

MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE - *Eye on Midtown 8/02/2007*

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS THIS COMING SATURDAY!

We need foot soldiers! In conjunction with the Midtown Neighbors' Association we will distribute about 1000 door hangers this Saturday morning that will include the National Night Out announcement and invitation, and membership brochures for both the MNA and the MPSA.

Because of the upcoming NNO this weekend is critical. Please meet at 9am, at the home of Elston Collins (809 Myrtle Street). Even if you only have time to do one stretch of a street we can use your help! If you can help please let us know as soon as possible.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Come join your neighbors next Tuesday (8/07) in the nicely shaded area on Myrtle Street near 6th for a good ol' fashion cookout and lots of fun! For the kids we will have the moonwalk, sidewalk chalk, bubbles and balloons. For everybody we will have the Sno Cone machine, MPSA Patrol officers, Atlanta Police Department, and other public officials.

Special thanks go to the following sponsors for their donations: Shane's Bar-B-Q, Target, Mary Mac's, Brinks Home Security, Thom and Ray Team, and Piedmont Park Conservancy.

This event brought to you as a community event by the Midtown Neighbor's Association and the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance.

NO AUGUST SAFETY MEETING

We are putting all of our energy into the National Night event. ***Contrary to previous announcements we will NOT hold a public safety meeting on August 13th.*** The monthly public safety meetings will resume on September 10th.

PEACHTREE PINE UPDATE

On Tuesday the Community Development Committee voted 3-2 to "file" the resolution regarding the Peachtree Pine shelter after an 8-hour marathon. "Filing" a motion means to defeat a motion. The council members generally felt that the resolution would not accomplish anything since it urged the Mayor to send another letter to the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless, clarifying that the City was not really withdrawing its support for Peachtree-Pine.

The Mayor's office made it clear that the original letter meant what it stated, and has no intention of sending another letter saying they did not mean it after all.

Councilman Kwanza Hall, who represents District 2 (covers part of Midtown), serves on the Community Development Committee and made the motion to "file." Anne Fauver of District 6 (serves the rest of Midtown) is not on the committee and is recovering from surgery. But she went to the committee meeting and spoke in favor of the Mayor's approach and against what goes on at Peachtree-Pine.

The three Council members voting to file were Jim Maddox (chairperson of the CD Committee), Kwanza Hall and Mary Norwood (Citywide member). We should all thank them for their support. We are very grateful that they are listening to the concerns of the community impacted by the Peachtree Pine shelter.

The two Council members voting against the motion to file both indicated that they are still listening and could change their minds by the August 20 Council meeting.

Of the three at-large City Council members Mary Norwood is already on board with the neighborhoods, and we should credit her for her hard work. We should really focus on the other two at-large council members – Ceasar Mitchell and H. Lamar Willis.

In the time running up to the August 20th Full Council meeting, we need e-mails and phone calls to City Council. There is still time to do so if you haven't or wish to send a reiteration. On the 20th we will need the community to make a showing once again. We are told to have people come before 1:00 to sign up for a speaking slot. The earlier you get there, the earlier you will be on the list.

We are finally making progress on this issue, thanks to the Mayor, and we need everyone to speak up. The Task Force for the Homeless brought lots of shelter folks to Community Development meeting to cheer and boo for them, and had nothing but time on their hands to outwait neighbors and business owners who had to get back to work.

Also, let Mayor Franklin know that you appreciate her efforts - both her leadership on dealing with the complex issue of homelessness and her diligent effort in finding real solutions. Her tenacity in telling the truth about Peachtree-Pine deserves much appreciation in the community.

AJC ARTICLE ON THE PEACHTREE PINE SHELTER

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution ran an article recapping the Community Development meeting this past Tuesday. The link is posted below - they normally run articles free-of-charge for only a week. We urge people to write reader letters to raise awareness of the implications of this issue – this will help later to address their major benefactors (Atlanta Business Chronicle named Chick-Fil-A and Perkins+Will). The focus now should be on supporting the City Council's denial of funding for this shelter. Nothing was mentioned about the observations and experiences of the surrounding residential community.

- ***AJC article online:***
http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2007/07/31/homeless_0801_web.html

PARKING PERMIT SYSTEM IN PARTS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The parking permit signs have been erected in most of the area bound by 8th, Myrtle, 10th, and Charles Allen Drive. This includes those parts of Argonne and Taft Avenues. ***Residents in the affected area should call the Public Works Department for more information on fees and eligibility requirements for the decals.***

Neither the MPSA nor the MNA was involved in the petition process for the permits. Furthermore, the MPSA maintains a neutral position on this issue. Under city ordinance citizens can petition for a parking permit system for their block. Approval requires 70% of the affected homeowners to sign the petition, and do not require comment from neighborhood organizations or their NPU. City ordinance does not provide for neighborhood-wide parking permit systems – only block-by-block.

- ***Information on neighborhood parking decals: 404-330-6501 (ask for Ahlumba Harris).***

MPSA WEBSITE CHANGES

We have overhauled the MPSA website. We made substantial changes to the About page, which more or less outlines our current “blueprint.” Old, expired content was purged from the website. We re-organized the News page and put links to current galleries.

- ***MPSA website: www.midtownponce.org***

LATEST PROSTITUTION STING

After we ran the prostitution videos (currently off-line until we find a more appropriate venue than YouTube) the vice unit of the Atlanta Police Department conducted a big prostitution sting.

A representative from the Vice Unit informed us that 33 arrests were made just for prostitution-related offenses. 30 prostitutes were arrested, along with 2 johns and another for procuring. On top of that they made additional incidental arrests for unrelated offenses, such as violation of pedestrian duties and disorderly conduct.

An inordinate number of prostitutes gave Peachtree Pine addresses, and another claimed an address on Glendale Terrace.

The sting took place throughout Midtown but the MPSA service area benefited greatly from this sting. Most of the subjects in our video were arrested in the sting – one chronic prostitute frequenting Myrtle Street was arrested twice during the same sting. This one may still be in jail.

With great appreciation for the Atlanta Police Vice Unit we look forward to an even more comprehensive sting in the near future. Midtown will be under heavy observation in planning for the next big sting. Police stings greatly assist in our efforts toward a safer

and more orderly neighborhood, and furthermore in reminding the remaining prostitutes plying their trade here that they are truly living in the past.

PUBLIC SAFETY FORUM

Mayor Shirley Franklin and Police Chief Richard Pennington will hold a public safety forum.

- Location: Georgia Power Corporate Headquarters – 241 Ralph McGill Boulevard – Atlanta, GA 30308
- Date and Time: Saturday August 11th, from 8:30 to 11am. A light breakfast will be available at 8:30am, and the forum will begin at 9am.

MPSA MAILBAG (does not necessarily reflect the view of the MPSA)

Messy scavengers

Last night, a man pulled up at the edge of our residence [in the 800 block of] Argonne Avenue around 11:00 p.m. in a pickup truck, which was already full of trash bags, furniture, etc. Unfortunately we were not able to get his tag number. He proceeded to dig through all of the Herbie Curbies pulled up to the curb for pickup today. While I'm not sure about Atlanta's dumpster diving laws, the mess he left behind was atrocious and was definitely littering. It took me over 20 minutes today to pick up all of the mess he left behind. He ripped open trash bags and scattered trash over a large area spanning two properties. He was going through people's mail, so I wanted to pass this along as a warning about identity thieves that may be scouting the area. Please encourage residents to shred all personal mail and documents.

Summary of the Community Development Meeting

The meeting began at 12:30 with a large showing from the Task Force, some business owners in the area and local residents from [neighborhoods like Midtown, Central Park, and Old Fourth Ward].

Vince Smith, Director of the Atlanta Gateway Center briefed the committee on its progress by providing statistics on whom they had served, the projected growth of their initiative, and future plans to address the homeless issue. C.T. Martin, again, went on a tangent to discuss his observations when driving by the facility on his way home and making speeches.

- ***Link: Atlanta Gateway Center www.gatewayctr.org***

A vice president from the United Way gave a thorough briefing on the efforts of the Metropolitan Regional Commission, which involves Fulton, Dekalb, Cobb counties, etc..., to transition homeless people from shelters to housing. The idea is to not use emergency shelters as long term housing facilities, as is the case with the Pine Street Shelter. 900 units have been created to help families lift themselves out of their situation with an additional 450 units to come online by the end of the year. Also reviewed was the regional statistics on the growth of the homeless population and the work completed

to help understanding the underlying reasons, then coordinate action to help address. It was detailed, well thought out, and impressive.

Ann Fauver, district 6 councilperson, summarized her view with her opening remarks prior to the Task Force presentation. It is an issue with Quality of Life, everyone feels for the homeless and wants them to get support/help, however from a facility that is well managed, works with the community, works to transition individuals, and is considerate of the neighborhood. The atmosphere created by the Shelter is unacceptable and unnecessary; consideration needs to be given to the residents of the area. Furthermore, if the Shelter wants tax payer money it needs to accept some conditions for the funding, i.e. working within the established network and following basic guidelines like the rest of the centers.

Once it was time for the public to be heard, who signed up at the beginning of the meeting 3 hours earlier, the Shelter demanded to have equal time to present its side of the argument. They had not requested time prior to the meeting for presentation to the committee. The committee voted to allow 45 minutes for the presentation. Unfortunately I was not able to stay but for about 30 minutes of the presentation for having to return to work prior to the end of the day, however what I did witness was an emotional argument which alluded to racism and classism rather than providing factual information about how the Shelter operations, its tracking/reporting, plans for transitioning individuals, security, etc... I checked with another resident who did remain and she said it was not communicated by them. I was disappointed not to have heard that information.

I was frustrated with the lack of concise arguments and the emotional, in my opinion, offensive way it was presented by the Shelter. It is a reasonable request by the city to set conditions for public funding. The Shelter seemed to be more intent on crusading rather than addressing concerns.

STAY SAFE AND ENJOY THE WONDERFUL THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance

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A Safer Midtown... You are truly a part of it! www.midtownponce.org

The Midtown Public Safety Meeting is held at 7pm on the second Monday of the month, at Mary Mac's Tearoom.

A very special thanks to our Corporate and Community Sponsors who provide a major enhancement to your patrol's effectiveness:

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