The TCA Tribune

July 2009

Tucker Civic Association

"Partners in the Progress and Preservation of Tucker"

Letter from the President

Working as partners for Tucker's bright future

We have just about reached the midpoint of our membership year, a good time to reflect on our recent accomplishments, as well as to think about Tucker Civic Association's role in the future of Tucker.

The rest of this newsletter is designed to explain the work of our committees, district representatives and special projects. But I would like to write a few lines about the "big picture" view.

Many parties are doing great things to improve Tucker. The recent implementation of an overlay district for our downtown area, the new public library, the major renovation of Tucker High School and the coming improvements on Main Street will create a dynamic community. And now that the county commission has voted to allow restaurants inside overlay districts to apply for a liquor license despite proximity to churches, there is a chance that Tucker can build a pedestrian-friendly downtown with restaurants and creative storefronts, a downtown which might draw comparisons with Norcross and Decatur.

Not to mention the possibility of a "brain train" commuter rail service between Atlanta and Athens which could include a station stop in Tucker.

TCA has been involved in all these projects, with officers and members attending and sometimes hosting meetings, with committee members doing "behind the scenes" work, and with the TCA Board of Directors passing motions in support of these efforts. We are indeed living up to our motto of being "partners in the progress and preservation of Tucker."

We appreciate the contributions and involvement of our members, and we encourage more Tucker residents to join our association. In our role of being a voice for Tucker citizens in public affairs, this is indeed an exciting time. And we hope more of our current and yet-to-be members will get actively involved.

"Students of the Year" honored

At our spring membership meeting, TCA for the first time announced co-winners of the Student of the Year in Community Service Award, which goes to graduating seniors at Tucker High School.

Christopher Beck has served as a mentor at Livsey Elementary, a teacher cadet at Midvale Elementary, and a special education "buddy." He also

Christopher

Capucine

spent six days helping build a home for Habitat for Humanity and devoted time to playing bridge with patients in a nursing home.

Capucine Beck worked as a fund-raiser for Habitat for Humanity. She was co-president of Project Rebound. She also volunteered at Idlewood Elementary as a reading tutor for a first grade student.

Each winner received a plaque and a $300 scholarship check.

TCA Board reaches out to Tucker churches

Led by President Joe Scarpaci, Vice President Helen von Waldner, Secretary Harriett Gess and Treasurer Tom Democko, TCA has put a priority this year on building relationships with religious institutions. "We know that Tucker is home to more than 160 churches," said Joe, "and that churches build a sense of community and address social needs." The TCA Board has been holding its monthly meetings (on the second Thursday) at different churches, and is exploring projects on which TCA and churches can work together.

Joe

Helen

Harriett

Tom

"Give An Hour" for Food Pantry

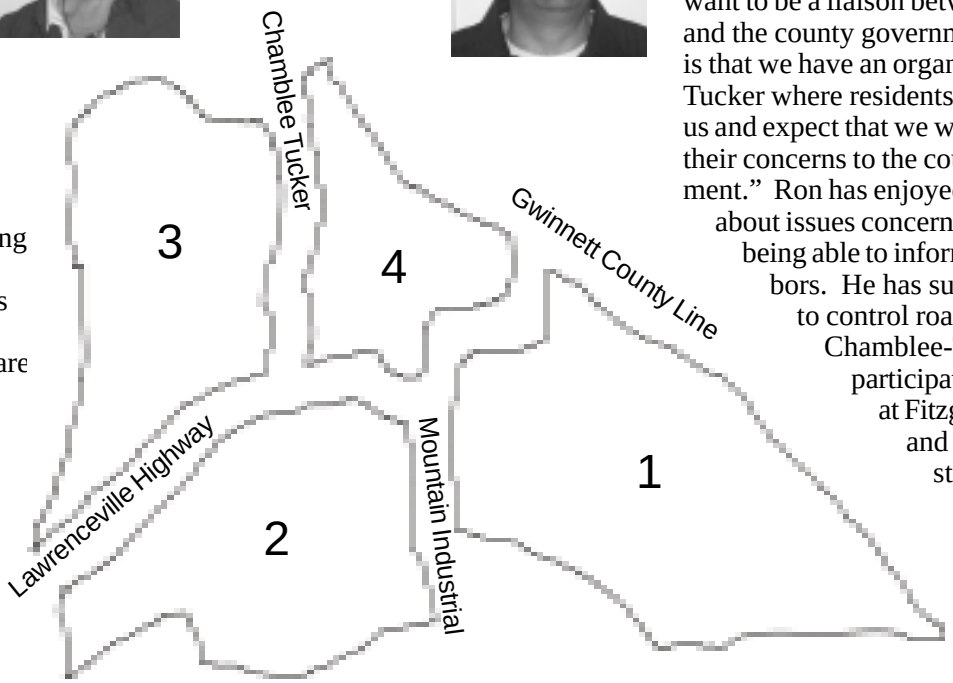
TCA's effort to involve Tucker citizens in good works -- "Give An Hour" -- will focus for July and August on the Tucker Food Pantry in the Tucker Recreation Center on Lavista Road. Citizens are encouraged to bring donations of food to the Pantry Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A party is being planned to thank church volunteers who staff the Pantry. That's Sunday, Aug. 23, at Sheridan's Frozen Custard in the Cofer Crossing shopping center on Lawrenceville Highway. Donate canned goods and meet the volunteers. Check our website at www.tuckercivic.org.

District Representatives keep tabs on neighborhood and area issues

Tucker Civic Association bylaws divide Tucker into four districts. TCA members living in each district elect a representative to sit on the TCA Board of Directors. The District Representatives are ambassadors and watchdogs, spreading information about TCA to local neighborhoods and listening to their neighbors about local concerns and issues. This is an introduction to the TCA districts and what our representatives are hearing in their neighborhoods. The district representatives can be reached through email at the TCA website, www.tuckercivic.org.

District 3 Representative Jannean Bello is a homemaker and member of the Board of Directors of the Empire Square Civic Association for six years. She wants neighborhood associations, churches and local organizations to get involved in community affairs. She helped to coordinate a clean-up of Henderson Park by involving Brownie and Girl Scout troops, as well as neighbors who utilize the park. She knows that local residents are worried about gang-associated graffiti and burglaries. She believes Tucker residents should join TCA "to improve the community where they live." She says, "We need to protect and improve what we have."

District 4 Representative Ron Wilkinson is a manager for a firm that supplies prosthetics and orthotics. "Most people want a safe place to live and raise a family," Ron notes. "I want to be a liaison between residents and the county government. The idea is that we have an organization here in Tucker where residents can come to us and expect that we will express their concerns to the county government." Ron has enjoyed learning about issues concerning Tucker and being able to inform his neighbors. He has supported efforts to control road speed on Chamblee-Tucker. He participated in clean-ups at Fitzgerald Field and Johns Homestead park. "The idea of serving my community is important," Ron says.



District 2 Representative Robert Koch is an architect who has designed residential, retail and mixed use projects. He attended some TCA committee meetings and found that TCA was willing to work with applicants and was not automatically anti-development. He worked in TCA's Tucker Day booth and spoke with a lot of people. "I asked myself if I wanted to become a member of a local organization board. And I decided I wanted a bigger role in being active in my community," Robert said.

Tom Lawrence, our District 1 Representative, is an attorney who works with small businesses and does estate planning. He served as a state representative 1983-1997. His major focus is preserving the quality of life for his neighbors. He is concerned about "anything that would interfere with our quality of life, things that can and can't be done in certain zoning applications." Following a couple home invasions in his district, Tom knows that "we need to constantly work on public safety issues." Tom says, "My role is to work with the Smoke Rise Community Association and let them know we're here to help, not conflict with them."

Public Safety Committee addresses a wide range of issues

TCA had a history of sponsoring many community meetings on public safety before 2008. And that year we created a permanent committee to address this area.

Chair Jane Tanner has been a member of TCA for five years. She is recognized for her efforts to initiate traffic calming on Chamblee Tucker Road and her work with PEDS' Kids Walk and Safe Routes to School programs (see story, page 4).

Jane's committee works with TCA District Representatives to hold town hall meetings on public safety and code enforcement issues. She serves as a liaison with DeKalb Fire and Police Departments. She encourages efforts such as Neighborhood Watch crime prevention and the Police Department's Interactive Community Policing (ICP) program.

"I took this job because I believe TCA is needed," Jane explains. "I believe we should have a free flow of information. That's why I support Neighborhood Watch programs, so people in our subdivisions can share information about suspicious characters and crime statistics. And why I want our district representatives to be active on public safety issues."

Jane commends the work of State Rep. Kevin Levitas and Police representatives for working on traffic calming on Chamblee-Tucker Road. She looks forward to co-hosting with Rep. Levistas meeting in early 2010 to introduce the new Police Chief.

Jane can be reached by emailing publicsafety@tuckercivic.org, or by leaving a message on the TCA Hotline at 770-270-1620. She plans to hold her next Public Safety Committee meeting in early September.

PPLUZ Committee monitors land use & zoning proposals

Given the economic recession, it is not surprising that there have been few recent applications for rezonings and developments in Tucker.

Nevertheless, the Proactive Planning, Land Use & Zoning Committee stays busy representing TCA and Tucker residents on critical issues. The work requires committee members to carefully research each project and to be scrupulously fair with both developers and residents.

"A zoning application can pit a developer against the residents of surrounding neighborhoods," explains Anne Lerner. "Most of the time our role is to facilitate negotiations. We work with applicants, developers, property owners and citizens to produce solutions that work for all parties."

Anne

Anne, who does public relations work for Chik-fil-A, is co-chair of PPLUZ. Serving with her is Bruce Penn, who brings a wealth of experience as a real estate appraiser. Both serve on the DeKalb County Community Council.

"We need to educate people on the zoning process before an application hits," Anne stresses.

The next meeting of the committee will be announced on TCA's website.

P&G keeps TCA green

In 2008, TCA added a permanent Parks & Greenspace Committee, with the chair serving on the TCA Board of Directors. Bruce Nutter, the current chair, is a technician for Delta Airlines. "I know we can expect limited resources regarding county government help," he says. "That's why people need to be more politically involved, so we ask for more resources."

Bruce and his committee have helped with clean-ups at Henderson Park and the Johns Homestead property.

He is also coordinating this year's "Rivers Alive" project to continue cleaning up Old Peachtree Creek. Details of this and other events will be updated on the TCA website.

PR updates website

The Public Relations & Communications Committee keeps TCA members and the Tucker community informed about issues and public developments. Committee members Keith Kozicki and Rich Benevento have completed an update of the TCA website at www.tuckercivic.org. Check there for the next committee meeting.

Check out www.tuckercivic.org

Community Building

TCA's Community Building & Membership Committee has a long-standing history in the association, but no current chairperson.

This committee builds relationships with other organizations and solicits new members. Members of this committee are always active in manning the TCA booth at the Tucker Day celebration in May.

The former committee chair and members this past year also worked on park clean-ups, our contribution to the party given to thank officers of the Tucker Police Precinct, as well as our Rivers Alive project to clean out Old Peachtree Creek.

If you are interested in helping build a sense of community, email president@tuckercivic.org.

Tucker Civic Association
P.O. Box 1916
Tucker GA 30085
Hotline 770-270-1620
www.tuckercivic.org

The Tucker Civic Association Board of Directors meets once a month, normally on the second Thursday at 7 p.m. The location of each meeting is announced in advance on TCA's website and through broadcast emails. If you are interested in joining TCA or want more information, leave a message on the TCA Hotline at 770-270-1620.

Nominate someone for "Citizen of the Year"

TCA will present a "Tucker Citizen of the Year Award" at our membership meeting in late September. The winner must be someone who has contributed significantly to the progress and preservation of the Tucker community. Anyone can submit a nomination by writing a short essay. The essay must reach TCA by Friday, September 4, and it can be submitted as a letter, as a Word document or as an email. Each nomination should list address and phone number of the nominee and of the person who submits the nomination. Nominations can be mailed to CITIZEN OF THE YEAR, Tucker Civic Association, P.O. Box 1916, Tucker GA 30085, or emailed to vicepresident@tuckercivic.org.

SRTS project at Livsey wins funding

Tucker Civic Association this past year joined PEDS (metro Atlanta's advocacy group for pedestrian-friendly streetscapes), DeKalb County DOT, Dr. Castelle (Livsey principal) and others to apply for a Safe Routes To School (STRS) project at Livsey Elementary. The $313,000 federally funded project, funneled through the Georgia Department of Transportation, received approval in May and will begin work within the coming school year. The project will construct a sidewalk from Cofer Park to Chamblee-Tucker Road. It will place two permanent, solar-powered speed read-out signs on Chamblee-Tucker, build "bulb-out" curbs at the school, define parking spaces, create a raised crosswalk and update the crosswalk light. The project will include a traffic study to determine if there should be a left turn signal on Chamblee-Tucker coming from Lavista Road. For more information, check the TCA website at www.tuckercivic.org.

The project began with a "Walk to School" event a couple years ago.

News items: alcohol permitted for restaurants; automated carwash

Commissioners approve alcohol permits. The DeKalb Board of Commissioners in July approved restaurants in overlay districts to apply for alcohol permits. Previously in Tucker, restaurants on Main Street could not sell alcohol, due to proximity to churches. This vote means Tucker's Main Street can develop into a "destination," like downtown Decatur.

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Carwash intended. An applicant has proposed an adaptive re-use of the Arby's at 4037 Lawrenceville Highway to an automated carwash (Super Suds). As is the case with any redevelopment in the overlay district, it will not come before the Board of Commissioners, but must meet overlay requirements.

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Office building proposed. An office and an accessory building has been proposed at 4205 First Avenue. The owners of Baker Paint, across the street, have acquired this property, where an old residential structure was recently demolished. The new owners plan to build a 4,105 sq. ft. office building and a separate storage building. In negotiations with TCA representatives on June 22, the applicants agreed to a loft design with second story residential units, creating the first mixed use development in the Tucker overlay district. This should create a standard for future projects.

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Code enforcement actions. TCA has worked to have gang graffiti painted over at Pearsall's Auto Shop, as well as at locations on Evans Road, Henderson Mill Road, Briarcliff Way, and at Henderson Middle School.