

MHHA ♦ CONNECTION

Winter 2008 ♦ Volume 13, Issue 1



www.merryhills.com

A quarterly newsletter by the Merry Hills Homeowners Association

MHHA Meeting Tuesday, January 29, 7:00 p.m. Torah Day School Gym on LaVista Road

Dear Neighbors,

DeKalb Commissioner Jeff Rader has been invited to speak at our next MHHA meeting on Jan. 29. Our agenda also includes the election of MHHA officers. This is an opportunity to get more involved in the wonderful community in which you live. Neighborhood concerns will be discussed and opinions shared. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

We need to elect the following board members: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Coordinator, and 5 Directors.

At our November meeting, members voted to postpone election of new board members to allow those who are newly eligible for membership to serve as an officer or director. (See "Expanded boundaries and membership")

Please step forward and fill the vacant board positions to ensure that MHHA can continue as a viable and effective network and common voice for our neighborhood.

Send a message to Dan Wenger, secretary@merryhills.com, or leave a message at 404-935-6936, to nominate yourself or another person for a board position. You can call me at 404-633-3570 to discuss your interest in a board position.

Nominations will also be taken from the floor at our meeting.

Also, please join me in thanking the following neighbors for their participation as board members during the previous year: Sholly Feifer, Matt Rachford, Dan Wenger, Connie Locke, Debra Edelson, Doug Callas, Arlene Gross, Ariel Asa, Stefanie and Jeremy Sarnat, Ariana and Roy Fass, and Adrienne Feinberg.

Flo Wolf, Outgoing President

president@merryhills.com

Expanded boundaries and membership

Voting members can be any resident or homeowner within the expanded boundaries that now include the following residential streets:

Biltmore Drive (1305 to 1505)	Dalewood Drive	North Crossing Drive	Wembley Court
Bramble Road	Declair Drive	North Crossing Circle	North Druid Hills Road (2487 to 2827, odd- numbered residences)
Breezy Lane	Holly Lane	North Holly Lane	LaVista Road (1662 to 2204, even- numbered residences)
Briaroaks Trail	Jody Lane	Pine Tree Circle	
Carolyn Drive	Kittredge Court	Pineway Drive	
Christmas Lane	LaChona Court	Reindeer Drive	
	Merry Lane	Sheffield Drive	
	Nantahalla Court	Sheffield Glen Way	

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Briarcliff/North Druid Hills update

TAD:

On Dec. 11, the DeKalb Board of Commissioners (BOC) voted to create a Tax Allocation District (TAD) for the area surrounding the Briarcliff/North Druid Hills intersection. Approval was 5-2 in favor of the TAD, with Commissioners Burrell Ellis and Elaine Boyer opposing it.

At the only public hearing on the issue on Dec. 4—attended by only 3 BOC members—TAD consultant Ken Bleakly projected possible tax revenue of \$15 to 58 million from new development in the area over a 20-year period that could fund infrastructure and other improvements. Bleakly noted, though, that TAD funds could also be used to fund on-site improvements for projects, an incentive to developers that MHHA believes is unnecessary.

The Board of Education (BOE) has not yet agreed to participate in the TAD nor voted to sell its North Druid Hills property to Sembler Company. The Garvin study recommendations for improvements to accommodate proposed development totaled an estimated \$135 to 185 million. Without the BOE's participation, the projected TAD proceeds would be insufficient to implement Garvin's recommendations and could result in pressure to upzone from the current zoning in the TAD area: from 24 residential units per acre to 60 or 120 units per acre and from 2-story to 5-story buildings in the "Park at Briarcliff" and DeKalb school properties.

Survey:

This summer, Rep. Mike Jacobs polled residents in Merry Hills H.A., North Druid Hills R.A. and LaVista Park C.A., with the following question:

"Do you support the proposed high-density, mixed-use development at the intersection of North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Roads?"

318 households responded as follows:

No : 53.1%

Yes, with conditions: 42.5%

Yes, unconditionally: 4.4%

Garvin Study and DRIs

Still unavailable: the final Garvin study for the Briarcliff/North Druid Hills area and the traffic study results that are required by the ARC for the proposed DRIs.

1662 LaVista Apartments

Developers received approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to demolish the 1662 LaVista Apartments and build 34 townhouses in their place. The apartments are located behind BriarVista Shopping Center and behind the quonset hut and Kim Cleaners on LaVista Road. Houses on Dalewood Drive are adjacent to the project. The 100-foot buffer adjacent to Dalewood Drive will be reduced to 50 feet. Josiah V. Benator, Sheffield Civic Club president, was notified on Nov. 5 by developers that demolition for the project is proceeding.

Homes demolished for public safety

Three homes at 2527-2545 North Druid Hills Road were demolished late last year. The three homes were apparently occupied by homeless squatters, which is considered a public safety issue. In 2006, this property was rezoned to allow for construction of 21 homes. A "For Sale" sign is currently posted on the property.

Lindbergh LaVista Corridor Coalition

The Lindbergh LaVista Corridor Coalition (LLCC) has applied for a \$100,000 study grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission. The LLCC was formed by residents from LaVista Park, Woodland Hills and Lindridge/Martin Manor neighborhoods. The LLCC intends to conduct a formal planning study of the area that stretches half a mile on either side of Lindbergh/LaVista from the I-85 underpass to the intersection with Briarcliff Road.

Results of the application won't be known until the spring. For more info about the LLCC, see www.lindberghlavista.org.

Legislation to change last call for serving alcohol vetoed by CEO

Efforts to change "last call" for serving alcohol from 4:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. in DeKalb County were defeated in November. CEO Vernon Jones vetoed legislation by the Board of Commissioners to change the late night pouring hours.

Don Broussard, a former planning commissioner, then took action on behalf of neighbors in the Sagamore Hills neighborhood who objected to the recently-opened night club "Pure" at Clairmont and Briarcliff Roads. Broussard challenged the permits issued to the club by the county on the basis that the club does not have a kitchen as required by the zoning code and the ZBA ruled that the permit was incorrectly issued.

The county has not taken action to revoke the club's permit in accordance with the ZBA's ruling and the club remains open.

Township for Toco Hills?

State Representative Mike Jacobs spoke at the Nov. 6 MHHA meeting. He has been working with Representative Edward Lindsey of Buckhead on a new township bill to give DeKalb County communities local control over planning, zoning, land use, code enforcement, building permits, and alcohol licenses, as well as enable presently unincorporated communities to decide -- by public referendum, and without further action by the General Assembly -- whether or not they would like to become a full-fledged city at a later date.

If the township legislation passes in 2008, Rep. Jacobs said he is open to creating a township in Toco Hills if citizens are interested in it.

Welcome new MHHA members

Allen and Shelley Shaw, Declair Drive
Edward and Lynn Koffsky, Kittredge Court
Clive and Sandra Slovin, Nantahalla Court
Graeme Lenne, Sheffield Glen Way

Crime update

A crime update for October through December 2007 from the DeKalb County Police Dept. will be published at <http://www.merryhills.com/watch.htm> as soon as it is available.

No incidents were reported by neighbors to MHHA during the 4th quarter of 2007.

During the month of October, Center Precinct Detectives made arrests of juveniles believed to be responsible for the series of burglaries and break-ins that occurred earlier in the fall. The arrested suspects advised they looked for homes that appeared to be unoccupied as targets.



To report a crime or suspicious activity:

Call 911 to report the incident.

To inform the neighborhood, leave a message on the MHHA Hotline, 404-935-6936, or send a message to safety@merryhills.com.

Bylaws revision approved

On November 6, members voted to revise the MHHA bylaws as follows.

1. Membership. Voting members can be any resident or homeowner within boundaries.
2. Boundaries. Expanded to include triangular area bordered by LaVista Road, Briarcliff Road, and North Druid Hills Road.
3. Board of Directors. Eliminates appointed section representatives. Replaces current board structure with:
 - a. Elected Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Coordinator
 - b. Five (5) Elected Directors
 - c. Appointed Officers: Zoning Coordinator and Crime Prevention Coordinator
4. Term of office. Two years instead of one.
5. Elections. Eliminates nominating committee and designates Secretary to receive nominations.
6. Simplifies Purpose statement. Requires only 1 meeting of the Association annually, in November.

2008 Membership dues

Membership is on a calendar year basis, January to December. Dues are \$25 per year for each new or renewing member household. To join, complete the membership form and send it with your dues as directed. In addition to money, our organization needs officers and other volunteers. Please say yes to volunteering.

Mail your \$25 check payable to Merry Hills H.A. with the following form to:
Merry Hills H.A., P.O. Box 98490, Atlanta, GA 30359.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Member households will be listed as above in the printed MHHA Membership Directory unless you check the following:

- Do not list my phone number Do not list my household at all

E-mail address(es): _____

(MHHA Membership Directory does not include e-mail addresses)

Check this box to request snail mail delivery of our newsletter if you do not have access to e-mail.

Contact me about volunteering:

To serve as an officer for MHHA or other board member

To provide other assistance (such as legal assistance or database management)

Toco Hills-Avis G. Williams Library closes for construction of new building

The Toco Hill-Avis G. Williams Library will be replaced using revenue from the 2005 Bond Referendum. Construction is set to start in February 2008 and completion of the library is projected for January 2009. The new building will be 18,000 square foot, almost double the size of the old one. It will include a 100 seat meeting room, 12 seat conference room, 6 seat study/tutor room, 42 computers plus a 12-station computer lab. Parking will be increased from 66 to 120 spaces. See www.dekalb.public.lib.ga.us for architect's drawings and more info.

Emory considering relocating hospital and clinic to Clairmont Road

Emory University has announced it is considering relocating its hospital and clinic to its Clairmont Road Campus next to the VA Hospital. New clinic and hospital buildings were to be built on Clifton Road as part of Emory's strategic plan, and groundbreaking for the new clinic had already started. Under this new plan, student housing would relocate to Clifton Road from the Clairmont Campus. The Clairmont Campus, including a pool and fitness center, was built out within the past 5 years. The Emory Board of Trustees is expected to consider this change in plans—that might reduce traffic in the Clifton corridor—within the next few months. Construction is already underway for a 50-acre mixed use project on Clifton Road across from the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Development of Regional Impact (DRI) recommendations for the mixed use project included adding a divided median on Briarcliff Road from Clifton Road to LaVista Road to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety.

PHPList and Calling Post



PHPList

MHHA distributed 4 quarterly newsletters to those on our e-mail list during 2007, in addition to this winter 2008 edition. If you have not received our free newsletters, you may not be on our e-mail list or they may have landed in your SPAMBOX. We are now using an automated system, PHPList, to send newsletters. Messages are sent from email@merryhills.com. Make sure this e-mail address is on your safe sender's list so it does not get tagged as SPAM. If you are not a subscriber yet, you can join our PHPList on our website, www.merryhills.com.



Calling Post

MHHA also maintains a telephone database to broadcast meeting reminders and other messages to neighbors. To add your phone number to our Calling Post list, leave a message on our Hotline, 404-935-6936.

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MHHA HOTLINE: 404-935-6936

