



Messenger

MONTHLY REPORT OF THE CANDLER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

Volume 12, Issue 2, February 2000

When the lights went out in Candler Park

It was a dark and stormy night followed by a cold, infuriating day. The candles and flashlights put aside for Y2K finally came in handy. But we were not prepared for more than 24 hours of inconvenience.

"I am ending my 36th hour of no electricity. For a tiny storm that generated little tree damage in Candler Park, I find that unacceptable," Patti Goulding wrote on the Candler Park Web site message board.

"It was fun on Sunday, but on Monday morning, it was really irritating because there wasn't a Georgia Power truck in sight," Callan Circle resident Susan Wells said.

Trying to reach Georgia Power also was frustrating since it was impossible to get to a human being on the customer service line. By Wednesday, power finally returned to all of Candler Park.

CPNO President Debra Snell called the Georgia Power community affairs office on Thursday and asked for a representative to appear at the February meeting to explain how Candler Park and part of



— Deb Milbrath

Lake Claire could remain powerless when surrounding areas had regained electricity.

"The representative told me he welcomed the opportunity to appear at the meeting to explain the process, but they were in

'storm mode' and could only tentatively agree," Snell said.

Bring your sweetheart and your questions to the next Candler Park Neighborhood Organization meeting, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 14.

City of Atlanta refunds storm water utility bill

The City will be sending a refund, with interest, to residents who paid last year's storm water utility bill — a new fee that was assessed to fund projects to improve stormwater infrastructure. (The administration has decided to not appeal the Fulton County Superior Court ruling that this bill was illegally imposed.) The Finance Department is setting up a process for sending the refund checks, but at this time I do not have an estimate for when residents can expect to receive them in the mail. City officials plan to study successful storm water utilities in other jurisdictions in preparation for a future attempt to establish one in Atlanta.

— Council member Cathy Woolard

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How to appeal your property tax appraisal

You may not be aware of it, but property tax season is here.

If you believe your DeKalb property tax appraisal is too high, you can appeal that appraisal. There are two ways to do this.

The proactive way is to file a Property Tax Return. You can obtain this form by calling the DeKalb Board of Tax Assessors at 404-371-0841. This form must be filed between Jan. 1 and March 1. On this form you declare what you believe the fair market value of your home to be.

The important thing to know about this way of appealing the current DeKalb appraisal is that if DeKalb does not change your appraisal from 1999, this is your only way to appeal the 2000 appraisal. You will not know if DeKalb plans to change your appraisal until the appraisal change notices are mailed in mid-April. So if you believe the appraisal on your home to be too high relative to comparable homes, this is the only way to ensure you can appeal in 2000.

The risk you take is that if DeKalb was not planning to raise your appraisal in 2000, this will force them to look at your home and they might disagree with you and actually raise your appraisal. So do your research and be confident about the estimate of your home's value before you pursue this route.

The reactive way to appeal your appraisal is to appeal the change in appraisal value sent by DeKalb in mid-April. Again, you will not get this notice if DeKalb does not change their appraisal of your home in 2000.

The advantage of waiting until DeKalb changes your appraisal is that you then know what they believe your current appraisal to be and you do not run the risk of provoking them into raising the value higher. The disadvantage of waiting for the change in appraisal by DeKalb is that if you are quite confident that their 1999 appraisal was too high and they do not reappraise your home in 2000, you have no way to

appeal in 2000 since the deadline for proactively appealing was March 1.

The advantage of appealing your appraisal by one method or another even if you do not get DeKalb to lower the appraisal is that if you take your appeal all the way to the DeKalb Board of Equalization, the value they set this year will stay in place for three years. DeKalb can only change your appraisal within the next three years if they make an on-site inspection, something not usually done. In short, if you are willing to appear in person in front of the DeKalb Board of Equalization, you will in most cases have the appraisal of your home frozen for the next three years.

How do you research the current value of your home?

Basically, you find what nearby comparable homes have sold for recently. Comparable homes are those which you can show are similar to your own. Usually, you would find homes with the same square footage, the same number of bedrooms and baths, and same degree of renovation and repair. The value would be modified by which street the houses are on, by driveways and carports, by landscaping, by decks and patios, etc. In short, by all the factors that affect the selling price of a home.

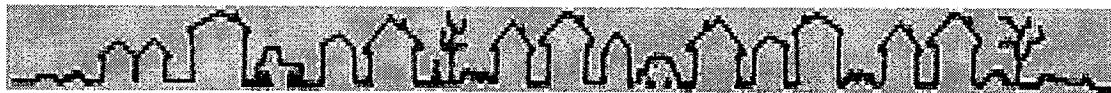
You can research the value of comparable homes in several ways. You might call the real estate agent who sold you your home. Real estate agents keep up with what neighborhood homes are selling for.

You can also find what you think are comparable homes in the neighborhood and either go to the DeKalb County courthouse to look up the selling price or (soon) go on-line to www.ezgov.com. Lastly, you could hire a professional appraiser to research the value of your home.

If you have other questions, contact Greg Smith at 404-681-9945 or gsmithmd1@aol.com.

Next month: Tips on how to present the best case to the Board of Equalization.

— Greg Smith



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CPNO Officers

President Debra Snell
404-370-0040, dsnell@gsu.edu
1st Vice President Greg Smith
4/681-9945, GSmithMD1@aol.com
VP Finances Karen Hill
4/373-1928, karenhill87@hotmail.com
VP Special Events Roger Johnson
4/524-3202, Webmaster@candlerpark.org
VP Communications Barb Senftleber
4/377-9174, bsenftleber@ajc.com
VP Zoning Walter Weimar
4/377-1411, wwelma01@sprintspectrum.com
NPU Representative John Rick
4/581-9944, rick.5@mindspring.com
VP Environment Susan Grider
4/373-2026, avenir@mindspring.com
VP Safety Austin Wattles
4/577-1498, awattles@mindspring.com

Property Tax Refund Update

Dear residents:

It could have been better, but it could have been worse.

Mike Holiman and Aaron Watson were not able to get the five votes needed to authorize refunds from the School Board.

Instead, the board voted to ask a judge for a declaratory judgment on whether they have to do what the city told them to do: pay the refunds.

The School Board doesn't appear to be seeking to overturn the ordinance itself, just asking whether they have the authority to pay refunds for the School Board's portion in the manner set out by the city.

There is some honest doubt whether the ordinance as passed is the proper way to have the School Board's portion refunded. Whether a majority of the School Board wants to make refunds is a separate issue.

A potential problem is how well or vigorously the city will defend an ordinance it spent five months trying to block.

For now, however, there is nothing more we can do until we see what the School Board files with the court.

— Greg Smith

CPNO Meeting Feb. 14

The Candler Park Neighborhood Organization meets on the second MONDAY of the month at Epworth United Methodist Church, 1561 McLendon Ave.
Please use the Mell Ave. entrance.

This month's agenda

7:00 p.m. Refreshments
7:30 p.m. *Officer reports
***Discussion** of City Parks mulching of Candler Park Drive pathway (See article)
* **Discussion** of Watershed Protection preliminary study
* **Vote** on Center for Watershed Protection concepts neighborhood supports for 319 grant (See article)
* **Vote** to change Freedom Parkway Conservancy bylaws (See Update article)
* **Vote** on Moreland Gateway traffic study (See article)
***Discussion** of Battery Bar hours in Little Five Points

Calendar

Mon, 2/14	— CPNO general meeting 7 p.m. refreshments 7:30 monthly meeting Every second Monday
Mon., 2/21	— CPNO Exec. Committee 7 p.m. at Epworth United Methodist Church Every third Monday
Wed., 2/23	— CPNO Community Plan Panel 7 p.m. at Epworth United Methodist Church
Thur., 2/24	— N.P.U. Monthly Meeting Every fourth Thursday

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Watershed restoration discussed

At the February CPNO meeting, preliminary results from a study performed by the Center for Watershed Protection in Ellicott City, Md., will be discussed. The study, funded through a grant from the Alex C. Walker Educational & Charitable Foundation, suggests potential concepts and sites in Freedom and Candler Parks for watershed restoration.

Concepts are all geared toward nonpoint source pollution reduction. Nonpoint source pollution is the pollution caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As rain hits paved areas and even the ground, it accumulates pollutants (car oil residue, herbicides, animal droppings) and deposits them in rivers and streams. The net is the destruction of plant and animal habitat.

Watershed restoration concepts range from naturalizing concrete culverts to creating bio-retention areas to slow the flow of water in the creeks

Two or three of these concepts in Freedom Park will be discussed in more detail. A vote will be taken to identify watershed restoration concepts for which Candler Park neighborhood is interested in helping to seek implementation funds. Based on this vote, a team of volunteers from the neighborhood and the Freedom Park Conservancy will write a Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant (319 Grant) this spring. Funds are awarded by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

— Susan Grider

It's Not Too Cool for the Pool

The winter winds may be blowing outside but the Candler Park Pool Association is thinking summer.

For those unfamiliar with this little oasis, Candler Park Pool is neighborhood managed and open to the public. Staff and improvements are paid for by subscriptions. Subscribers are allowed unlimited access to the pool, extended swim times and a safe and friendly environment at a reasonable price. For those who were subscribers, patrons or volunteers for the 1999 season, thank you for helping make the dream possible.

The pool association is currently making plans for summer 2000. If you or your family is planning on subscribing, consider doing so before April 1 in order to aid in planning. There are many volunteer opportunities.

You can access a subscription form at www.candlerpark.org.

— Any questions, call Bert Bellington at 404-351-8000

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Stay tuned.....

In April, CPNO should hear whether we received with Lake Claire and Park Pride Atlanta a Sustainable Development Challenge Grant (SDCG) from the EPA to fund an integrated streetscape and waterscape plan linking Lake Claire Park, Candler Park, Freedom Park and Findley Plaza in Little Five Points.

Neighborhood Update

Freedom Park Conservancy

The Freedom Park Conservancy (FPC) is looking to change its bylaws to expand membership beyond the neighborhoods that surround the park. This change is being proposed to increase the number of individuals who have an interest in the park and is based on the results of a study performed by a fundraising organization hired by FPC.

Currently the Candler Park Neighborhood Organization, Druid Hills Civic Association, Inman Park Neighborhood and Poncey Highland Neighborhood have two voting members on the board. Lake Claire, Ponce Corridor East and the Old Fourth Ward each have one voting member. The current draft calls for each neighborhood to have a single delegate and adds the Bedford Pine Neighborhood as a representative. Additionally, slots would be elected to the board for two-year terms.

A more detailed draft will be presented at the February meeting for approval by the Candler Park Neighborhood Organization. Call me at 404-522-7130 with questions.

— Eric Dusenbury

Comprehensive development

In February, Atlanta will be holding public hearings on the 2001 Comprehensive Development Plan. Interested residents can discuss neighborhood development issues with city officials. The hearing for the Northeast area will be 7 p.m. Feb. 15 at Grady High School, 929 Charles Allen Dr. NE. For information, call the Bureau of Planning at 404-330-6145.

Candler Park Playground

The Candler Park Playground Task Force met with three people from the city's Bureau of Parks in mid-January to go over our proposal (review it at www.candlerpark.org). We'll meet again at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16 at the playground to review sketches of the renovated playground. We hope to include these sketches in the March issue of the Messenger. To join the task force, contact me at stacywms@aol.com or 404-378-5564.

— Stacy Williams

Moreland Gateway

The Moreland Gateway is a project to make improvements to Freedom Park east of Moreland Avenue. The focus is sidewalks, trails and landscaping. The Freedom Park Conservancy has acquired a little over \$640,000 to make the improvements and is helping to oversee the implementation of the project. Additionally, there is a subcommittee of the Candler Park Neighborhood Organization that is reviewing the scope of work and making suggestions on how it would like the park improved.

FPC recently hired a firm to perform a traffic study of the intersection of Moreland Avenue and Freedom Parkway to try to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists trying to cross Moreland Avenue. We hope to have some proposed solutions for review and vote at this month's meeting. Please attend if you are interested in this issue.

Additionally, FPC has sent out requests for proposals to several design firms. These proposals should be received and a design firm selected by February's CPNO meeting. The firm will develop designs for park improvements that will be reviewed by the neighborhood. The designs should be completed by the end of summer, at which time the project will be sent to bid so construction can begin in the fall and be completed by spring.

Anyone interested in joining the CPNO subcommittee for the Moreland Gateway Project should contact Eric Dusenbury at 404-522-7130 or via e-mail at ericandkarin@msn.com.

Mulch removed from path

The woody mulch material was removed from the path along Candler Park Drive on the top ridge. Steve Waller of the city Parks Department was very responsive to the requests from the community to maintain the area as a path for foot traffic. He will attend the Feb. 14 CPNO meeting to hear residents' concerns about grassy areas of the park being covered with mulch.

— Randy Byrd

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Crime Report

Crimes reported between Dec. 25, 1999 and Jan. 17, 2000 in 6th Zone's records.

400 Moreland, 12/23 ,3 p.m. Female struck kid with stick.

DeKalb & Oakdale, 12/24, 10:07 a.m. Suspect fled from police in car, chase ensued, arrested.

400 Page, 12/24, 6 a.m. Vehicle entered, cellphone, some items thrown in street.

1200 DeKalb, 12/25, 4:20 p.m. Suspect vehicle had stolen license plate.

400 Candler Park Drive, 12/25, 3 p.m. Apartment burglarized, VCR taken.

1300 Euclid, 12/29, 7:15 p.m. Straw purse found behind building.

400 Candler Park Drive, 12/29, 7:15 p.m.

Apartment burglarized, personal items stolen.

400 Candler Park Drive, 12/30, Midnight. Rear window broken, alarm sounded.

Year 2000

Iverson Park, 1/4, 12:33 p.m. Old lawn mower found.

1300 McLendon, 1/4, Midnight. Couple found bullet hole in their window.

300 Candler Street, 1/5, 4:03 p.m. Victim struck, knocked down by suspect.

300 Clifton, 1/9, 4:01 p.m. Stolen vehicle recovered, returned by friend.

200 Moreland, 1/12, 3:30 p.m. Man arrested with cocaine.

400 Euclid Terrace, 1/13, 9:00 a.m. Damage to parked car, probably not an accident.

1800 Marlbrook Drive, 1/16, 3:40 p.m. Tools valued at \$5,000 stolen from van.

300 Elmira Place, 1/16, 1:43 p.m. Arrestee threatened victim.

Crime in the last century

It seems to me that crime went down a little in 1999. It is hard to know for sure until I learn how to evaluate the statistics better, and we have greater access to more of the Atlanta police records. But to anyone who has been victimized in 1999, one crime is too much.

People think that the police can guard their house. They can't. They depend on the citizens to call them. Sometimes they run into something, but they are dependent, more than we sometimes realize, on our cooperation.

We in Candler Park can do our share by calling the police about suspicious people on our block. I am pleased to announce that Connie Weimar has agreed to work with me on this and we hope more of you will be interested in helping as well.

A good number of times in 1999, I read in the police records about suspects being arrested because of timely action by neighbors and police working together.

— Austin Wattles

ATTENTION BLOCK CAPTAINS!

If you have not given
your block/street directory
to the block captain coordinator*,
Please do so as soon as possible.

Thanks

*Rita Wuebbeler
421 Callan Circle

404-378-1990
Rwuebbeler@aol.com

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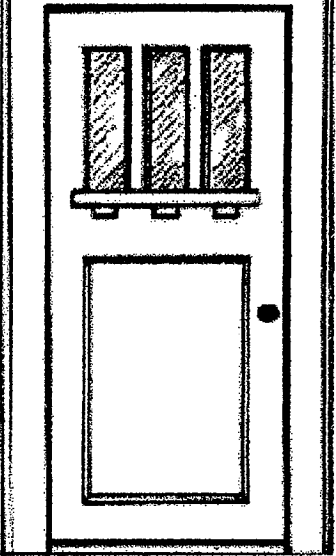
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Display ads are \$10/column inch in height. Ads should be camera ready. Deliver ad and check made out to C.P.N.O. to Jack Hammond, 1429 McLendon Ave. (688-2916) no later than the 18th of the month for the next edition. Include your name and phone.



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