

CLAIRMONT HEIGHTS

CIVIC ASSOCIATION

NEWS

Spring 2009

Event Schedule:

Monday, March 16:
CHCA/MANA
Garden Club Meeting

Saturday, May 9
9AM-3PM
Neighborhood Yard Sale

May – To be Announced
CHCA Annual Meeting

May –To be Announced
CHCA/MANA Traffic Control
Meeting

CHCA Board Members:
Direct all questions to:
info@clairmonthheights.org

Charlie Bleau
President
pres@clairmonthheights.org

John Maynard
Vice President & Traffic Chair

Tim Bryson
Recording Secretary
List Serve Administrator
Website

Catherine Larson
Treasurer

Nancy Ciliax
Corresponding Secretary

Jeff Mercante
Parks Chair

Suzan Rowe
Zoning Chair
Community Council
Representative

What Makes a Good Neighbor?

By Charlie Bleau

Well, that is a good question, isn't it? Being a good neighbor has all kinds of meaning to all kinds of folks. Frost once said, "Good fences make good neighbors", but I have to think that there is more to it than that.

There are some of us, like myself, who are "new" to the neighborhood. Some have been here longer, but many of our neighbors have been here for 30 years or more. Depending on where you grew up, you might think that when you move into a new home, being welcomed into the neighborhood is the responsibility of the residents who were here before us, and happily that is what I was lucky to find. Sometimes, though, that doesn't happen and if you've 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 know that you value their experience and knowledge of the community and its history. It is these people who have 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 reading news on the internet and communicating through 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.

Home burglaries and car thefts are on the rise everywhere, even in our little neighborhood. These mostly happen during the day and early evening hours, but are increasingly at all hours of the day and night. 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.

Alert, involved neighbors getting to know each other and working together 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 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 sitters, etc, to be visiting your home.
- 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 with details about suspicious activity or crime after you have called the police.
- Sign up for our weekly newsletter by sending an email to info@clairmontsheights.org. If your neighbors don't have a computer, please print out the weekly newsletter and share it with them.

DeKalb County Updates

by Suzan Rowe

Zoning Ordinance

DeKalb County is re-examining its current zoning code for the entire county and has selected a consultant team to re-write the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance. Public involvement is a key component and will commence at the onset of the project, lasting through the adoption of the newly revised and comprehensive zoning ordinance. To facilitate public involvement, a Zoning Task Force including district representatives, county department representatives and others has been established. Our district, District 2, is represented by Gene Schmidt from the LaVista Park Civic Association.

The first meeting of the Task Force was held on Nov. 20, 2008 and public hearings began Dec 4. The hearings are conducted in an open house format where representatives can hear concerns from the attendees. A total of three hearings have been held so far.

Code pages are being presented to the Task Force for their review. The first draft should be available for the next round of public hearings scheduled for Apr 14, 16, and 21, 2009. Those hearings will be followed by a second public hearing at the DeKalb County Planning Commission Meeting on Aug. 26 and a final DeKalb County Board of Commissioners Adoption Hearing on Sept.22. Both the Planning Commission meeting and the Board of Commissioners meeting will be held at the Maloof Auditorium, 1300 Commerce Dr. in downtown Decatur at 6:30 PM. Attendance at any and all of these meetings is encouraged.

There is an interactive website where one can make comments, follow the process and get more information:
<http://www.co.dekalb.ga.us/planning/zoningCode.html>.
 For those without internet access you can call 404-371-2155.

North Druid Hills & Clairmont

The application of Julian LeCraw & Company, LLC to amend the Comprehensive Land Use Plan from Suburban and Conservation Space to Town Center was DENIED by a vote of 11/0/1 at the **District 2 Community Council** meeting on Feb 18. This property is located at N. Druid Hills and Clairmont on the south side of North Jamestown Road at the southeastern corner of North Jamestown Road and Blackshear Drive and includes the Williamsburg Apartments. The developer (LeCraw & Co.) wants permission to build a high density development right next to homes like those in our neighborhood. While

the Council's vote is non-binding, it is hoped that their opposition will be taken into account by the BOC when hearing this case. If you wish to attend the BOC meeting regarding this issue, it will be held on March 24th at the Maloof Auditorium at 6:30 PM.

Hampton Inn

We were contacted by developer Stan Citron of Southern Atlantic Associates in February of 2008, regarding a proposed Hampton Inn to be built on the site of the current Emory Tool Rental building on N. Decatur Road. Mr. Citron represents Parkside Developers, the current owners of the Holiday Inn Express on N. Decatur Road. Their website is www.parksidedevelopers.com. An informational meeting was held with members of CHCA, MANA and DHCA invited. The proposed hotel would be 71 rooms and 6 stories above grade. It is expected that the new hotel would bring in local tax revenues, provide customers for nearby businesses and create 20-30 full time jobs plus approximately 300 temporary jobs during the construction phase. On the downside, the height may set an unwanted precedent for future development in the area. You will find information regarding this proposal on the CHCA website and in this newsletter. We would like to have your thoughts.



Send your snow pictures to the CHCA website

Can you believe that it was just over a week ago that we had snow! Share your photos with your neighbors. Go to the Clairmont Heights website to see how to upload photos and to see the photos your neighbors sent in.

Read more at:
<http://clairmonthights.org/node/609>

Clairmont Heights and Medlock Area Neighbors - Working Together to Decrease Cut-through Traffic

By John Maynard

During 2008 hundreds of Clairmont Heights and Medlock area neighbors came together in a series of public meetings to develop a plan that would limit the excessive amount of cut-through traffic we see during weekday rush hours in both neighborhoods. Residents from Clairmont Heights and the Medlock area collaborated with County transportation officials, local elected officials and representatives from Emory University during a year long series of public planning meetings. This series of meetings resulted in the development of a resident designed traffic control plan.

Now that the traffic control plan has been developed it is time to move forward with a resident driven implementation policy for the plan. During 2009, Clairmont Heights and Medlock area residents are invited to collaborate on the development of the implementation policy for the traffic control plan in a year long series of public meetings held for this purpose. The next meeting is tentatively set for April at the North Decatur Presbyterian Church.

To end a few misconceptions that have recently surfaced it is important to note the following facts concerning the traffic control plan: 1) the traffic control plan is in no way related to the county's traffic calming plan nor does it use traffic calming devices. 2) The traffic control plan will not impact residents ability to enter or exit the neighborhood as residents are exempted from the signage. 3) The traffic control plan can be implemented at no cost to residents. 4) Visitors and service/trades persons are not prohibited from entering the neighborhood... Weekday 6-9 AM and 4-7 PM visitors and service/trade persons have multiple feasible options to enter the neighborhood at all times.

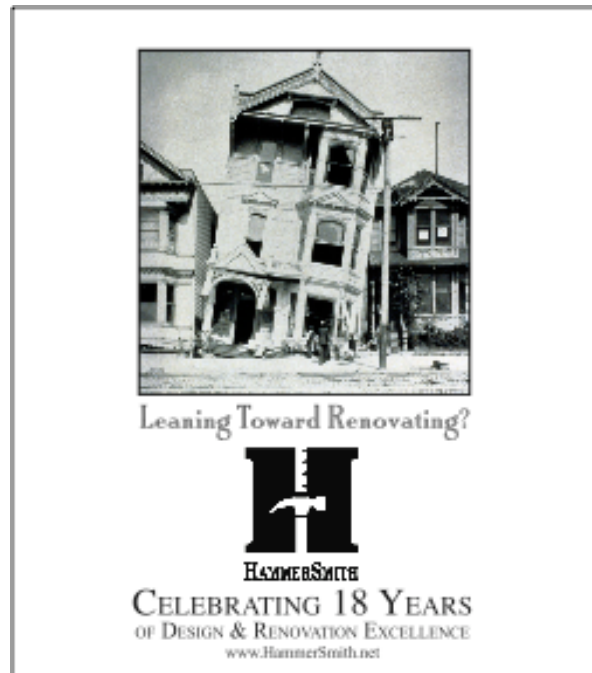
If you would like accurate and more detailed information on the traffic control plan please visit the neighborhood website at www.clairmonthheights.org/TrafficControl.

There are various links that will take you from the beginning to the present on the subject area including a FAQ document found at: <http://clairmonthheights.org/node/615>

There are several helpful color maps available (including the links inserted into this newsletter) that are helpful in understanding the plan and how it will work once implemented.

- An overview style map of the traffic control plan area can be found at: <http://www.clairmonthheights.org/node/566>
- A color map depicted allowed and not allowed turns for the AM period can be found at: <http://clairmonthheights.org/node/570>
- A color map depicted allowed and not allowed turns for the PM period can be found at: <http://clairmonthheights.org/node/571>

Please watch for future electronic and print announcements and signs posted at neighborhood intersections announcing future meetings.



South Peachtree Creek Trail Update

by Charlie Bleau

After a somewhat rocky start, Phase I of the South Peachtree Creek Trail has been completed and is open for business! A settlement of the dispute between the Three Forks Heritage Alliance and the County has allowed a new contractor to finish up the work that was started by the PATH foundation. Now that the Trail is open, remember that it is not lit and can only be used between dawn and dusk, as is the rule for County parks in general.

Beginning in the parking lot of Medlock Park on Scott Circle, the concrete Trail snakes back through the woods towards the South Peachtree Creek and then follows the edge of the floodplain on a boardwalk to the new 3-way stop on Willivee. There it crosses Willivee and continues along the edge of the

floodplain, leaps the creek with a clearspan bridge and heads off up and over the ridge to the stone Burnt Fork Creek bridge by the Old Decatur Waterworks, turning back to concrete once it crosses the sewer access road.

The Trail has proved popular with all kinds of neighbors of all ages and interests. It's not unusual to see seniors out for a quiet stroll among the trees, groups of little tykes enjoying a safe off-road bicycle ride with a parent, or dog-owners walking their dogs away from the traffic. All seem to be enjoying the Trail and their new-found access to their park in their own way.

The Trail has a much longer history than newcomers to the area are generally aware. Vestiges of the trail in the form of an old dirt road can be seen on old maps of the Decatur Water Works from 1930 and there are references to formalizing a trail between Mason Mill and Medlock Parks in County documents from the 1960s. The current Trail effort began in 1988 and an application for a transportation grant with broad community support was submitted in 1994. Since then, plans for the Trail were developed by the county and the PATH foundation with input from the community, and implementation took place in 2008. For details, see our webpage about the Trail and its history at <http://www.clairmonthheights.org/PATH>.

The County is now planning a \$2 million upgrade to Mason Mill Park, and part of that upgrade will connect the Trail to upper Mason Mill Park via a bridge over the CSX railroad tracks. This will allow pedestrians and bicyclists easy access from Willivee to the DeKalb Tennis Center, the Senior Center and the Library without having to use busy streets. Emory has also been in active negotiations to connect the Trail to their own bicycle path network so that commuters can more safely commute by bicycle and on foot.

A neighborhood event is in the planning stages to celebrate the opening of the Trail. The event will be held in Medlock Park and is currently being planned for the end of April. We will be sending out notices as events become finalized, so please keep your eyes open for the date and come out and meet your neighbors and celebrate your parks.

CHCA/MANA Gardening News

By Sharon Johnson

With spring in the air, discussions are going on about starting a cooperative Clairmont Heights/Medlock Park Garden Club. The organizers for this effort are Margie Dodd, Sharon Johnson and Jane Ayres. It is not clear

what form the garden club will take, but possibilities include looking after the FEMA buyout lots, being the contact for plant donations for both neighborhoods and advocating for community gardens. If you think you might be interested in helping with any of these potential gardening projects, the first meeting is being held on Monday, March 16th at 6:30 PM. This is at the home of Margie Dodd: 576 Willivee Drive. Additionally, if you would like to get on the email list, contact Sharon Johnson at sblott.johnson@gmail.com.

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Creek Clean-Up Planned by Bet Haverim Students

By Sharon Johnson

Students from Congregation Bet Haverim chose Medlock Park and specifically the south section of Peachtree Creek within the park as their "Tikkun Olam" project. In Hebrew, "Tikkun Olam" means "repair the world." Through the Adopt-a-Stream program the students learned about the local water supply and how it impacts the water that comes into our homes and other public spaces. On February 8th a group of fifteen 6th and 7th graders pulled tires, car batteries and bottles from the Creek.

Thanks to Stephanie Gerwitz and the students of Congregation Bet Haverim for picking Medlock Park as the site for their special project. Also, thank you to ALL of our neighbors who keep an eye on the Park and South Peachtree Creek.

Mason Mill Park Master Plan

By Tim Bryson

DeKalb county is updating the 1988 master plan for Mason Mill Park. The update also includes the Ira Melton Park but not Medlock Park. The county asked for community input over three meetings in September, October, and January at the Senior Center in Mason Mill Park. The county reported there is about two million dollars available from the 2006 parks bond for implementing the plan. The county contracted with a company called MACTEC to develop the master plan. After evaluating community input, the master planners conducted their own field studies, balanced the various interests, and made a list of recommendations. About fifty to one hundred people attended each meeting. Among the officials attending were project manager John Anderson from the Parks and Recreation division, county district commissioner Jeff Rader and deputy Parks director Marvin Billups.

The planners reported that Mason Mill Park is about 130 acres, of which 50% is floodplain, 25% or 32 acres is wetland, 30% or 48 acres is woodland. The Senior center and tennis center areas cover about 27 acres. The following summary of comments is offered by CHCA members who attended. The official Parks summary and maps are available on the county website:

http://www.co.dekalb.ga.us/parks/mason_mill.htm

The final plan proposal divides the park areas into "districts", i.e., two natural woodland districts (Burnt Fork Creek district north of the CSX railroad tracks

and the South Peachtree Creek District south of the tracks), the former City of Decatur Water Works ruins, Ira Melton Park, and the "Day Use" district comprising the senior center and tennis center areas. For the nature districts the plan calls for nature trails, continuation of the South Peachtree Creek Trail from its current endpoint at the Burnt Fork Creek bridge to McConnell Drive via a bridge over the CSX tracks, and relocation of the dog park to the bottom of McConnell Drive. At the Water Works area, the recommendation is to add walking trails, mitigate stormwater runoff, and set up interpretive signage. Melton Park would have its loop trail formalized, a "play area" cleared in the middle, and a pedestrian bridge installed across the creek to the Water Works district. The Day Use district would see less asphalt and more greenspace with a loop road cutting behind the senior center; the dog park would be converted to a drainage pond with natural vegetation; the tennis center would get a pro shop with restrooms; and again extensive stormwater mitigation would be installed to reduce runoff into the creeks. More detailed notes from the meetings and maps are available at the CHCA website in the Our Parks section at this url:

<http://clairmonthheights.org/masonmillplan>



Plan NOW for the Spring CHCA Neighborhood Yard Sale Saturday May 9th, 9 AM to 3 PM

The Clairmont Heights Civic Association will sponsor a Yard Sale throughout the entire neighborhood. Every household, whether a CHCA member or not, can participate.

Send in the application form (on page 6 of this newsletter) to Diane Buch, 759 North Superior Avenue, Decatur, GA, 30033 accompanied by a check for \$15. Make it out to CHCA and **get it in by Saturday, April 18th**. Your \$15.00 will pay for an ad in the AJC, signs at the Neighborhood entry streets, copies of maps of the participants and balloons for your mailbox. For more information contact Diane Buch at 404.633.3258. **Attention: If there are no more than 15 registrants by April 18th, the sale will not be held and your check will be returned.**

CHCA Yard Sale Sign-Up Form

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE #: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Return this form with \$15 by **April 18th** to CHCA, 759 North Superior Ave, Decatur, GA, 30033
If we don't get more than 15 registrants by April 18th, the sale will not be held and your check will be returned.

A Note From the Treasurer

Thanks so much to our members who automatically renew each year. **This year we really need your support!** You may not be aware of this, but our annual membership fee is one of the lowest of any neighborhood association in our area. With economic times as difficult as they are, we do not intend to raise our dues this year. However, if you feel you can afford it, please help by making an additional contribution.

According to our bylaws, two of the main purposes of our association are: **“to be a catalyst for discussion of neighborhood planning issues”** and **“to serve as an instrument for communicating issues to residents”**. In order to achieve these goals we email an electronic newsletter every Friday. This newsletter summarizes key issues of concern to our neighborhood and also allows you to link to complete articles for topics that interest you. In addition, the CHCA website (<http://clairmontheights.org>) provides a wealth of information for our community. Finally, we try to send out three printed newsletters a year. These are hand delivered to everyone within the CHCA boundaries.

Every bit of this work is done for free through volunteer efforts. Your annual donation helps to pay for the website, newsletters and various other expenses. For example, this past year we purchased beautiful entrance signs for our neighborhood. Unfortunately, one was almost immediately destroyed by a vandal. This year, with your help, we would like to replace this sign. Please join and help us to continue to expand our efforts to communicate and connect with everyone in our neighborhood!

Clairmont Heights Civic Association Membership Form

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

KEEP INFORMED!! Please PRINT your email addresses in order to receive weekly Friday news updates from CHCA.

In addition to my membership dues of \$10 (minimum) per household,
I have included a donation of \$ _____ to help support CHCA.

Paid for by: Check
 Cash

I am a: New Member
 Renewing Member

Please mail to: Catherine Larson 855 North Superior Avenue Decatur, Ga. 30033