



NEWSLETTER

BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Summer 2008

Athens, Georgia, USA

From the Chair: On Vacations and Parks

Matthew Elliott

July is time for summer vacation, at least around our house. This year we got a lot of curious looks when we said we were going to Ohio and Michigan for vacation. "You must have family up there, right?" Well, yes, a few relatives, but that wasn't the primary reason for selecting that particular part of the country.

Besides being cooler than Georgia in July (true of most places), both peninsulas of Michigan have incredible public lands—state parks, and state and national forests and seashores. This is an important consideration for us when we pick a vacation destination. I'm generally not interested in spending my free time around condos or outlet malls.

Georgia has made admirable strides in increasing the quantity and quality of its parks and other public lands in recent years, but we still have a long way to go. Even the long-derided Cleveland area of Ohio has the magnificent Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, over 30,000 acres of gorges, waterfalls, and beautiful hardwood forests within just a few miles of downtown Cleveland.

In the midst of the recent ACC budget crisis, some have suggested we cut back on parks and

"leisure services." I am sure we will probably hear this at the state level soon as well. I get very frustrated with such views. To me it seems extremely short-sighted. Much like under-funding education, failing to invest in parks and public lands now is kind of like stealing from our future.

People are far more mobile and well-informed these days. They are not tied down to one particular place. They migrate to where the quality of life is best, and things like parks, bike trails, and other recreation areas are important to many. And word travels fast about locations with such amenities.

Sandy Creek Park in north Athens is a great place to go any time. It's perfect for a hike or a picnic, and even has a really nice tent-camping area. Not to give away too many secrets, but some very impressive bass lurk in the lake if you know how to catch them. As nice as Sandy Creek is though, I really believe that if we want Athens to continue to be a desirable place for folks to live, we could use a couple more just like it—and a network of smaller parks as well—it's a priority that I don't think we can afford to ignore.

YOUR BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR 2008

Officers

CHAIR: Matt Elliott
VICE CHAIR: Marci White
SECRETARY: Marie Woods
TREASURER: Mary Beth Gates

Standing Committee Chairs

MEMBERSHIP/FINANCE: vacant
NEWSLETTER/PUBLICITY: vacant
PROGRAMS: Melissa Link
NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH: Mary Porter
PRESERVATION/
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: Kristen Morales

At-Large Members

Chuck Ramsey
Mark Ebell
Russ Foster
Gregg Bayard
Charles Apostolik
Carole Holmes

DOG RUN OFF? HAVING A YARD SALE? JUST WANNA VENT?

Post it on the Boulevard Neighborhood listserv!

Go to

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HistoricBoulevardNeighborhood/>
to join.

JOIN THE BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

The purpose of our neighborhood association is to provide a social and informational network for those who wish to participate. We welcome all to engage in festivities and/or dialogue to the degree they feel comfortable. Dues are \$10 a year per household or \$25 for a three-year membership, or \$5 per year for a student household.

Name: _____ Address: _____
Phone: # _____ Email addresses of each member: _____
Please indicate: New member renewing member

Would you be interested in participating in Neighborhood Crime Watch, Block Captain, Membership committee, organizing social events, or other volunteer duties?

Note: Your contact information is for the exclusive use of communicating BNA news and events. It will not be shared or sold to other parties. Mail or drop off membership form and dues to BNA treasurer:

Mary Beth Gates: 155 Grady Ave, Athens 30601.

Chase Street Elementary Kicks off New School Year

Christy Fricks Proud parent of a CSE Kindergarten student and Cobbham resident

As a parent, letting your child go is one of the hardest things to do. So, on Thursday, August 7th, as I watched parents walk, bike, and drive their children to the first day of Fall classes at Chase Street Elementary, most of us had tears in our eyes. But, we were also smiling. We weren't just dropping our kids off at any institution; we were bringing them to our community school.

A healthy community is a place of both freedom and security. Learning to live within a community is an invaluable life lesson. It creates the sort of social capital that cannot be measured. In the natural or biological world it takes a huge variety of organisms interacting to create a healthy community. Likewise, it takes the efforts of all our neighbors, parents and children to make this a beautiful place to live.

As the parent of a young child, over the past few years I have watched with interest as CSE became a focal point and a gathering place for residents of our neighborhoods. It is amazing to see what we've accomplished in the past year and to look at what we plan for the future. How lovely it is to watch our children and community grow and flourish together!

At last year's **Fall Festival**, held at White Tiger, the PTO sponsored a cakewalk and auction to help raise funds to become officially designated as a non-profit organization. **The 2008 Fall Festival** will be held at Chase Street Elementary on October 31. Final dates have not yet been set, there will be both community and children's activities, including a scarecrow competition, costume parade, and a cake walk/cake auction to raise money for the school gardens.

The school gardens are one of the most collaborative projects at CSE, with the maintenance and planting involving students, parents and volunteers from Athens Master Gardeners and Boulevard Gardening Club. Last year, the Grit and Keep Athens Clarke County Beautiful donated buckets (Grit) and tools (KACCB) so that 8 classes could plant veggies and butterfly plants.

This year, CSE 2nd-graders will be designing a **new Butterfly Garden** near the media center. The Boulevard Gardening Club recently received a \$694 Master Gardener grant to help pay for soil amendments for the butterfly garden area. Work begins September 13.

Chase Street is also the Community Tree Council's first **Trees for Tomorrow School** and there are plans to use the proceeds from the first annual **Race for Chase** for traffic-calming trees along Chase Street and new benches under the historic deodar cedar in front of the school. The first annual Race for Chase was a huge success, drawing over 100 runners. (You can see pictures from the event at www.spotted.onlineathens.com/galleries/index.php?id=398888. Next year's race and bike safety workshop is **March 28th, 2009**.)

Have you noticed the crossing guards at the Corners of Prince Avenue and Boulevard? Watch out for students on your way to work! There is now a **Safe Routes to School** committee at CSE. This program works to create safe pathways so that more children from Cobbham, Normaltown, and Boulevard neighborhoods can walk and ride their bikes to school. **On the First Friday** of every month, all families are encouraged to participate in CSE Walk/Ride to school day. Also, First Friday of each month is a **parent coffee at 7:30 AM**, with great speakers at 8:00. Sept. 5 will have Maureen O'Brien from the Community Tree Council to speak about the Trees for Tomorrow Program, and on Oct. 3, Evelyn Haynes from Athens Safe Kids will talk about walking to school safely. The PTO provides juice, bagels, coffee and occasional guest speakers. All parents are welcome (even if you drive to school).

Thanks to all the individuals who have donated their time, energy and love to making Chase a wonderful place to be!

For updates, news, and events check out:
www.orgsites.com/ga/chasestreetpto/

... and for the information about the garden
www.eeingorgia.org/net/org/info.aspx?s=66395.0.0.4863

... and don't forget to sign up for the PTO listserve for instant updates at
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/ChasePTO

Buena Vista Neighborhood Gets Back to its Roots

Kristen Morales

Three members of the Boulevard Steering Committee have begun the process of officially recognizing the Buena Vista neighborhood as an official historic neighborhood with Athens-Clarke County. This neighborhood—which includes the streets of Yonah Avenue, Boulevard, Boulevard Heights, Buena Vista and Satula Avenue—was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. However, because some houses have come and gone in the nearly 10 years since the initial evaluation, we are investigating a new survey of the neighborhood, evaluation costs, and what we need to present to Athens-Clarke County.

Right now, we're still in the planning stages. Before the proposed district goes for a vote, all residents and property owners in the neighborhood will be notified and have a chance to express their opinions at public hearings held by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Not all homes in a historic district need be historic. But if a property owner wants to make a change to a non-historic property, it can often be done in a way to enhance or be in keeping with the entire historic district. Often, this also means improvements will increase

Rezoning??

Carole Holmes

There are signs for proposed rezoning scattered all around the neighborhood. Here's why, from a notice I received in early July from Lara Mathes of the Planning Department:

Following a February 2007 request from the ACC Mayor and Commission, the Planning Department reanalyzed current zoning in Boulevard. This was presented to the Planning Commission in April 2007 and included recommendations to rezone several different sections of the Boulevard neighborhood area to better align the residential zoning classifications with existing development patterns and densities. The Planning Staff is proposing a comprehensive rezone of several residential areas within the Boulevard neighborhood from one single-family residential category to another single-family residential category. The changes were approved by the Planning Commission on August 7 and the Mayor and Commission are tentatively scheduled to review and vote upon the proposed changes and Planning Commission recommendation on Tuesday, October 7, 2008.

Know Your Buena Vista History!

You may or may not know that a trolley connected the Boulevard neighborhood with downtown Athens at the start of the 20th Century, but did you know these fun facts about the neighborhood at the top of the hill?

1. The kudzu-covered area between Park Avenue and Hiwassee was originally planned to be a neighborhood park, and the stream that cuts through this property was the original city line for Athens.
2. The trolley that ran down Boulevard was housed in a building now located on the Georgia Power property on Boulevard. That building still exists today.
3. The trolley's route actually went up Boulevard to Boulevard Heights, where it turned and took Prince Avenue back into town.
4. The Boulevard and Buena Vista neighborhoods were the first actual subdivisions in Athens. The land was bought up in the mid 1800s and divided into lots, then sold to individual landowners.
5. According to documents filed with the National Register of Historic Places, even the retaining walls which run along the 1100 block of Boulevard are historic!

property values to both historic and non-historic structures.

Property owners in a historic district will not be restricted on how they use their property, nor will it stop owners from making changes to their properties, but being in a historic district does mean a property owner must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness before making any changes.

If you have information about the history of the Buena Vista neighborhood, or have any questions about the process of becoming a historic neighborhood, contact Kristen Morales at Kbergman@mindspring.com.

An open house was held in July 17 at the Planning Department to answer questions about the proposal. All parcels that are currently zoned for single family use will continue to be zoned as single family property. The required lot size will be changed on many parcels if this proposal is approved. Presently, single family lots in the neighborhood are zoned RS-5 (single family with a lot of 5000 square feet), RS-8 (single family with a lot of 8000 square feet), or RS 15 (single family with a lot of 15000 square feet). The recommendations of the Boulevard Zoning Study are to leave all parcels facing Boulevard at RS-15 and rezone the parcels on the west side of Barber to RS-15 since most of these lots are large with large homes on them. Parcels on other streets in the neighborhood are being rezoned to RS-8 from RS-15.

Comments or concerns can be sent to the County Commission before their October meeting. You can read the entire study and see the maps at: www.acplanning.com/user_files/BoulevardZoningStudy.pdf

Neighborhood Stream Project Begins in Boulevard Area

Elizabeth Little

The Upper Oconee Watershed Network (UOWN) has recently partnered with the ACC Stormwater Division on a neighborhood stream project with the goal of engaging Athens residents in issues and solutions related to the health of streams that flow through their various neighborhoods. A series of workshops will be held for Boulevard area residents that will address impacts to the streams that drain this neighborhood.

UOWN is a local nonprofit volunteer organization whose mission is to improve water quality through community-based advocacy, monitoring and education. For the past ten years, UOWN has been monitoring water quality in the streams and rivers of the Athens area, including three streams in the greater Boulevard area (see map). Reese's

Branch originates south of Boulevard between Lyndon and Virginia, and emerges from pipes north of Boulevard between Beulah and Wynburn. It then crosses Nantahala and Barber near Tracy St. before merging with the river just downstream of the water treatment plant. A second stream, Brickyard Creek,

has two contributing branches. The south branch begins near Prince and Hiwassee, and continues north past Boulevard and under the railroad and bypass. The north branch of Brickyard drains the pond at Athens Country Club before merging with the south branch. Brickyard then flows east though old industrial and undeveloped property north of the by-pass and empties into the river upstream of the treatment plant. Pulaski Creek begins near the intersection of Dougherty and Pulaski Streets, runs parallel to Pulaski, and flows under College Ave. near Cleveland where it is

pipled to the river. Pulaski Creek receives storm water discharge from the downtown district.

All three streams are highly impacted by urbanization and have relatively poor water quality. While aged infrastructure and piping contribute to stream degradation, storm water run-off and contamination from the impervious surfaces of the built environment are the greatest contributors to poor stream quality in urban and suburban streams. The goal of the neighborhood project is to design workshops that will enable residents to lessen the neighborhood impacts to the streams while increasing awareness of water quality issues and solutions. Potential workshops include maintaining an effective stream buffer, retaining and infiltrating storm water run-off, monitoring

of erosion and sedimentation during land disturbance, water quality testing and advocacy, and keeping contamination out of storm drains. A grant from the Georgia River Network and the Turner Foundation provides partial funding for the neighborhood project.

Two workshops were held in July: A rain barrel workshop and a workshop on how to monitor for erosion and sedimentation.

In late summer, an informational exchange meeting with residents will discuss stream quality, storm water issues, and neighborhood residents' concerns and interests.

Look for additional details about workshop dates and times on the BNA listserv and on fliers in the neighborhood. For more information, please feel free to contact Libby Fennell (libby.fennell@yahoo.com) or Elizabeth Little (elittle@uga.edu).

