

# Clairmont Heights

## CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWS

VOLUME VIII NUMBER 2 2006

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## How To Turn Your Neighborhood into a Community

By Diane Buch

Our Neighborhood is represented by Clairmont Heights Civic Association but we share many concerns with our neighbors represented by Medlock Area Neighborhood Association and the North Decatur Heights Neighborhood Association. Many of us have friends that live across "association borders". News of special events, community affairs, and crime updates often gets passed along not only by official association newsletters but also by word of mouth.

Some of us are "new" to the neighborhood. (1-5 years). Some have been here longer, but many of our neighbors have been here for 30+ years. Depending on where one grew up, we might have the belief that upon moving into our new home, being welcomed into the neighborhood is the responsibility of the residents who were here before us. Sometimes, for different reasons, that does not happen. If you have recently moved into the neighborhood and those initial contacts have not yet been made, please consider taking the initiative and reaching out to your neighbors. Let the long-term residents of this neighborhood know that you value their experience and knowledge of the community and its history. It is these people who made this community what it is today, a place where we all want to live. At the same time, new residents bring a life and energy

that is necessary to keep any neighborhood active and involved.

Personal interaction and human contact quite often are forgotten as a way of sharing news and information. Many of us have become used to the ease and convenience of communicating thru email. We forget that there are still many households that don't have computers and are left out of that link to the community. Find out if that is the case with any of your neighbors and consider filling in that gap for them.

Another benefit to forming bonds with your neighbors is the increased ability for a neighborhood to strengthen its safety and security against crime. Becoming aware and taking an active part in what is going on around you is the most effective and least costly way to do that.

Most home burglaries occur during the day and early evening hours. Alert, involved neighbors getting to know each other and working with mutual assistance is key to reducing the incidence of many types of residential crimes. There are several simple ways that we as residents of Clairmont Heights can be very effective crime stoppers.

#### Here are some:

- Get to know your neighbors-try to have regular interactions with those on either side

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and across the street from you.

- Exchange home, work, emergency phone numbers, and any other pertinent information with your neighbors.
- Let neighbors know when you are going to be away from home overnight. When you are going to be out of town, let your neighbors know if you are expecting workers, pet sitter, etc.
- Make sure that your home is a secured home.
- Be alert and aware for suspicious persons and vehicles.
- Call 911 to report any suspicious activity or crime incidents that occur at your home or that you witness in the neighborhood.
- If you have a computer, email [info@clairmontsheights.org](mailto:info@clairmontsheights.org) with details about suspicious activity or crime after you have called the police.

## Pets in Our Environment

By Liz Beyer

As taken from Fern Creek Crier, Fall 2004

In the summer of 2004 there was a park dedication for the furrier of our residents, the Mason Mill Dog Park. Some may wonder why there is a need for a dedicated park for dogs. Dekalb County is jumping on the national movement to create dedicated greenspaces for our four legged friends, and it isn't just dog owners that benefit. Studies over the past 20 years have found compelling evidence that dogs are negatively affecting the streams and rivers in the United States.

In Baltimore, MD, dog feces were found to be the single greatest contributor of fecal coliform and fecal strep bacteria in their urban watersheds. The Pacific Shellfish Institute states that one gram of dog waste (the weight of a business card) contains 23 million fecal coliform bacteria, almost twice as much as human waste. When it rains, these bacteria can be washed into lakes and streams, or into storm drains that flow directly to lakes and streams.

Apart from endangering humans who may come in contact with the water, these bacteria kill fish. Bacteria require oxygen in order to live and, as a result, will reduce the amount of oxygen in the water that is available for fish.

Even in your own yard during a rain storm, this waste can get washed out of your yard, down a storm sewer and find its way into your local stream. If you live next to creek, it

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is recommended that you pick up the waste in your own yard, put it in plastic bags and toss them in the garbage and never into a storm drain..

(A side note: one should never use dog/cat waste in their gardens since the bacteria from your pets digestive system can be passed along to plants, potentially making someone ill by eating fruits or vegetables from a plant fertilized with pet waste. Store bought garden fertilizer/manure does come from animals, but they have been fed a vegetarian diet and so do not have the harmful bacteria and worms in their digestive system that carnivorous animals, such as dogs and cats can have.)

**So now you've got the "poop" on why it is important to SCOOP.** Be prepared and keep extra bags convenient and available for neighborhood walks or official outings.

**FYI:**

**CHCA has installed two bag dispensers at each end of Medlock Park. They are there for you to use.**

**CHCA wishes to thank**

**Choco Laté**  
**(North Decatur Square)**

**For providing beverages at our Annual meeting in April.**

**Thank You!**

## Traffic Calming and Sidewalks

By Tim Bryson

**R**esidents of North Superior Ave are currently engaged in conversations to decide whether to ask the county to add traffic calming devices on their street. Those responding to an initial inquiry favored speed tables (about 3 inches high and 10 feet long), and the county engineer has drawn up a map to show where they would be located. The CHCA board will organize a public meeting for residents to discuss this and other options. If there is consensus among residents on the street, the proposal will go to the Board of Commissioners who would presumably approve the request and then issue an official petition form. 65% of residents on the street would have to sign the petition within 90 days in order for the county to go ahead and install whatever devices are selected. Other options include speed humps (same configuration as speed tables but higher), bike lanes, and landscaped median strips.

Sidewalks may come to North Superior as well but via an entirely different process. Sidewalks for our neighborhood are listed in the latest county bond project. The county prioritizes sidewalks around schools like Medlock and along busy thoroughfares within a mile, so the proposal is to replace the sidewalks around Medlock School, extend the existing sidewalk on Desmond all the way to Clairmont, and add sidewalks to Willivee and North Superior from Desmond Drive to North Decatur Rd. These would be constructed on only one side of the street. They will be installed within the county's right of way in people's front yards. The county estimates the work would take place in 2007. Before the board takes a public position with the county, we would like to hear from residents, especially those who would "host" these sidewalks or would be directly affected by them one way or the other. Contact us at [pres@clairmonthights.org](mailto:pres@clairmonthights.org).

## Emory Launches New Interactive Community Website

By Nancy Ciliax

**W**ant to know what's up with all the construction at Emory near Haygood? Go to Emory's new Clifton Community Partnership (CCP) Update interactive website <http://www.cliftoncommunitypartnership.org/news.asp>.

Emory will also continue to host community forums. **The next community meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 28, from 6:00-8:00 pm., at the Miller Ward Alumni House, 815 Houston Mill Road.**

Topics for discussion include:

- Update on Clifton Road Redevelopment Project
- Update on Transportation Projects

For additional information, please contact Stacey Paschal at 404.727.5166 or [stacey.paschal@emory.edu](mailto:stacey.paschal@emory.edu).

Emory wants to develop a better relationship with its neighboring communities for a couple of reasons. First, it's to Emory's benefit to improve surrounding residential and commercial areas in order to attract potential employees and top notch faculty members; Second, there is less resistance to change if the community is informed and has input on those changes. As stated in a recent email to the Emory community, Emory wants to "enhance the livability, accessibility, and vibrancy of its own campus as well as the surrounding Clifton community. Goals include restoring a walkable environment, creating a beautifully landscaped public realm, transforming Clifton and N. Decatur Roads, and expanding the concept of transportation."

The next big hurdle for Emory is getting a height variance for it's new hospital, which will be located across the street from the existing one. Right now the area is zoned for 5 stories and they want to build 12 stories.

In order to do reduce community opposition to the height variance Emory may be willing to help us, for example, get a pedestrian overpass/underpass across Clairmont Road. Emory has looked at the demographics and knows that many employees live in our area. Over 3000 employees live within 3 miles of Emory (we're considered within the 2 mile radius), and Emory wants to get us into work without using single occupancy vehicles. This is definitely to the advantage of our community - fewer cars racing through our streets in the morning and evenings allowing many of us to walk to work

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### Are you receiving the CHCA E-mail Updates?

CHCA sends out 4 to 6 email updates a month including valuable community information and will distribute to any interested community member. Please send your name and the email address you prefer to [info@clairmonthights.org](mailto:info@clairmonthights.org) if you'd like to sign up.

## PATH along S. Peachtree Creek into Mason Mill Park

By Jim Smith

**D**eKalb County is continuing to try to negotiate easements/fee-simple purchase of portions of 5 lots to the west of Willivee Road in order to route PATH from Willivee, alongside S. Peachtree Creek and over the CSX tracks to Mason Mill Park. They have inked agreements with 3 out of the 5 and have most recently started to pressure the owner of a lot on Willivee Place to allow PATH to cross his property.

PATH is a concept developed by the PATH Foundation to provide a multi-use metrowide trail system for Atlanta. It is designed for joggers, walkers, bikers and skaters. PATH is using plans drawn up in 2004 that call for a 12 foot wide boardwalk from the bridge at Willivee, alongside and crossing the creek and ascending the ridgeline. Once at the top of the ridge, it changes into a 12 foot wide concrete surface down into Mason Mill Park. They had previously planned to cross the CSX tracks by building a route under the Burnt Fork trestle near the old dam site but have now decided it would be preferable to bridge over the rail line at a spot where the banks on either side of the tracks rise up well above the tracks. The boardwalk will stay entirely in the 100 year floodplain until it crests the ridge, with the creek bridge being only long enough to anchor outside the 25 foot state waters boundaries (county regulations call for 75 foot setbacks from waterways).

The CHCA board has not taken an official position yet, pending an update from Commissioners Walldorff and Gannon. The board has heard from several neighbors on this issue but we welcome further input.

While pedestrian/bicycling connectivity is sorely needed in the entire metro area, the board has several concerns that must be addressed before agreeing to this plan. These include Policing the PATH, Maintenance/Repair, Environmental Impacts, Property Rights and Traffic/Parking. On the plus side are the likelihood that a PATH segment traversing our neighborhood would promote community feeling, be heavily used, promote exercise and encourage commuting on foot or bike rather than by car.

The board recently visited the segment of PATH that traverses Arabia Mountain Park in South DeKalb. We found it to be a very popular, inviting bikeway that was

quite enjoyable to bike and walk on. The most visible negatives were the width of the corridor cleared through the trees (12 feet of concrete plus 1~3 feet of cleared ground on either side, totaling a minimum of 14 feet of cleared woodland ecosystem) and the number of large support timbers (for the boardwalk) in the very active floodplain. Pictures from this trip can be viewed at <http://photos.yahoo.com/chcaorg>

The board will keep you posted as this project develops.

## Reading County Assessors Maps

By Tim Bryson

**I**n case you, like me, have trouble reading the online county assessor maps; you might find helpful the following response from the county to my own questions. The county tax assessor office responded quickly and helpfully.

To see the map for your street, go to this site and enter your address.

<https://dklbweb.dekalbga.org/taxAssessor/realSearch.asp>

The first screen will show detailed data for your parcel, including square footage, assessed value, appraised value, and sale price. Click on MAP to see the parcel map for your neighborhood.

- Underlined gray numbers = lot numbers = street addresses
- Green numbers inside green circles = original subdivision number from the original plat
- Large green numbers in middle of a set of adjoining lots = Block numbers
- Red numbers inside each lot = Parcel numbers
- Smaller red numbers in parentheses inside each lot = Legal lot number from the original plat
- The meaning of the letters in parentheses after an acreage number, e.g., the (D) in 18.787 AC(D): D = data from the deed, C = Calculated, P = from original plat. All data on maps in parentheses indicate the data is from a legal document.

If you have further questions, here is the county contact:

Alice Jones  
User Liaison Coordinator  
DeKalb Property Appraisal Dept.  
120 West Trinity Place, Room 208  
Decatur, GA 30030  
404/371-2632  
[amjones@co.dekalb.ga.us](mailto:amjones@co.dekalb.ga.us)

## Infill Update

By Tim Bryson

**T**here appears to be an accelerating trend in our general area to tear down older houses and replace them with much larger ones. Recently several neighborhoods in our part of the county -- Meadowcliff, Diamond Head, Sagamore Hills, Ponderosa and Leafmore/Creek Park Hills -- requested and were granted infill overlay zones. The heart of these overlay zones is a height maximum for infill construction which is stricter than the existing county-wide ordinance. The overlay maximum allows a full two-story house to be constructed but without the towering roofs and artificially elevated grading that has caused concern among residents of older subdivisions. There have often emerged strong disagreements between residents and developers and even other residents over the impacts on property value, views, tree cover, drainage, demographic diversity, density and more. Your board has supported the right of these other neighborhoods to decide for themselves whether or not to adopt stricter standards. What about our neighborhood? Should we be concerned? Should we apply for an overlay? Your board plans to organize a public meeting in the fall to air the various points of view and solicit your opinion.

## Looking Forward: CHCA Fall Festival in October

Last October CHCA and DeKalb county worked together to organize a fall festival to build community around Medlock Park. Because it happened to be the turn of Medlock Park to receive a one-time big budget festival which occurs every few years in the county's program to highlight each county park, there was free food and drink for everyone and for kids there was a D.J., several inflatables, and a home-run derby. The neighborhood associations organized a dog jog, contests (costume, trick, musical chairs) with prizes, and invited several vendors and non-profit organizations. This year we won't have the big budget but we do hope to repeat our partnership with the county and hold the fall festival at Medlock Park. We are currently planning on scheduling it for Saturday, October 14.

**If you would like to help out, please contact us at [Pres@Clairmonthights.org](mailto:Pres@Clairmonthights.org).**

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safely. For those living outside our community, shuttle service from N. Dekalb Mall to the Clifton Corridor will begin later this month. Shuttles from Northlake Mall will start up shortly thereafter.

As an Emory employee and a community leader I have been invited to take part in a 30 member task force to give input on the realization of Emory's master plan. This will include Emory's involvement in local business districts, shuttle service, roadscaping, sidewalks and new mixed use residential/business districts. The group will meet once a month. The Clairmont Heights Civic Association will keep you informed through our listserv and newsletters and ask for your input.

I encourage you to get involved by going to the Clifton Community Partnership (CCP) website and giving your input. Another great source for information is the Go Dekalb website: [www.godekalb.com](http://www.godekalb.com).

## Candidates Fair

Thursday, June 29, 2006 7-9 pm

Hellenic Community Center/Greek Orthodox Church  
2500 Clairmont Road NE, Atlanta

CHCA has joined several other civic associations to sponsor this event so that citizens can meet the candidates, talk with them one-on-one, and get their literature.

Candidates for the following offices have been invited:

*DeKalb Board of Commissioners, Districts 2 & 7*  
*DeKalb Solicitor General*  
*State House, Districts 57, 80, 81, 82, 83*  
*State Senate, Districts 40, 41, 42*  
*U.S. Representative, Congressional Districts 4 & 5*  
*Governor*  
*Lt. Governor*  
*School Superintendent* *Secretary of State*  
*Commissioner of Agriculture*  
*Public Service Commission, districts 3 & 5*

More information:

[www.dekalbpoltics.org](http://www.dekalbpoltics.org) or

[NBCA@gazebosoftware.com](mailto:NBCA@gazebosoftware.com)

Primary election: **July 18** (Runoff Aug 8)

Voter registration deadline: **June 19**

Early voting: July 10-14



## County Contacts

CEO Vernon Jones	404.371.2112 ceo@co.dekalb.ga.us
Ex. Asst. Richard Stogner	404.371.2883
Com. Gale Walldorf (DeKalb District 2)	404.371.2863 galew@co.dekalb.ga.us
Com. Kathie Gannon (DeKalb District 6)	404.371.2645 kgannon112@aol.com

## Medlock Pool Transformed

By Nancy Ciliax

It is so hot outside! Want to cool off? Go to the pool! Medlock Pool has a new deck and shade sails. It's open from noon to 5pm during the week and from 1-5 on Sundays. There's adult swim on Tuesday and Thursday from 5:30-7:30. You can take food and drinks (no glassware) and your own lawn chair.

The county is hosting a "grand re-opening" of the pool on Sunday, June 25th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Come to swim and/or socialize. There will be food and drinks. Commissioner Kathie Gannon said the county may also put some permanent picnic tables out front of the pool entrance so families can take a swim break. It's been a hard-fought battle with the county over the past 3 years, but thanks to county funds donated by Judy Yates and some pushing and pulling by the CHCA and commissioners Gale Walldorff and Kathie Gannon, the pool improvements are in place.

When I went to the pool a couple of weekends ago I sat under the beige and blue shade-sails in the deck chairs donated by the CHCA. We'll have a dozen more chairs in place in the next couple of weeks, thanks to your membership donations.

It was a great atmosphere. I chatted with neighbors while watching my 12 year old son splash around in the pool with his friend. This is a great community asset and one of the few amenities at the park that is community friendly.

The CHCA is working continuously to get improvements to the playground. Help us out by contacting our commissioners, Kathie Gannon kgannon112@aol.com, and Gale Walldorff galew@co.dekalb.ga.us.

## See you at the pool Sunday, June 25th!

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## Support the Community!      Join the CHCA!

Please print clearly.

New members and renewals are accepted throughout the year.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:  
 Martha Smith • 2119 Woodmoor Lane  
 Dues are \$10 per year