



BrookNotes

February 2018

The Newsletter of the Brookwood Hills Community

Volume XXXI, No. 1

Park Update

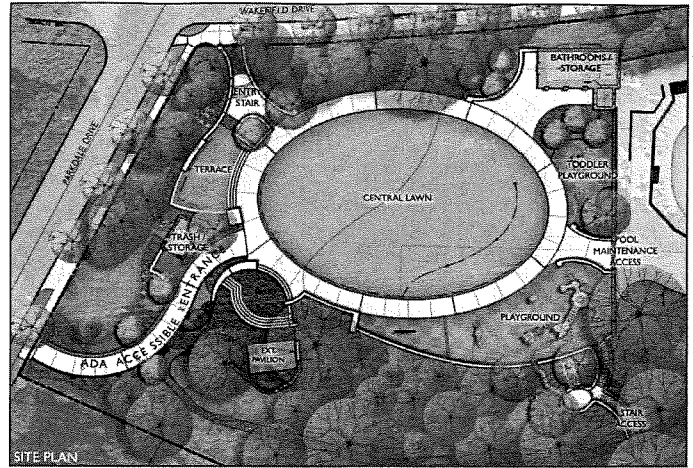
Contributed by Bryan Kenna, Park, Tennis, and Common Areas Chair

For those who missed the Annual Meeting last month, we were excited to give the update that we are getting close to starting the park renovation. Since our last “official” fall Brooknotes update, we’ve made significant progress: Plans & permits: We have received our Land Development Permit (LDP) and should have our Building Permit very soon.

Financing: As we showed during the Annual Meeting, the total project budget is ~\$2.7M, roughly split \$2.1M construction, \$0.3 playground equipment and install, \$0.2 contingency, and \$0.1 closing/project management/etc. This is in line with the bid we received two years ago when adjusted for scope differences and construction cost inflation.

We are in the final stages of contract review with Atlantic Capital for a \$2.0M loan, and we will use our ample cash reserves for the remainder. As a reminder, we received 3 term sheets and the Board selected Atlantic Capital based on their responsiveness, flexibility, and favorable terms. Importantly, Atlantic has agreed to secure the loan by negative pledge (not a mortgage) on the Club’s Armour Drive property. This affords the Club the benefit of leveraging the valuable property without putting it at risk in any way. Key terms include a 7 year loan that amortizes over 15 years, with no prepayment penalty.

Construction: We are in the contract review phase with Astra, who we moved forward with based on their fit, responsiveness, and references. We anticipate starting in the next several weeks with an ~8 month timeline, and we are going to work with Astra to make sure we are able to have a normal pool season while the project is underway. Additionally, once we sign the contract we’ll be working with Astra to develop a plan for construction traffic, parking, etc. to minimize disruption to the extent possible.



That said, we appreciate everyone’s patience and cooperation during what will be a large construction project. While there is still a ton of work ahead, we are incredibly excited to be on the verge of a major improvement to our of our biggest assets for the benefit of the entire membership.

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About *BrookNotes*

BrookNotes is published for Brookwood Hills residents on behalf of the Brookwood Hills Community Club, 77 Wakefield Dr., Atlanta, GA 30309.

Sarah Hagood of Specialty Homes, Inc. and Patti Junger of Dorsey Alston Realtors sponsor alternate issues of *BrookNotes*.

Call for Submissions

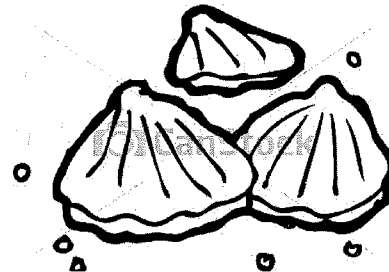
BrookNotes welcomes articles, photographs, and story ideas. The deadline for the next issue is **Wednesday, 3/21/18**. Please email the *BrookNotes* co-editors at brooknotes@brookwoodhills.com.

Mark Your Calendar!

BWH WineDown Friday at Sherlocks
March 9th, 5:30pm - 8pm



BWH Oyster Party,
March 24th, 1 - 5pm



BWH Garden Club's 80th
Anniversary Soiree
 Saturday, April 18 at Watershed Restaurant
 Please see page 3 for more details

Brookwood Hills Security

Neighborhood (404) 242-3321
Patrol Cell Phone

Going Out of Email BWH Security at
Town? Brookwoodhillspatrol@gmail.com
 or call (404) 325-5114.

BWH Security Chair security@brookwoodhills.com
 Matt Little (205) 335 - 7085 (text or call)

Property Tax Information

Contributed by Lee Morris

We all know that state law requires counties to appraise properties for property tax purposes at "fair market value". But in 2017, residents throughout Fulton County were shocked to see their property tax assessment notices increase their proposed values sharply. Almost 25% of the 300,000+ parcels increased over 50%. Some of the increases raised values to, or close to, fair market value. Some of the increase was due to continued recovery from the recession, some was due to accelerated increases in property values as more people wanted to move closer to town to avoid long commutes and congestion, and some was due to the fact that the county had not kept up with re-valuations in past year. However, as testimony at town hall meetings and calls and emails demonstrated, some was due to errors in the process of valuation.

Unfortunately, state law also requires that the assessment notice show an "estimate" of what the proposed assessment would mean in taxes. The problem with that is that the estimate must necessarily be based on prior year tax rates. Current rates are not set until later in the year, and jurisdictions almost always reduce millage rates when assessments go up, so these estimates are often overstated. (Although the math is such that if your assessment goes up 75% and millage rates go down 15%, you still see a huge increase in tax.) But we heard from folks who were desperately distraught over not being able to pay a tax increase that the proposed assessment might create, and I was reminded of the recent Atlanta Regional Commission survey which showed that about half of regional residents do not have funds to pay an unexpected \$300-\$400 household expense.

After hearing from so many property owners and other elected officials throughout the county demanding relief, the Board of Commissioners (BOC) sought some way to respond. The BOC historically has had no power to act in this regard, because the system was designed to keep politics out of the property tax assessment process, for obvious reasons. After appointing a Board of Assessors (BOA), the BOC is not allowed even to remove them absent very limited reasons, or direct them in any way. However, the County Attorney discovered a law dating from the late 1800's which in her opinion gave the BOC the right to "correct" a tax digest. Based on that advice, the BOC took action to base 2017 bills on the 2016 values, which were the last values accepted as being correct. We all are familiar with the fact that delays in getting a tax digest to the State Department of Revenue thereafter,

Continued on page 6

Brookwood Hills Garden Club 80th Anniversary Soiree April 14, 2018

Save the date for

The BWH Garden Club's 80th
Anniversary Soiree

Saturday, April 14, 2018
Watershed Restaurant

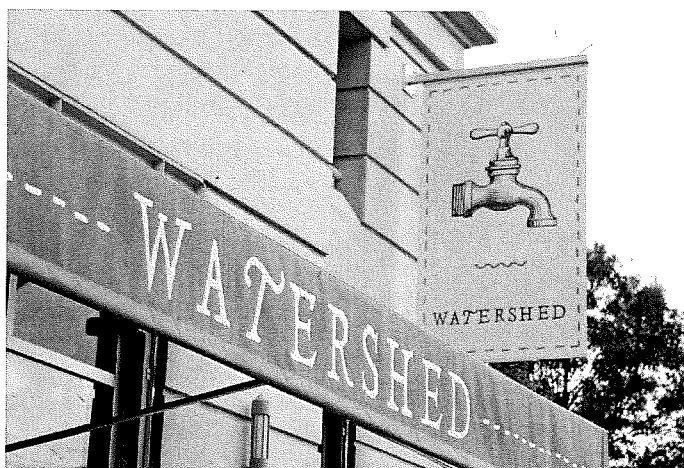
Open to all neighbors

Invitations will be delivered soon

Sponsorship opportunities still available!

Email Amanda Szwast at aszwast@yahoo.com for details,
including how to be invited to our
Sponsor Pre-Party at Summerour Architects!

We are looking for donations (of items or gift certificates)
for our auction/raffle! Email JoEllyn Bass at
joellyn.bass@me.com if you would like to contribute!



Membership Update

Contributed by Tom Carr, Membership Co-Chair

Membership Renewals are due March 15th for all current and renewing A, B, C and S members for 2018. 2018 annual dues have changed this year. The increases over 2017 were announced at the BWH Annual Meeting in January. The growth in Annual Dues and Initiation Fees is aligned with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan that was developed in 2014-2015 and is being followed by the recent and current Board of Directors

Membership Levels for 2018

A Members

Brookwood Hills Residents with park, pool and year-round tennis privileges.

Annual Dues - \$1,200

Initiation - \$7,500

B Members

Brookwood Hills Residents with park privileges and security benefits.

Annual Dues - \$410

Initiation - N/A

C Members

Non-Residents with park, pool and year-round tennis privileges.

Annual Dues - \$1,150

Initiation - \$9,500

S Members

Brookwood Hills Residents over the age of 60 on January 1, 2018 with park, pool and year-round tennis privileges.

Annual Dues - \$630

Initiation - \$5,000

Payments are due on March 15. After March 15 a \$100 late fee is assessed. Any memberships not renewed by March 31st will be canceled. Beginning April 1st, members who have not renewed will no longer retain membership and their spots will be offered to new families on the prospective member list. Membership renewals may be paid in one of the following ways:

- Directly via BrookwoodHills.com with a credit card. Click on the Membership tap at top of page to open Pay Membership Dues page. There is a credit processing fee of \$50.00 for A and C, \$31.00 for S and \$20.00 for B membership.
- By check or online banking check made payable to BWHCC Membership and mailed to BWHCC Membership at 2870 Peachtree Rd. #921 Atlanta, Ga. 30305
- Sorry no PayPal or Venmo.

New C Memberships: We are in the process of accepting New C Members from the prospective member list from 2014 and 2016 who will be able to join for THIS summer's pool and swim season.

Prospective members will receive an email from the BWHCC Membership Chair notifying that they've been accepted to join.

Prospective members will need to send two references to the BWHCC Membership Chair for Board approval, and pay the initiation and annual dues to secure the membership.

2018 membership can participate on the 2018 Brookwood Hills Swim and Dive Teams.

We plan to open up our list to a select number of new Prospective Members for 2018 this Spring. Please keep an eye out for communication on Brookwood Hills website, social media, email and Brooknotes for this date. We want to make sure all current residents and members are able to spread the word to friends and family.

Please keep in mind that new residents to BWH may join at any time during the year, once they move to Brookwood Hills, and they do not need to wait for an invitation from the membership chair. This includes A, B and S memberships.

New A and S members will follow the process of joining with two letters of reference sent to the BWHCC Membership Chair and payment of the initiation fee and annual dues to become a full member.

Please help us by letting us know when a new neighbor moves in so that they can be welcomed to join BWHCC.

Welcome to new BWHCC Membership Co-Chair, Wendy Lewis!

For any other questions, see the Membership Page FAQs on Brookwoodhills.com and always feel free to send questions to us at membership@brookwoodhills.com

For Ladies 60+

Contributed by: Sara Jean Burke

The photo is of the planning committee for The Legacy Ladies Christmas Party at the home of Alex and Kay Summers. Any neighborhood lady 60 or over is eligible for membership. Please contact Sandie McGibbon at [404-853-1655](tel:404-853-1655).



left to right: Marge Henson, Harvey Ross, Jane Miller, Kay Summers, Sandie McGibbon, Anne Donaldson, and Jan Irvin.

BWH SUMMER CAMPS!

WHY LEAVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Calling All BWHills Sports Dudes!

Sign up for Tafts Boys Camp

Dates: May 30th, 31st & June 1st

Wed, Thurs, Friday

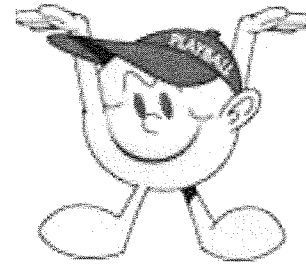
10am to 2pm - ages 5&cup

One day or all three

\$30.00 per day - soccer, football, wall ball, swimming!

To sign up email - elizmeredith@gmail.com

**SUMMER
CAMP!**



Me And My World with Playball - Learning how to make the world a better place on and off the field!

This summer we are focusing on this motto while having fun learning sport skills and playing games!

JUNE 4 - 8TH & AUGUST 6TH - 10TH
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

COST: \$200.00 PER WEEK. Please contact Devon Parker for more information. Contact info is below.

WHAT IS PLAYBALL?

Playball is not just another ball program. It is a highly specialized program, devised, and continually updated by sports experts, occupational therapists and educational specialists. By giving children competence in sports, we help them develop skills that are not associated with sports at all.

HOW DOES IT HELP CHILDREN?

We use the medium of sports, not only to improve gross motor development, increase concentration skills, build low muscle tone, teach children to be competent in hand-eye/foot-eye coordination and improve balance; but sport is also used to teach basic, yet essential life skills.

At Playball your children will learn persistence, courage, cooperation, respect, positive relationships, self-worth, communication, responsibility, and countless other attributes. We address the needs of the whole child – dealing with the emotional, social, cognitive, and physical.

Children must be potty-trained, ages 3 and up. Camp will be held in the pavilion and lower basketball courts. Bring a sack lunch and water bottle.

Devon B Parker

Playball 404, LLC

404-316-0040

playball404@gmail.com

<http://www.playballkids.com/>

Property Tax Info Continued

resulted in delays in getting 2017 bills delivered to taxpayers.

The BOC has placed in the 2018 budget \$3.4 million in additional spending for the BOA to upgrade technology and staffing, so that the reasons for valuations will be more transparent to taxpayers, so that they may interact better to correct factual errors in their property characteristics, and so that adequate staff will be available to make and review better valuations.

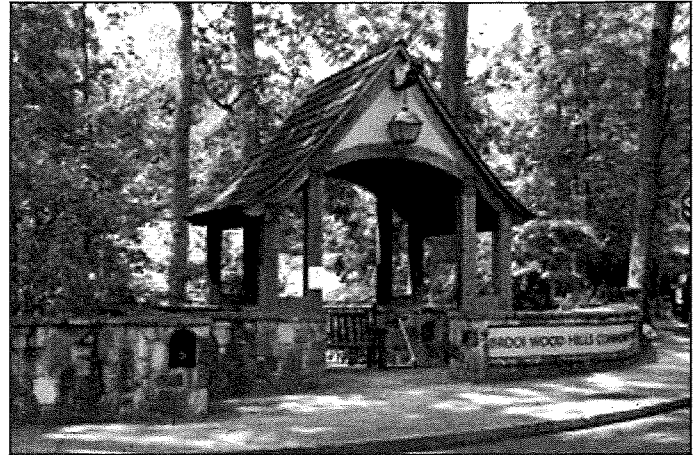
But the BOC also has asked the General Assembly for changes to state law to provide some relief to homeowners, including a “floating homestead exemption” to apply to all property taxes in Fulton – city and school as well as county. There already exists such a homestead exemption that applies to your Fulton County general fund property tax and to Sandy Springs city tax. Generally speaking, it increases your homestead exemption by the amount of the increase in your assessed value, except for 3% or CPI, such that, in effect, your net taxable value only goes up 3% per year at most.

Understand that such legislation is “local legislation” which requires the local General Assembly delegation’s approval. The local delegation are those members of the General Assembly who represent a portion of that area. Senator John Albers has introduced legislation to call for a voter referendum to extend such floating homestead exemption to city taxes in all the other cities he represents in north

Fulton – Milton, Johns Creek, Roswell, Alpharetta, etc. – and to the Fulton County School taxes. The odds of that passing seem good. But he is not part of the “Atlanta local delegation” so cannot sponsor such legislation addressing Atlanta and Atlanta Public Schools (APS).

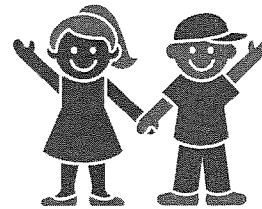
In July of 2017 in the height of the outrage over the assessments, a majority of the Atlanta City Council members then in office (including Mayor Lance Bottoms) sponsored a resolution calling for the inclusion in Atlanta’s legislative package, of a referendum for a floating homestead exemption to be applicable to Atlanta’s and APS’ taxes. As of the writing this piece, it has not been made a part of Atlanta’s legislative package, and the Mayor announced at a delegation meeting that she no longer supports such legislation. Without Atlanta’s support, the legislation is unlikely to be passed.

In my discussions with members of the Atlanta local delegation, there are differing positions on the appropriate taxpayer relief, unfortunately with differences generally falling along partisan lines. However, some members do feel that some kind of relief will be granted, although the nature of it is not currently known. If you have thoughts on the issues, feel free to let your positions known to the state representatives.



CHOA Friends Corner

Contributed by Emory Herbert and Lauren Donaldson



Children’sSM Healthcare of Atlanta Foundation

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the BWH Friends group this fall OR know someone that you think would be great, please contact Lauren or Emory at lauren.jo.donaldson@gmail.com or emory_calhoun@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Good-bye to the Donaldson's

Contributed by Kay Summers

If you pass the corner of Northwood and Huntington in the evening when the lights are on, you probably know that Alex and I collect traditional African art. The masks you see through the windows are art to us, but they were created during the ages for use in rituals and ceremonies marking the passages of life....birth, coming of age, governance, honoring the ancestors, and death. And along with carving these and other things of beauty, Africans of centuries past created many wise sayings: "Don't rub bottoms with a porcupine." "Fly like an eagle so you don't become the prey of a vulture or crocodile." "It takes a village to raise a child." Guidelines, that when applied, make life in a community joyful to share.

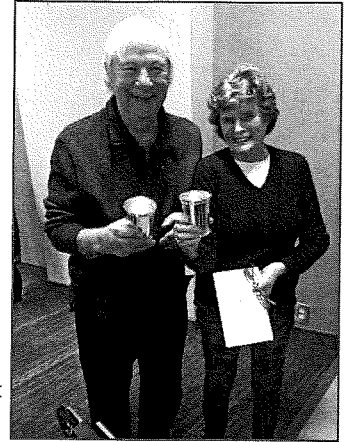
That was the community we were looking for when, after 2 years of searching Brookwood Hills real estate we bought our first "fixer-upper" for \$24,800 on Huntington Road. A little later Anne and Sam Donaldson moved in across the street. Our friendship, over the past 50+ years has enabled us to see how Anne and Sam have set the standard for all we think is ideal in Brookwood Hills. Sam was president of the Board after serving as the treasurer, and that was at a time when the treasurer wrote every check, from the lifeguards salary with all the deductions to the water bills and city taxes. But Sam also got out his chain saw when a tree or big limb would fall in a neighbor's driveway. He would chop it up, immediately freeing the cars. After the board arranged for Christmas trees to be ground into mulch for landscaping, Sam would load trees that were discarded on the curb into his little grey pick up, tie others to his back bumper and drag them to the park.

Once he found that one of our neighbors, who had more money than sense, had left his tree with all the lights still on it. Sam got a couple of pairs of clippers and a neighbor and stripped the tree so the wires would not hurt the chippers. He and Dudley Ottley walked our neighborhood, and much of Buckhead, in the wee hours of the mornings for decades. After the nature preserve was established, they made a point of checking out how the ducks, beaver, and snakes were making out down there. They usually ended stretching and pushing on a pole at the corner of Northwood and Palisades. The standing joke is that they never pushed it down.

Sam would show up at the door with three tomatoes, or a bag of fresh eggs, or a request to borrow a tool from Alex to fix something for a neighbor. He has never met a stranger or someone he could not infect with his joy of life. The Northwood neighbors know Anne and Sam as

extra grandparents to their children. There are many of us who have felt their genuine love and caring for our children.

Anne taught elementary school at Westminster....taught some of your kids...taught some of you....and she drove many of the Brookwood children "just because she was going there anyhow."...saving us thousands of carpooling hours. She was the manager of the pool for many summers before a professional pool management company was hired. While Anne was "hired", Sam put in many hours "jerry rigging" the old equipment to keep it pumping. She was active in the Garden Club. Once supervising little boys in cleaning up the park and actually got it done, and she volunteered in Twigs Home tours. She was a founder of Legacy Ladies, an important social link for those of us who are gratefully retired from child raising and the many warm connections it brings.



So many memories flood my mind. the countless trips we made to City Hall to support what was right for Brookwood Hills whether it was a zoning or traffic problem....consultations on rearing teens, especially those who snuck into the pool at night.....if you needed a home for a stray cat, call Anne....my newspaper is on my doorstep. Sam put it there.....I needed to move my aged Mother to an Atlanta nursing home, Anne said take my station wagon and save \$11,000 ambulance fee....I did. Many of you also have Donaldson memories.

Sam bought their house on Northwood while Anne was in Piedmont Hospital having little Sam. She didn't know it had happened. Sam said she waited all these years to buy one by herself. Unfortunately for us, it is in Birmingham where Anne grew up and where their daughter Kenan and Rob and their grandson Fleetwood live.....This makes us sad. We will be seeing them, just not as often. Let's take their legacy of caring and giving and working with others and multiply it with our neighbors. Let us remember the joy they spread, practice it and pass it on!

Recommendations

Neighbor, Tiffany Dougherty, recommends thestorkdelivery.com! This company delivers a hand painted, personalized stork to your home to announce to friends and neighbors your newest family member! Sibling Stars are available for those super important big brothers or sisters who want to be apart of the announcement. Please visit thestorkdelivery.com for more information



BROOKNOTES

SPONSORED BY YOUR NEIGHBOR
AT 205 HUNTINGTON ROAD

SARAH HAGOOD

OWNER/BROKER tel: 404.231.5678

location: 2980 HARDMAN CT. NE | 30305

www.sarahhagood.com
specialtyhomes@mindspring.com
residence: 404.881.0808

