

Poncey-Highland Neighborhood Association  
Monthly General Meeting Minutes  
January 20, 2021  
32 attendees; 5 visitors

Welcome – Erika Heller, President

APD Zone 6 Update:

- No APD representation present at this month's meeting.

Public Safety Update – E.L. Taylor:

- E.L., a Poncey-Highland resident for over 30 years, has agreed to continue serving as a Public Safety Representative for Poncey-Highland. After his most recent meeting and Freedom Park walkthrough with the Zone 6 officer, E.L. shared three key reminders and suggestions for the neighborhood.
  - Clean Car Campaign – APD highly recommends keeping all vehicles free and clear of items regardless of value. Criminals are far less likely to break into vehicles if they are empty and no items of any kind are in sight.
  - Homeless – APD officers recommended leaving the homeless community alone and not confronting them. Please call 911 to report any urgent issues.
  - There are on-going efforts to clean up the park and any encampments that might be created. If you come across any issues, please report them. And if you have any safety concerns or questions for E.L., feel free to contact him by phone at 404-307-1368 or email [e\\_l\\_t@att.net](mailto:e_l_t@att.net)

City Council Update – Amir Farokhi, District 2 Councilmember:

Councilmember Farokhi provided an update and news around 2021 shaping up to be a very busy year not only because it is an election year but also due to new legislation that is forthcoming.

- Atlanta City Council has introduced a new Tree Protection Ordinance. This ordinance was in conjunction with the Department of City Planning. The goal of the proposed ordinance is to prioritize protection of the City of Atlanta's tree canopy. The legislation will be presented at the next session on January 26<sup>th</sup>. There is also accompanying legislation for a zoning amendment which proposes setback variances for the purposes of tree preservation. Any feedback or questions you may have can be sent to [treeprotection@atlantaga.gov](mailto:treeprotection@atlantaga.gov).
- Mayor Lance Bottoms has also submitted a proposal to close City Jail. Reasons for proposing the jail closure are that the jail is underutilized (primarily used for non-

violent arrests), it is an old, outdated building that is costly to maintain, and the building could be sold and the monies used elsewhere.

- Councilmember Farokhi briefly spoke about the Short Term Rental Ordinance. The focus of this legislation is primarily to focus on and resolve “problem properties” where there have been ongoing, frequent issues. Councilman Farokhi also stated that in his experience if you file a complaint with Airbnb, they are very quick to respond and address the issue. There is a \$150 registration fee and owners may register two additional properties in addition to primary residence. This legislation is expected to have little impact on Poncey-Highland due to the Historic District designation that is now in place.
- As Chair of the Zoning Commission, Mr. Farokhi mentioned that they are in the process of rewriting the zoning code for Atlanta. The code hasn’t been modified in years and this will be a big undertaking for the Commission this year.
- Councilman Farokhi addressed Street Racing concerns. APD has written many citations over the last couple of months and some neighborhoods have seen significant improvement; however, this is an ongoing challenge for law enforcement. Unfortunately, street racing has become a statewide problem and is prevalent not only in urban areas but also rural areas of the State. Keep reporting cases of street racing as APD is continuing to prioritize their resources.
- For any questions, concerns or additional information, Jay Tribby, Chief of Staff, provided the following contact information for Amir: arfarokhi@atlantaga.gov Office: 404-330-6038 City mobile: 404-290-3347

#### Land Use – Lianne Deren, Land Use Chair:

- Mindy Thompson (legal counsel) and Grace Renshaw, Assistance Manager of the Hotel Clermont presented an Application for a new liquor license based upon Change of Ownership. The original liquor license was held by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. Grace Renshaw is the tenant applicant on the new liquor license. Hotel Clermont plans to retrain their management team and bar staff to be in continued compliance with liquor laws and serving. In the past three years since re-opening, Hotel Clermont has never been cited for a violation. Both the Land Use Committee and PHNA Board of Directors voted and unanimously approved the application be brought to the neighborhood for vote. A motion was made to approve; EL Taylor seconded that motion and it was unanimously approved.
- Nathan Soldat of the Atlanta Beltline, Inc. presented to the neighborhood. He is the Community Engagement Manager with Atlanta Beltline, Inc., and he is also the project manager for the Atlanta Beltline’s Sub Area 5 Master Plan. They are working to finalize the SubArea 5 Master Plan Update and present it to City Council in March. As Nathan explained (and you can read more about via the link provided below) the Sub Area 5 Master plan represents sub areas that lie just outside of the Beltline loop. The goal of the Sub Area Master plan is to implement the Redevelopment Plan goals for each unique geographic area. The primary purpose is to guide growth for vibrant, livable mixed-use communities by applying best practices for transit oriented development,

mobility, green space and alternative modes of transportation. You can read more about this plan and provide feedback at <https://beltline.org/the-project/planning-and-community-engagement/#sub-area-master-plans>. If you wish to submit any feedback, you are encouraged to do so within the next 2-3 weeks as they hope to present to the City Council in March. Nathan's contact information is: [nsoldat@atlbeltline.org](mailto:nsoldat@atlbeltline.org) and 404-477-3552.

- Food Truck Ordinance 2001696 – This ordinance relates to Food Truck businesses in the city. The purpose is to promote opportunities for small businesses and increased access for underserved areas. This is currently up for review and comment only and will be presented at the January NPU meeting. The Land Use Committee's concern ensuring Food Trucks do not impose on existing, like businesses, but over all the Land Use Committee is in support of the ordinance.
- Informational update regarding the Highland Inn – The owners had applied for a demolition permit in August 2020; it was rejected due to Historic District interim controls. They filed an appeal, but have since withdrawn that appeal. There is a potential sale pending on that property; and if a sale does go through more information will be shared with the Neighborhood.
- The City of Atlanta has implemented new reporting procedures for reporting zoning violations whether they be related to historic districts, landmark districts or general zoning violations of working without a permit or beyond scope. Violations can be reported to the Department of City Planning via email [codebustersdcp@atlantaga.gov](mailto:codebustersdcp@atlantaga.gov) or via phone 404-865-8550. Be prepared to provide the street address, date the violation was first observed and as much detail as you can provide.

#### Treasurer Report – Nick Pastore:

- Nick reported on the current finances for PHNA. PHNA currently banks with Truist Bank (formerly Suntrust) and has a current bank balance of \$677. Nick is looking into other banking options primarily for the sake of lowering monthly fees and will have more information to share at next month's membership meeting. He will also have a budget to present at the February meeting.

#### Fundraising – Ward Binns, Vice President:

- Ward discussed the need to start fundraising efforts to increase our depleted bank account as well as bring the neighborhood together with some fun events that would also benefit PHNA. If anyone would like to assist Ward with brainstorming and initial planning for fundraising efforts, please reach out to him directly at [ward@airtightdesign.com](mailto:ward@airtightdesign.com) or 404-944-2944.

#### NPU Update – Lenore Carrol, NPU Representative:

- The first NPU meeting of the year will be held at the end of January. Although Lenore did not have anything to report this month, she expects to have more to report to the neighborhood in February.

Freedom Park Conservancy – Beth McDonald, PHNA Representative:

- Beth reported on the Conservancy's continued efforts for the Master Plan. They are planning to hold the next Community Engagement meeting in February.
- In an effort to bring more awareness to the John Lewis Plaza and with the help of Greg Levine of Trees Atlanta, plans are being made for Planting Days in February. The goal is to plant 150-300 blooming trees in the John Lewis plaza the weekend of Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. They will have multiple sessions over the weekend in order to manage numbers due to COVID. Please go to the this link to find additional information and sign-up to participate. <https://freedompark.org/news/>