

Minutes of the Merry Hills Homeowners' Association  
Spring Meeting May 7, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 2:37 P.M. by Flo Wolf, President MHHA. She reminded us that 2006 is the 10 year anniversary of MHHA. She introduced State Senator David Adelman who talked about his sponsorship of the floating homestead county tax exemption bill. If passed by the voters, the county homeowner's tax ( about 40% of total tax) would be frozen at this year's level. For every \$100,000 of assessed value, the homeowner would see about \$75 annual saving. Senator Adelman also informed the audience that the sexual predator bill of 2003 on minors below the age of 14 was strengthened this year. Added restrictions have been imposed on where convicted sex offenders can live and work (1000 foot distance from where children congregate – such as schools) and lifetime 24 hour electronic monitoring for many offenders whose victims were age 14 or younger. The Senator discussed a passed bill which requires a decreased student / teacher ratio in Georgia elementary and middle schools. He ended his presentation with some complimentary remarks about State Representative Mike Jacobs and a pep talk about the power of the people who care enough to attend meetings and participate in politics to make a difference in state and local government.

State Representative Mike Jacobs began his talk by telling us that he had arranged to have installed a flashing yellow traffic light on La Vista to insure the safety of students crossing the road to get to Torah DAY School. Representative Jacobs also mentioned the tax freeze bill and encouraged people to go out and vote for it this fall. It needs >50% affirmation to pass. The Representative also discussed the necessity for a comprehensive Atlanta mass transit system. He is actively working with a task force on various options such as Lovejoy, Brain Train Athens to Atlanta with proposed stops near us, Peachtree Rd. streetcar etc. He reassured the audience that he plans to continue working hard on this. Rep. Jacobs next discussed a failed bill to increase bonding capacity of De Kalb County for \$30 million which had been killed on the House floor but then tagged on as an amendment to a bill presented at the last minute. Mike Jacobs worked to defeat the bill because there was no accountability in it for inappropriate or excessive spending. Rep. Jacobs claims that he is now blamed for all that goes wrong in the County. He plans to reintroduce the bill with provisions for full disclosure and voter approval

Several questions were raised by the audience: Will the homestead tax freeze starve the county? M. Jacobs answered that developer impact fees will more than offset any loss from above and when a home is sold, a new assessment will be made. If the county needs to raise taxes, it can always do it, but not by just increasing your house assessment every year. More remarks were made regarding traffic safety on La Vista Road. Traffic lights were suggested for exiting Toco Hill shopping center. M. Jacobs reported that in recent past the traffic had not met the minimum volume needed for another traffic light but he promised to make a new request for re-evaluation. He also suggested that local residents request a speed measurement device for that area of La Vista which should help to slow the traffic. A request was made for contact information to reach county or state legislators.

Tracy Alexander read the minutes of Nov. 17, 2005 meeting which were approved and she submitted the Treasurer's report. The total cash balance as of now is \$5764.37. As of May 7, 2006 there are 124 current members who have paid 2005 or 2006 dues and 16 Non-current members (paid 2004 dues) out of 351 total properties.

Debra Edelson, zoning chair MHHA, brought to our attention two recent surprising rejections of requested front yard variances of the 35 foot limit ( in spite of neighbor support of the requests). She also discussed a planned development on Holly and North Druid where 3 purchased lots have been combined to 2.6 acres and for which RAA zoning has been requested. They have asked for 21 units – 14 townhouses and 7 single family homes. The concerns have been for increased traffic on North Druid Hills Road, questions of density and size of houses possibly towering over everything else and significant drainage issues. A full site plan has been promised but not yet received. Ms. Edelson was concerned that the site plan might be approved before the zoning plan. Future meetings, initially with the immediate neighbors, are planned.

Doug Richards, president of the Diamondhead Homeowner's Association (120 houses) told us how his group created an Infill Housing Overlay District to protect their neighborhood from McMansions. This restricts the height to 28 feet and thus prevents the 40 foot houses. A committee of 12 people polled each of 10 homeowners to see if the community did or did not want such protection. They got back 100 petitions of which 88 were in favor. They submitted the request to the planning commission in Jan. 2006 and apparently will soon have it enacted. Now however, neighborhoods have to follow new rules which include a fee of \$700 and a 5 to 6 month wait to be evaluated. Flo Wolf asked people to sign up if they were interested in pursuing such action by Merry Hills.

Debra Robey presented a report on PDK Airport Master Plan. She had attended a meeting regarding air traffic noise which lasted 2 hours and consisted mainly of people voicing their concerns such as noise, air pollution, low flying helicopters, planes heavier than 66,000 lbs landing at PDK, police helicopters using shortcuts instead of their proper 285 route, voluntary curfew violations and no enforcement of the rules. Homeland Security rules are also not enforced. PDK Airport has an advisory board, but they don't attend meetings. Ms. Poley was concerned that this airport will become Hartsfield North and have negative impact on our quality of life and home prices.

Flo Wolf thanked Virginia Smith and Val Schlorf for doing a great job greeting new neighbors and delivering gift bags to them.

Flo Wolf mentioned a need of some changes in our bylaws. Because it is often difficult to obtain a quorum of 3 board members and 3 section leaders, we should consider changing quorum to any 5 board members. People who are interested in participating but outside our immediate boundaries might be included as nonvoting members.

A question was raised from the audience regarding the nuisance of barking dogs. Flo Wolf advised contacting animal control service. The telephone # is on our web site.

There was some further discussion regarding the Clifton Corridor Traffic Commission. They are still pursuing the “Brain Train” along CSX railroad. Emory plans contracting additional vans from Toco Hill shopping center and shuttles to park and ride lots such as North De Kalb Mall, Sage Hill, Executive Park etc. Emory Hospital has plans to double its size.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted  
Ariana Fass