Major Senzer noted that this has been a very difficult year for officers with the pandemic and political unrest and anti-police sentiment. The spike in COVID-19 numbers makes recruitment very difficult. Major Senzer noted that he would love to recruit officers from the Seattle and Portland areas but the conditions don't permit this kind of recruitment.

A board member asked if installing roadblocks (like those used to stop drunk drivers) would serve as an irritant and slow the unwanted behaviors. Major Senzer responded that the zone is always looking to try new ideas. Prior legal challenges to roadblocks make them infeasible because APD must provide public notice, ensure there are several officers in reflective gear, etc.

The reward for the effort is not there. Street racing has become a more “intel” driven solution. With street racing, some of the participants have been charged and Major Senzer hopes that the numbers will decrease as the penalties are enforced.

A board member asked if there were other ordinances that would be helpful to address crime. Major Senzer noted that the street racing ordinance has been helpful. The biggest problem with the clubs is that there is a very small enforcement group for licenses and there are a lot of problematic establishments. Major Senzer has recommended a probation period with revenue audits when new facilities open in order to confirm they are operating correctly. The City is considering hiring private accountants to help conduct these revenue audits.

A board member asked about recruiting efforts and whether Atlanta could offer officers stipends to move into newer apartment complexes to add additional protections. Major Senzer shared that Denise Starling with Livable Buckhead is working on a program to offer these opportunities as an enticement for offers to live in the communities in which they work. This initiative is new and Major Senzer doesn't know how his officers will respond. A board member noted that this could be a recruiting tool as well as an opportunity for existing officers. Major Senzer agreed.

Atlanta Fire Rescue Department (AFRD)
404-546-4400 (or dial 404-546-4421 to reach station 21)

No Report.

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 the municipal court is open to the public with safety protocols. Ms. Carey has covered the specialty court that covers street racing and curfew issues. Several of these issues were resolved by plea (\$1,000 fine) and some have chosen to go to a jury trial. Jury trials are handled by Fulton County and not at the municipal court. Cases related to properties operating outside of their permits are also making their way through the court system as are code enforcement cases.

If you get stopped for a traffic citation, you can take advantage of the diversion program. You can inquire by email to PTIT@atlantaga.gov.

Fulton County District Attorney Community Prosecutor's Office
Megan McCulloch, Zone 2 Community Prosecutor (megan.mcculloch@fultoncountyga.gov, 678-362-1855)

No Report.

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

No Report.

Department of Watershed Management (DWM) (404-982-1480) www.atlantawatershed.org

Louis Sheppard, 404-546-1181, cell (770) 624-0793, lsheppard@atlantaga.gov

Louis Sheppard from the Department of Watershed Management noted that the Department will not terminate water service through January 31, 2021 for non-payment due to COVID-19. There are several ways to pay your water bill online and there is a raffle with prizes if you sign up for paperless billing.

Keep leaves out of the storm drain and consider joining the Adopt a Drain program.

Keep FOG (fats, oil, and grease) out of your system to protect our infrastructure.

There are several programs to assist seniors with their water bills.

There is a virtual community meeting on January 13th from 6 to 7pm to discuss the North Buckhead Stormwater Projects within NPU-B. For more information, contact 678-387-9878 or kcato@atlantaga.gov.

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

www.atlantaGA.gov/iparcs

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

Peachtree Hills is a voting site today. The learning pod will re-start on January 11 to May 26, even though school is scheduled to start at the end of January, the pod will be available for those who do not want to send their kids back to school. Erica noted that COVID-19 restrictions are still in place. Golf and tennis facilities are open. The City is continuing to watch the COVID-19 numbers.

Department of Public Works

Marcus McGaw (404-865-8743) mlmcgaw@atlantaga.gov

Verna Singleton, VSingleton@AtlantaGA.gov

Officer O (404-807-2610)

Sama 404-865-8621 samakoi@atlantaga.gov

Officer McLendon, amclendon@atlantaga.gov, 404-273-0865

Officer Walker with the SWEET team was available for questions. He noted there were not many violations in the Buckhead area. Bulky pickups are required for more than 20 yard waste bags and other bulky waste. These must be scheduled.

A board member noted that yard waste is still not getting picked up consistently. Dr. Bliwise will compile a list of residential areas that are not getting yard waste service and submit this to Office Walker for resolution.

Officer J. Walker – 470-698-6976 or jawwalker@atlantaga.gov

Atlanta Department of Transportation

Josh Rowan, jrowan@atlantaga.gov

No report.

Code Enforcement Section, APD Community Services Division
CodesRequests@AtlantaGA.gov 404-546-3800 (call to report an issue)
Officer Bowden, labowden@atlantaga.gov, (404) 387-4688

No report.

ATL311

Barbara Dougherty, Community Affairs Coordinator. 470-698-5171. bdougherty@atlantaga.gov

NaGena Hibbler noted that 311 is the non-emergency service call number in Atlanta. They handle potholes, missed trash pickups, etc. The team is working remotely but still available to assist during business hours of 7am to 7pm.

To sign up for COVID-related emergency notifications, text “ATLSTRONG” to 888-777

A board member asked about bulk pickups and their schedule. Ms. Hibbler noted that they were available and residents can sign up online as well as via the phone for bulk pickups.

Buckhead Coalition

Jim Durrett

Livable Buckhead, Inc (LBI) - Denise Starling, Executive Director
www.livablebuckhead.org

Buckhead Community Improvement District (CID)
www.buckheadcid.com

Jim noted that the Buckhead Safety Plan has been launched and the Buckhead Coalition has started fundraising. Jim wanted to clarify that this is not a private police force, but a private fundraising effort to invest in the public safety infrastructure in Atlanta. Jim noted that Major Senzer is a great partner in the security efforts.

They are working on getting a third supplemental patrol in commercial areas and determining where this patrol should be deployed. The goal is to communicate with Zone 2, commercial private security patrols, and residential private security patrols. The plan recommends thinking systematically about how to integrate camera efforts in order to prevent crime and secure data quickly to support investigations – improvements in Operation Shield.

The BCID is meeting with the Coalition Chair and Chair-Elect and Mayor to talk about security issues. Jim is encouraged by recent mayor and council activities, even though the pace is slower than the community would like. Jim added that there is legislation that is moving forward that will be helpful.

There was a discussion about the security cameras. After an incident, the officers must request the information from Flock security. There are discussions about how to make this process faster.

A board member noted that it doesn't feel like the Mayor sees the crime in Buckhead as an important issue. He would like to see the Mayor exhibit more leadership.

A board member suggested that Jim and the Buckhead Safety Plan collective could help by creating best practices for how to share video footage to solve crimes and other best practices for neighborhoods. The board member also noted that the NPU is trying to step up efforts to review alcohol licenses more critically. The NPU is open to recommendations on questions or other guidance that could help uncover potential problems while reviewing alcohol licenses. Several board members recommended that NPU University teach a class on reviewing alcohol licenses.

A board member asked who was being solicited during the fundraising efforts. Jim responded that the fundraising efforts include individuals, businesses, organizations, and anyone who wants to keep Buckhead safe. A board member suggested targeting the restaurants and other establishments whose businesses were hurting as a result of the increase in crime. Jim noted that they have not done targeted fundraising yet.

Jim noted that there is a homelessness committee that is meeting and studying this issue and will recommend potential solutions as well.

5. COMMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

No comments.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

APAB report was distributed via email.

A. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mandi Gibson, Chair

Amalfi Pizza / 3242 Peachtree Road / New Business / 10-0-0

Hotel Colee (Lobby Bar, Restaurant, and Rooftop Bar) / 3377 Peachtree Road NE / Change of Ownership / 9-0-0

On the Border Mexican Grill & Cantina / 1 Buckhead Loop NE / Change of Agent / 9-0-0

JW Marriott Atlanta Buckhead / 3300 Lenox Road / Change of Agent / 10-0-0

Le Colonial / 3035 Peachtree Road NE / Change of Agent / 10-0-0

Cost Plus World Market / 3495 Buckhead Loop NE / Change of Agent / 10-0-0

The Kimpton Sylvan Hotel (Restaurant Bar, Garden Patio, Suite Hotel Roof Top Patio) / 374 East Paces Ferry Road / Change of Agent / 10-0-0

The Pool Hall / 30 Irby Avenue NW / Change of Agent / 9-0-1

ALDI #1 / 3221 Peachtree Road NE / Change of Agent / 10-0-0

NPU-B action: A motion to approve the consent agenda passed by vote of 14-0-0.

9. PRESENTATIONS

Chanel Zeisel with the Atlanta Department of City Planning had 2 brief presentations: (1) food truck ordinance, and (2) Atlanta City of Design of Housing.

Food Trucks On-Street Locations: Within the city's existing ordinance, food trucks are limited to a 4-block area in downtown called "government walk". There is a higher demand for food trucks due to COVID-19 and there is a desire to expand the area where they can park. The recommendation creates a community-driven application process where public right-of-way can be used by food trucks within commercial districts. Contact is Ben Kamber at bkamber@atlantaga.gov; 470-631-9775.

A board member asked if alcohol could be sold from the food trucks. Chanel did not know the answer and noted that she would find out. She thinks that if sales are currently allowed, then they would be allowed under this ordinance. A board member asked whether the City would determine where food trucks would serve or whether this decision would be made by the community. Chanel responded that the locations would be community driven. A board member noted that they have a City pocket park and the civic association wanted to have a gathering at a pocket park but were unable to be served by a food truck. There is a current process for food trucks on private property, but Chanel does not think that City parks would be allowed to host food trucks within this Ordinance.

Atlanta City Design Housing: This is a story map that highlights the history of housing and affordability in Atlanta based on years of research into the topic. A history of exclusionary zoning led to a restrictive supply of housing and raised the prices of housing. The goal of the initiative is to preserve the aspects of Atlanta that are unique and desirable. The goal is an inclusive, resilient, and affordable City. The plan identifies growth area, which are mostly along commercial corridors, as well as conservation areas. There will be a full presentation on February 11, 2021 at 6pm via zoom. housing@atlantaga.gov

A board member noted that the extension of accessory dwellings to all residential zoning and the subsequent allowance for that property to be subdivided and sold was a dramatic change. This would increase density in current single-family residential areas. There are four proposals around zoning changes that are being presented as short-term solutions while Atlanta works on the 5-year zoning code re-write.

Several board members noted infrastructure problems. Flooding, insufficient transportation infrastructure, and insufficient parking are going to be exacerbated by these proposals for additional density. Board members cautioned that we need to think very carefully about how proposals to increase affordable housing might create harm in other areas. Atlanta needs to make sure that these programs have been successful in other communities before bringing forward these programs, as NPU members' research has shown these programs are not successful.

A board member noted that there were three legs of the stool that are important for addressing affordable housing; zoning, lending, and donation of city land to the effort. The proposals are only addressing one of the three legs and therefore are likely to not be effective.

10. OLD BUSINESS

An executive committee meeting was held to discuss a time-sensitive request for funding. This meeting was held in accordance with the bylaws. Ben noted NPU-B has \$9,000 prior to receipt of dues. There was a request from Hala Carey to support an alcohol awareness program for the Zone 2 officers. This was discussed at the executive committee meeting as well as the annual gifts that NPU gives to public service agencies.

The Executive Board recommendation a donation of \$500 to the Atlanta Solicitor to fund the proposed alcohol awareness training for the Zone 2 Police Officers.

NPU-B action: A motion to approve the Ordinance as written passed by vote of 14-0-0.

The Executive Board recommends making a \$500 for 2021 to the following entities: Atlanta Police Foundation, Atlanta Fire Foundation, and the Cathedral at St. Phillips (meeting location).

NPU-B action: A motion to approve the Ordinance as written passed by vote of 13-0-0.

Committee assignments have been distributed via email. Some committees have determined their chair and vice-chair positions, and some will meet electronically to decide.

Zoning

Bill Murray – Chair

Jefferson McConkey – Vice-Chair

Public Safety

Bryan Steed – Chair

TBD – Vice-Chair

D&T

TBD – Chair

TBD – Vice-Chair

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next NPU-B meeting will be February 2, 2021.

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 13-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM