

MHHA ♦ CONNECTION



Spring 2006 ♦ Volume 11, Issue 2

www.merryhills.com

A quarterly newsletter by the Merry Hills Homeowners Association

Keeping you informed

Our community is continuing to experience rapid growth and development:

- Applications for zoning variances in setbacks for the expansion of two homes in the Merry Hills subdivision have been heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- An application has been filed for the rezoning of 2.6 acres on North Druid Hills Road adjacent to homes on Holly Lane.

No doubt more changes are ahead for our neighborhood and the surrounding area. Read the articles inside this issue of the MHHA Connection to find out more about what's happening now in our community and what's expected in the future.

The Merry Hills Homeowners Association (MHHA) has enhanced its ability to communicate with neighborhood residents, as anticipated in our previous newsletter. We now have:



To contact us, call the
MHHA Hotline
404-935-6936

- A “hotline” number that you can call to report the occurrence of a crime or suspicious activity to MHHA so we can alert the neighborhood if needed. You can also call this number to contact MHHA board members with questions or concerns.
- An automated phone service to send occasional crime alerts, meeting announcements, and important messages to those without e-mail. We continue to send newsletters, crime alerts, and other notices by e-mail as well. If you live in the MHHA boundaries and have not received either automated phone or e-mail messages from the MHHA, make sure we have a correct phone number or e-mail address for your residence.

The MHHA board is doing its part to keep you informed. Please do your part by participating in our activities and responding to the call for volunteers to carry out our programs.

Planning Underway for Block Party



The MHHA board has scheduled this year's block party on September 10. In order to make it happen, we need volunteers to plan and help out with the day's activities. No special talents are required—just energy and enthusiasm! Please get involved—it's a great way to meet your neighbors and make a difference in your neighborhood. If you can help with this year's block party, let us know by email, blockparty@merryhills.com, or by calling the MHHA Hotline, 404-935-6936.

Crime Update 1/1/06 to 3/31/06

A report from the DeKalb Police Crime Awareness program showed officers responded to 14 false alarms and 26 requests to check a house or location in our community. Also listed in the report were the following incidents:

Bramble Road

3/23/06 Abandoned Vehicle

Christmas Lane

Illegal Parking (4)

Holly Lane

1/28/06 Illegal Parking

2/8/06 Illegal Parking

Suspicious Person (7)

Jody Lane

2/12/06 Patrol Request

3/8/06 Animal Complaint

3/21/06 Disturbance

Lavista Road (2002-2066)

(No Reported Incidents)

Merry Lane

1/25/06 Burglary

2/21/06 Suspicious Person

N Druid Hills Road (2497, 2515 2771-2801)

1/19/06 Disorderly Juveniles

3/5/06 Neighbor Dispute

3/19/06 Theft from a Vehicle

N. Holly Lane

2/7/06 Suspicious Person

2/17/06 Loud Party/Noise

2/24/06 Neighbor Dispute

Pinetree Circle

1/18/06 Patrol Request

1/20/06 Patrol Request

Reindeer Drive

1/17/06 Neighbor Dispute

Wembley Court

3/4/06 Loud Party/Noise

Crime Meeting

A March 29 community-wide crime meeting was attended by more than 500 residents from the area spanning central DeKalb from Toco Hills to Tucker. DeKalb Police Chief Louis Graham said it was the "largest turnout I have ever seen at a crime meeting during my 40-year career." The meeting was organized to discuss the home burglaries and vehicle break-ins that occurred in late 2005 and early 2006. Police have arrested 1 adult and 6 juveniles who are linked to 5 business and 20 residential burglaries in November and December. Most of the stolen items were disposed of quickly on the street rather than sold to a pawn shop. The suspects knew each other but were not part of a gang. In February, an adult and 2 juveniles were arrested who robbed 5 to 6 homes on Nalley Circle. Police expect to complete 15 more burglary investigations as a result of the February arrest.

The majority of these crimes were committed by juveniles during the school day. Most of the homes burglarized did not have a security system. The burglaries were not usually planned in advance, and homes were randomly selected. Burglars usually look for a home with no car in the driveway and no activity, and knock on the door first.

The meeting audience was given the following crime-fighting tips by police:

- Ask door-to-door solicitors or salespeople to display a photo ID issued by DeKalb County that they are required to carry. Call 911 if they don't have one.
- A barking dog is an effective deterrent. If you do not have a dog, you can play a recording of a loud dog when a stranger knocks or rings the doorbell.
- Call 911 if you see a strange car in your driveway when you arrive home.
- Call 911 whenever you see suspicious activity. A witness to an ongoing crime may not call police or may not realize he is witnessing a crime until it is too late.
- Make a list of serial numbers and take photos of all valuables, electronics and tools. Store the information in a safe place, not in a computer that will likely be stolen.
- Secure homes with heavy-duty locks, lock car doors, and remove valuables from cars.

If you do become the victim of a crime, you are advised to:

- Call 911 and make a police report.
- Make a list of stolen items with serial numbers.
- Notify your Neighborhood Watch or homeowners association.



To report a crime or suspicious activity:

- Call 911 to report the incident.
- Call the MHHA Hotline, 404-935-6936, to report the incident so an alert can be distributed if warranted.

Zoning and Development News

- On April 12, the DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals heard the following applications for zoning variances:

1385 Christmas Lane – to reduce the front yard setback average to build an addition. The application was withdrawn by applicant before the Board's ruling.

1379 Holly Lane – to reduce the front yard setback and side setback to build an enclosed carport. The application was denied by the Board. The applicant can appeal the Board's ruling to Superior Court or can reapply in two years.

- An application for rezoning and change in land use has been filed for three homes—2529, 2533, and 2545 N. Druid Hills Road—by Green Street Development. The purchased property adjoins homes at 1477 to 1505 Holly Lane and 2515 N. Druid Hills Road in the Merry Hills subdivision.

Current zoning of the 2.64 acre tract permits the construction of up to 4 homes per acre and the applicant is requesting a change to allow up to 21 homes. A site plan has not yet been released, but MHHA Zoning Chair Debra Edelson provided an overview of the proposed use of the property at the May 7 MHHA Board meeting.

A DeKalb County Board of Commissioners public hearing for the rezoning and land use change may not occur until the fall of 2006, according to the applicant's attorney. As more information is obtained, residents will be kept informed so appropriate action can be taken on the application.

Our Neighbors

New MHHA members:

Debra and Steve Robey
Fred and Kathy Howard
Aharon and Devorah Fink

New neighbors:

Patricia Moore
James and Jennifer Demer

Condolences:

Ann Hiller passed away in December. She is survived by her husband.

Welcoming new neighbors:

Virginia Smith and Val Schlorff are welcoming new neighbors with an informational packet and gift from the Merry Hills Homeowners Association. If you know of a neighbor who has recently moved here, or if you are a new neighbor whose household was missed, please let Virginia and Val know by sending a message to welcome@merryhills.com or by leaving a message on the MHHA Hotline, 404-935-6936.

Neighborhood News

- Construction is expected to begin in March 2007 on N. Druid Hills Rd. to add a westbound through-lane and a center two-way left-turn lane from Briarcliff Road to Target. A new southbound through-lane will be added to Briarcliff Road. See the "News" page at www.merryhills.com for a drawing of the road improvements and a public comment form.

- The Old Briarcliff High School building on N. Druid Hills Road continues to be occupied by DeKalb School of the Arts, Open Campus High School, and the Jim Cherry Teacher Resource Center. The anticipated relocation of Open Campus and the Jim Cherry Center to a facility in Stone Mountain was put on hold due to a revenue shortfall.

As reported in the *Dekalb Neighbor*, students at a recent DeKalb School of the Arts assembly asked why the school has no auditorium and no specialized practice spaces. School superintendent Dr. Crawford Lewis and DeKalb CEO Vernon Jones said officials would go to work to provide the necessary facilities, including the possibility of a building at a new location.

The DeKalb School System is planning to release a prioritized list of school facility needs in June that could determine the future use of the Old Briarcliff High School building.

- DeKalb School of the Arts and Druid Hills High School are among the Top 1000 high schools in America according to a list in the May 9 issue of *Newsweek*. Druid Hills High School is the designated public high school for our neighborhood.

- On April 13 at about 1:00 a.m., a fire that started with an electrical short circuit damaged the house at 2074 LaVista Road.

- Swim season begins on May 27 for Kittredge Pool. The pool is open Monday through Saturday from 12 noon – 5:30pm. Evening swim is also available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30pm – 8:30pm. An annual pool pass, swim lessons, and an aerobics program are available. Kittredge pool is located at 2535 N. Druid Hills Rd, across from Target. For more information, call 678-937-8921.

- As part of DeKalb County's *Movies in the Park* program, enjoy a free outdoor family movie at Mason Mill Park on Saturday, August 26 at 8 p.m. Mason Mill Park is at 1400 McConnell Drive, off Clairmont Road, near the Avis G. Williams Library. For more information, call 404-371-2176.

Elections 2006

June 19 is the voter registration deadline for the July 18 primary election. For election information, contact the DeKalb County election office at 404-298-4020.

