

Why do we need a neighborhood association?

1. Development and land use issues

Development is ramping up all around us. This is inevitable - the question is, can we have any influence on the direction it takes? We don't want to be taken by surprise. The LRSCA was re-activated in a furious push when the cityhood movement was gaining momentum a few years ago. Whatever your opinion was or is about cityhood, no one can deny that the affected neighborhoods have the right to make informed decisions, and the association worked hard to gather that information from various government and advocacy organizations, and to make it available to those affected by the decisions. Similarly, as other development issues come up we want to have representatives "in the loop" to keep us informed.

2. Civic involvement

The board members and officers of the LRSCA represent the neighborhood at numerous meetings over the course of the year. During the past year we have attended over a dozen meetings with various officials and organizations to gather information and, if need be, act as an early warning system. There were a number of meetings held by the Atlanta Regional Commission to interact with the Lawrenceville Highway Corridor Stakeholders to map out long term goals for development along this corridor that borders our neighborhood. There were meetings with state and county officials, including State Senator Elena Parent, County Commissioners Jeff Rader, Kathy Gannon, and Sharon Barnes Sutton, School Board member Marshal Orson, Tax Commissioner Irvin Johnson, Chief of Police Jim Conroy, and others. Topics included the potential impact of Emory annexing into the city of Atlanta; plans for the three phase development of the Fuqua projects along Scott Boulevard from the WalMart to the old Ford dealership; potential development of townhomes and/or mixed use at the driving range on N. Druid Hills; townhomes on Orion Drive across from the QT; the senior residential development on Lawrenceville Highway; the redevelopment of the Williamsburg Apartments over by Toco Hills; proposed re-zoning of the property on the corner of N. Druid Hills and N. Druid Woods for a daycare facility; county plans for flood plain management; county plans for stringent code enforcement to control "unsavory" businesses; and re-visioning the structure of DeKalb County government through the Blueprint II committee.

In these interactions, the community's voice is stronger when officials see the neighborhood represented by a formal structure. In other words, we are the face of the neighborhood for these officials. The neighborhood association also provides a structure for interacting with nearby neighborhoods through the Civic Association Network (CAN), sharing information, resources, and strategy when appropriate.

In the near future (on October 10), we will be hosting a forum to discuss pros and cons of the proposed Opportunity School District amendment on the ballot this November. And the owners of North DeKalb Mall have assured us that whenever they finalize their negotiations with potential tenants, they will share information with us so we can finally move beyond the rumor stage!

3. Neighborhood Watch

We will be hearing shortly from Susan Hellinger, who is doing a wonderful job as NW coordinator to keep us informed of happenings in the neighborhood and providing consistent communications with DeKalb County Police. She could use a lot more help with block captains, and I'm sure she will say more about that.

4. Social Events

Many thanks to Susan McWethy and to Druid Hills Middle School for the most enjoyable outdoor concert this past spring. Pictures from the event are posted on the walls. I think it is safe to say that all who attended had a great time., and the weather cooperated this year!

5. Civic pride

From time to time the county coordinates clean-up events, such as the up-coming round-up of illegal signs throughout the county on Saturday, September 24. The beautification committee is our point of contact for these events.

How can I help?

We want to actively represent your interests, which is a whole lot easier to do when you all get involved. Volunteer for a committee. Attend meetings and share what you learn. Get to know your neighbors and watch out for the neighborhood. Pay your dues. Get involved and help us move the organization in directions that are important to you and that benefit all of us.