

HBNA Spring General Meeting and New Neighbor Reception

Tuesday, April 18th, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 6:00-8:30pm

Notes

HBNA Board President Maribett Varner called the meeting to order at 6:50pm during a beautifully catered reception for all attendees. Round table seating invited neighbors old and new to share conversation, introductions, and news. A big thank you to Rebecca Harvill, HBNA Events Chair, for arranging the welcome reception.

APD Zone 2 Major Ailen Mitchell and Zone 2 Captain Benjamin Vayens: Major Mitchell joined the APD in 2006 and has worked in Zone 2 since 2014 as a Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, and now Major. He was Commander Andre Senzer's (promoted to Deputy Chief) assistant since 2020. Major Mitchell previously commanded the SWAT team, served on the Red Dog Unit, Gang Unit, and Auto Theft Task Force.

Captain Vayens also joined APD in 2006 and is now Assistant Zone Commander for Zone 2, after having served in various capacities in Zones 1 (NW ATL) and 3 (SW ATL) and attaining several promotions. Zone 2 residents and businesses are fortunate to have these experienced men and other Zone 2 officers.

Report: Zone 2 covers 32 square miles and 40+ neighborhoods. Recruitment goal for the entire COA is 2,000 officers; there are 1,500 presently. Retention has been difficult in recent years due to pay level, unfit buildings to work in, absence of take-home cars, etc. Those conditions are changing for the better with the implementation of some take-home cars, the prospect of the new training facility that will house all operations, including horse and canine barracks, and other planned changes. The Buckhead Annex in Zone 2 at Peachtree Road and West Paces Ferry is open and staffed with fourteen officers, and Lenox / Phipps crime suppression is in full operation mode. Arrests are up by 30%, mostly for organized shoplifting, vehicle break-ins, and stolen cars. In addition, Zone 2 monitors five homeless encampments that are located a few miles from one another. There are currently 120 officers in Zone 2 divided into specialized units. Eighty percent of police officers work extra jobs.

Please consider connecting your home cameras to connectatlanta.org. Google: Connect Atlanta for a good introduction video that explains the process. There is a non-emergency number to call if you need help: 404 658-6666. Major Mitchell, Captain Vayens, and Stephanie McGarity (Brookhaven Security) all stressed that residents should not hesitate to call 911 whether or not residents are sure if their concern is an emergency. Make sure you are connected to the proper 911 call center, Dekalb or Fulton.

Some good news: Captain Vayens told me that Zone 2 staffing levels have recovered to the point of being able to accommodate requests for speeding stakeouts. Peachtree Dunwoody Road will be the first street that I request for surveillance, speed study, and speeding citations, if Captain Vayens agrees. Volume and speed on Peachtree Dunwoody are not compromised by the North

Buckhead Storm Drain Project, so whatever data is collected should be “normal.” I hope to get something set up in early May.

Signature Streets: Peachtree Dunwoody Road: Matt Oja, member of the North Buckhead Civic Association gave a slide presentation and commentary on the Signature Streets initiative specifically regarding Peachtree Dunwoody Road, our neighborhood’s western boundary. Graphics showed safety, wayfinding, and beautification possibilities, though nothing is written in stone at this point as government and corporate fundraising is underway. To view the entire 165-page Pond & Co. Engineering document, go to: <https://nbca.memberclicks.net/> Document pages specific to Peachtree Dunwoody Road are 40-47 and 68-73. Matt answered several residents’ questions. NBCA and HBNA are working together on the PDR improvement options. HBNA is represented by Maribett Varner, HBNA President; Shelby Cobb, Transportation Committee chair, and Gordon Anderson, Transportation Committee member.

HBNA Time Capsule Redux: This September’s Street Party events will include the recovery of our neighborhood time capsule buried twenty-five years ago. A 2023 capsule will be buried in its place. Look for a neighborhood email blast in the coming months that will serve as a call to help decide the contents of the new capsule! Stay tuned!

Call for Nomination for HBNA Board Treasurer, beginning January 2014. Nominations, including self-nomination, are open for the HBNA Board Treasurer position. Our current Treasurer, Mark Bryant, will become Board President in January of 2024. If you have financial or treasurer experience and would like to learn more, please contact Maribett Varner: maribettvarner68@gmail.com. The Board meets monthly (except December) on the third Thursday on the month, 8:00am at Capital City Club. Due to current Club construction, we are temporarily meeting in neighborhood homes. Meetings typically adjourn by 9:30am.

The Spring General Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Shelby Cobb

HBNA Transportation Committee Chair

4/21/23