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New Buckhead neighborhood group offers unified voice

By Cathy Johnson
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A newly-formed association will give the 43 individual neighborhoods in Buckhead a consolidated voice when tackling problems such as transportation, traffic and development.

The purpose of the Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods is to address and protect the common interests and quality-of-life issues shared by Buckhead households.

"Until we incorporated, there was not a single neighborhood organization to give voice to shared issues," said Jim King, the chairman of the council and president of the Chastain Park Civic Association.

King added the formation of the group clearly makes sense for Buckhead.

"Other surrounding cities have neighborhood associations, but in Buckhead we're divided by council districts and NPUs [neighborhood

planning units]," he said, adding Sandy Springs and Dunwoody already have those organizations in place.

Participation in the new association does not alter the way individual neighborhoods work with NPUs, but gives a unified and influential forum.

"It's not about dividing the community, but uniting the community," said King.

He added the council differs from the Buckhead Coalition that represents business interests, and the Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation, which wants to reduce property taxes.

The nonprofit association incorporated over the summer, and, so far, has established bylaws, elected a six-member board, registered 22 neighborhoods, and begun to address issues.

Membership dues are \$100 per neighborhood and "each representative has an equal vote, regardless of the size of the neighborhood," said King.

The group issued two petitions early on: one asking city governments to complete the interchange at Interstate 85 and Ga. 400 so "spillover" traffic will be reduced coming into Buckhead, and another to encourage improvement of Northside Drive between I-75 and Arden Drive.

The organization meets the second Thursday of every month at Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Buckhead.

At the Jan. 8 meeting, ideas were presented to find a way to supplement the city's police and fire protection, or have extra security patrols, in the wake of city budget cuts, according to King.

Plans for the Feb. 12 meeting include representatives from Congressional offices discussing transportation issues in Buckhead.

"We want to create a forum where everyone can be heard," said King.

"This association gives us a larger voice," said Jennifer Moyers, communications chair for the group and representative for Whitewater Creek Civic Association, a neighborhood of about 130 homes.

"We border I-75 and traffic noise is horrible," said Ms. Moyers. "I'm sure our issues are shared by other neighborhoods."

 

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