



SOUTHEAST RALEIGH NEWS

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NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHEAST RALEIGH ASSEMBLY

Advocates push for better parks

Patricia Malone Johnson used to walk the track at Chavis Park six or seven days a week. Ms. Johnson is one of many fans of the historic park, whose deep roots are tightly woven throughout the fabric of the African American community.

Ms. Johnson would walk, and observe the children playing, families swimming, and especially other walkers looping around the track. In late winter, Ms. Johnson also noted that the track seemed increasingly worn and full of holes and ruts.

Fellow walkers were complaining about the holes as well. In fact, the park as a whole didn't seem to be as well kept as other parks in the city. So the lifelong



" My own, personal feeling is that Chavis Park ought to be the flagship park in the African American community. It could probably never rival a Pullen Park, but it ought to be a close second." – Mr. Norman Camp

Southeast Raleigh resident decided to do something about it.

Ms. Johnson, principal of Mary E. Phillips High School and a member of the City of Raleigh's Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board, gathered several other concerned citizens, including Norman Camp, a member of the Southeast Raleigh Assembly, to request that the City resurface the track. Council Member James West, Council District C, asked the group to look into conditions at the park and prepare a report.

The first meeting of the Community Advocates for Parks in Southeast Raleigh met on March 6. "We decided not to look at just Chavis, but at all the parks in Southeast Raleigh," says Ms. Johnson. "For us, it's a matter of making sure we have state-of-the-art, quality parks in Southeast Raleigh. We'd like to see a variety of activities for all Southeast Raleigh citizens, especially the senior citizens. We'd like the community centers to offer a variety of activities, too."

Norman Camp says the group was able to secure a small neighborhood improvement grant from Human

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Co-Chairs' Farewell	2
Meet Michele Grant	4
Community Day	4
National Night Out	6
Virtual Incubator News	7

Continued on page 5

SERA MEMBERS

Serving the Community

Ms Diane Alexander
Ms. Sonia Barnes
Mr. Gordon Blackwell
Ms. Jean Brown
Dr. Norman Camp
Dr. Charles Chambliss
Mr. John Church Jr.
Mr. Daniel Coleman
Mr. B.C. Cooper
Ms. Cathey Ector
Mr. Timothy Figgins
Mr. Charles Francis
Mr. Lyle Gardner
Ms. Yvette Holmes
Ms. Ajuba Joy
Mr. Steve Kenney
Mr. Jim Laurie
Mr. John McConnell
Mr. Jim Mebane
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Rev. Henry Pickett .Jr.
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Ms. Brenda High Sanders
Mr. Joseph M. Sansom
Dr. Dianne Boardley Suber
Ms. Nicole Sullivan
Ms. Jeanne Tedrow
Mr. Tyler Toulon
Mr. Claude Trotter
Mr. Harold Webb
Mr. Bob Wheeler
Rev. Frank White
Mr. Mark Williard
Mr. Ed Wills
Mr. Dickie Thompson,
Ex Officio
Dr. David Mallette,
Ex Officio
Lillian Thompson,
City Staff Resource
Councilor James West

Message

SERA Co-Chairs bid farewell

Charles Haywood and Bill Mullins have led the Southeast Raleigh Assembly since its inception in August 2001. Now, at the end of their two-year term, the SERA co-chairs reflect on the experience.



"It was a very rewarding experience for me. I grew up in Southeast Raleigh," says Charles Haywood. "I have considerable investment there, so I was very concerned about the continued improvement of that area. I'm proud to be a part of the Southeast Raleigh Assembly, and proud to have been able to establish some goals and objectives. Some are short-range, some are long-range, so the Assembly will probably continue for some time, with people working on accomplishing those objectives."

"... I'm proud to be a part of the Southeast Raleigh Assembly, and proud to have been able to establish some goals and objectives. . . ."

— Charles Haywood

Co-chair Bill Mullins says his position helped him learn more about Southeast Raleigh. "I have been particularly impressed by the knowledge and leadership abilities of the women I worked with, like Cathy Ector, Yvette Holmes, Nicole Sullivan and others. There is also a lot of hidden entrepreneurial spirit that just needs encouragement from City government and the established business community throughout Raleigh."

Mr. Haywood says he's most proud of SERA's community involvement, "and providing information that empowered people to know more about things that were happening in City Government, and how they fit into that process."

"Of course, a more tangible thing would be the Virtual Business Incubator, and the Real Estate Entrepreneur School. The committees that were organized did a fantastic job in those areas."

Mr. Mullins, too, was impressed by SERA's grassroots efforts. "There has been some history of the City of Raleigh attempting to impose plans on the area without much input from the local community, and the leadership in SERA has been rightfully sensitive to that criticism," he says. "The town hall meetings and discussion facilitators provided at the beginning are good examples of the constant effort to involve all citizens in a meaningful and effective way. There has been and will continue to be some who will say that their views (or agendas) were not included, but they can't say that they weren't given an opportunity to express their opinions."

Mr. Mullins says he particularly enjoyed co-chairing with Mr. Haywood. "I enjoyed working with Bill Mullins, too," Mr. Haywood says. "You know, when you're new at something like that, it's kind of ground breaking. Hopefully, it will be easier for the next co-chairs, now that they have a roadmap to help guide them." ■

Mission and Goals of SERA

The City's Southeast Raleigh Assembly is an advisory body that represents the partnership between the community and Raleigh City government, and is charged with helping ensure the long-term economic health of Southeast Raleigh.

The City Council's Budget and Economic Development Committee appointed the 45 members of the Assembly in March 2001. Among them are members of the former Southeast Raleigh Improvement Commission, as well as ex-officio members of the Planning Commission's Strategic Planning Committee.

Agenda items include those based on a report by the consulting firm Hammer Siler George Associates, and those identified by various feasibility studies, among them the St. Augustine Gateway Project, the South Blount Street Redevelopment Project, and the Garner Road Brownfield Development.

Assembly members formed six "issue teams" to address the highest priority issues facing Southeast Raleigh: the Community Involvement Team, Business and Commercial Development Team, Human Capacity Building Team, Public Safety Team, Equity and Resource Development Team, and Housing Team.

The full Assembly meets quarterly. The Executive Committee -- which consists of 11 members, including issue team chairs -- meets monthly.

The Assembly's work plan for 2002-2003 consists of 10 top priorities:

1. Development of community-based policing philosophy (problem-oriented policing)
 - a. Review successful models of community-based policing in other cities.
 - b. Street lighting maintenance and upgrades.
2. (A) Housing development and redevelopment program.
 - a. Redevelopment plan for Garner Road and community design workshop.
 - b. Infill development.
 - c. Incentives program to attract market-rate developers and encourage new development to have amenities.
2. (B) Create a 501(c) 3 entity to support the objectives of the community redevelopment act; establish investment fund; identify potential resource agencies, banks, and other funding sources.
3. Leadership development and neighborhood empowerment.
4. Establish entrepreneurship/job training programs.
5. Marketing strategy for development activities.
6. (A). Set priorities for streetscape improvements (Capital Improvement Program funding).
6. (B). Business partnerships.
7. Faith-based partnership.
8. Communication, public relations and marketing of Assembly.
 - a. Distribution of newsletter.
 - b. Use of public television.
 - c. Development and implementation of website.
 - d. Use of newspaper inserts.
 - e. Annual report.
9. Community forums on cultural diversity and sensitivity.
10. Arts partnerships.

For more information, please visit:

www.raleigh-nc.org/planning/Commissions/Se_Assembly.htm
or call (919) 890-3160. ■

Get out and vote!

October 7 is the date for City of Raleigh and Wake County Board of Education elections, and Nov. 4 are the municipal elections.

If you're not registered, fill out a voter registration form and send it to the Wake County Board of Elections. If you mail it in, the registration form must be postmarked at least 25 days before the election. If you hand-deliver it, the registration form must be received at the Board of Elections office not later than 5 p.m. on the 25th day before the election.

For more information on voter registration, who's running for what, how to vote and where to vote, visit the Board of Elections website at <http://msweb03.co.wake.nc.us/bordelec/default.htm>, or call 856-6240. The office is located at 337 S. Salisbury St., on the corner of South Salisbury and Davie streets, downtown.

Michele Grant is Named New Community Development Director

The City of Raleigh's new Community Development Department director wants to ensure a steady influx of new housing opportunities in Southeast Raleigh.

Michele Grant was named director effective Aug. 1. She'd previously been the department's project officer, focused more on strategic planning.

"Part of our mission has been to remove some blighted conditions, and to provide new housing opportunities," Ms. Grant says. "That has been the primary focus."

The Community Development Department works to revitalize neighborhoods by providing development services and loaning funds to homeowners and private and nonprofit developers who are constructing or rehabilitating affordable housing.

Ms. Grant's department is especially concerned with Southeast Raleigh's older neighborhoods that lie inside the beltline. "The goal there is to undertake neighborhood revitalization activities," she says.

Ms. Grant is planning a series of meetings with Southeast Raleigh residents in early fall to address their concerns and help them become more familiar with the Community Development Department. "We want to become more interactive," she says. "I want to encourage my staff to work with the community, to be more visible." ■



City Link

Hundreds celebrate community unity

Eugene Weeks' ultimate goal is to see one, big community party in Downtown Raleigh. He plans to achieve that goal – one neighborhood at a time.

More than 500 people attended the annual Community Day Celebration, held in August at Sanderford Road Community Park. It was the third year in a row the Parkside and Foxfire neighborhoods celebrated together, and the first year they invited another community – Sanderford. Next year, Mr. Weeks hopes to add one more community to the festivities, perhaps even two more. He's already received requests to participate from three other neighborhood associations.

"We'll just keep adding one neighborhood at a time, until we reach Downtown," says Mr. Weeks, a resident of Foxfire and chairman of Raleigh's Human Resource and Human Relations Advisory Commission. "We host this event so we can focus on the families being united and empowered, and to develop and maintain crime-free communities."

The celebration included a health fair; crime prevention by the Raleigh Police Department; the Helping Hand Mission Band; and a number of organizations that donated time and door prizes, including Mellon HR Solutions, Harvest of Hope Network, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and the Triangle Urban League. The Wake County Voter Coalition registered 24 new voters, says Weeks. The neighborhood associations fund the celebration, and get a great deal of assistance from

sponsors such as Kroger, Food Lion and Larry's Supermarket.

"It takes a special kind of commitment to do something like this, to do what's necessary," says James West, City Council member. "We must have a balance of both programs that are already existing in the community, and special programs, like this, that deal with the heart and soul. We're trying to be accountable; to improve the quality of life of our community residents."

Mr. Weeks says that when communities come together and speak in one voice, they can have a positive impact on their neighborhoods, on City government policymaking and service delivery systems. "This event is an opportunity to bring the neighborhoods together and provide resources that are essential to home ownership, safety, health and school issues, as well as keep families abreast of local and state issues. Our main goal is to keep expanding, and show the City of Raleigh that our communities can unite together." ■



Neighborhood quality teams residents with city staff

The College Park/Idlewild community is part of a pilot program created to address neighborhood problems that the City can resolve.

The Neighborhood Quality initiative, led by Hardy Watkins, director of the City of Raleigh's Community Services Department, first determines what issues need to be addressed. Garbage not collected, filthy streets, trees that shield streetlights are but a few examples. Then, a team of City staff members from the involved departments is pulled together to solve the problems as a group, and report back to the concerned neighborhood group.

"Many folks are of the opinion that the City is not putting forth the effort it should to address issues," Mr. Watkins says. "After several meetings with the City Manager, we decided the team approach would be the best thing to do."

The Neighborhood Quality team has been meeting with College Park/Idlewild neighbors regularly since June, over problems such as bus stops that impede traffic, vacant lots, and police complaints.

Mr. Watkins is unsure when the team will be ready to take on another neighborhood. The number of complaints will determine which neighborhood will be next in the program. For more information, contact Mr. Watkins at 831-6100. ■

Business opportunities with the City of Raleigh for Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises regarding the proposed convention center construction and services after construction. Contact Luther Williams, 890-3840

Advocates

Continued from page 1

Services, which paid for three charettes – meetings where neighborhood residents talked about their park needs. There was an average of 50 people at each meeting, Mr. Camp says.

Ms. Johnson, Mr. Camp and the other group members are now busily developing a report based on citizen input and their own analyses that will be submitted to the City's Community Services Department; Department of Parks and Recreation; the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board; City Council and the mayor's office.

"We're going to recommend significant upgrades to all the parks we visited, particularly Roberts Park, which needs to have a walking path installed, and improvements to the gymnasium," Mr. Camp says. "Also, we feel that not enough attention has been paid to landscaping in our parks. Parenthetically, if you go to parks in other parts of the city, you see flowers growing and carefully manicured grassy areas. Those things are not evident at Chavis, where there are planters devoid of plants, and other Southeast Raleigh parks."

Like Ms. Johnson, Mr. Camp is especially fond of Chavis, where he spent many youthful days watching African-American athletes playing a level of baseball worthy of the minor leagues. He remembers the Raleigh Tigers and the Raleigh Grays, and Shaw and St. Augustine's football games – all of which were played at Chavis, the only park where black people were allowed to play at the time.

"My own, personal feeling is that Chavis Park ought to be the flagship park in the African-American community. It could probably never rival a Pullen Park, but it ought to be a close second," Mr. Camp says.

There are other parks on the group's visitation list, including Biltmore Hills, which Mr. Camp says has vast potential. "We've not had a voice in the past; we have not exercised our right to speak out. This is what the Community Advocates for Parks in Southeast Raleigh will do. We're going to be vigilant in the future, to ensure the quality of parks is up to a level we can be proud of." ■



[Editor's Note: The improvements made to Chavis Park were based on the master plan which was developed by citizen input. Bond funds were used for projects within the master plan considering what would benefit the most people in the greatest amount of time.]

In The Community

30-year volunteer an inspiration

"I'm not doing anything great, honey," says Dorothy Sanders. "I'm just here trying to make a difference."



Fact is, Ms. Sanders has been making a difference in her South Central community for more than 30 years, work that was formally recognized at the first ever NC Neighborhood Conference. The conference was sponsored by the City of Raleigh, in collaboration with several other N.C. cities, including Durham, Greensboro, Charlotte and Winston-Salem. At the conference, Ms. Sanders was awarded the NC Neighborhood Excellence Award for Participation, the only such winner from Raleigh.

"She's a real stalwart and a real fighter," says Hardy Watkins, director of the City of Raleigh's Community Services Department. City staff members had nominated Ms. Sanders for the award.

"She's an inspiration to those of us who work with neighborhoods."

Ms. Sanders has worked to improve South Central via her neighborhood's Citizen Advisory Council. For years she's helped with anti-drug marches, community picnics and clean-up efforts, and today would like to see her younger neighbors get more involved.

"The younger people, they just don't seem interested. And the ones who are interested are moving out, and they're not coming back to help get the neighborhood straightened out," she says. "I'd love to see things continue. It's nice work, it's interesting, and you get a lot of joy when something is accomplished." ■

Day of festivities marks national night out

More than 300 children and adults crowded Chavis Park's ballfield Aug. 5, playing games, jumping in the "moon bounce" and meeting neighborhood police officers during a carnival for "National Night Out: America's Night Out Against Crime."

Southeast Raleigh joined with thousands of communities nationwide in the 20th anniversary of the event, which was created to:

- Heighten awareness of drug and crime prevention efforts.
- Generate support and participation in crime prevention efforts.
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police community relations.
- Send a message to criminals to let them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

The Downtown District and District 24 of the City of Raleigh Police Department, and the City's Southeast Raleigh Assembly sponsored the Chavis Park festival, which included a neighborhood banner competition. This year's winner: Cotton Place. The prize: a community barbecue.

A rally following the festival featured speeches by Mayor Charles Meeker, U.S. Rep. Bob Etheridge and City Council member James West, among others. Mr. Etheridge told the crowd, "We have to engage our friends and neighbors in the fight against crime. If we work together, we'll get the job done."

Also present were state Sen. Vernon Malone and Wake County Commissioner Harold Webb. Cathey Ector, an Assembly member who also leads Raleigh's federally funded Weed and Seed community revitalization program, spoke of the program's successes, and praised student volunteers who assist in that effort, and in after-school programs throughout the community. ■



SERA Progress Report

Pacesetters hit mid-year mark

The Virtual Business Incubator (VBI) has raised quite a few eyebrows since the first 20 entrepreneurs entered the program in April, and most of those eyebrows belong to customers of Eyebrowz, Inc.

"Being in the incubator has been wonderful for my business," says Michelle King, owner of Eyebrowz, Inc. at Crabtree Valley Mall. Ms. King, a Southeast Raleigh resident, says the knowledge gained through weekly classes has helped her business flourish. "We have a lot of competition here at the mall," she says. "I've learned how to manage my books and how to do payroll like a big, normal company would do."

Ms. King is part of the first class entrepreneurs enrolled in the VBI's "Pacesetters" program, which was created to strengthen small businesses and small-business owners in Southeast Raleigh. The 19 businesses currently enrolled get hands-on financial, marketing and technical assistance, all designed to ensure their ongoing success.

The VBI and Pacesetters program, initiated by the Southeast Raleigh Assembly, is a component of the Raleigh Business and Technology Center, and participants have use of the center's reference library and other resources. Additionally, the entrepreneurs meet weekly at the center for training sessions.

"This has been working very well," says Walton Jones, the center's executive director. "I think everyone on the program has been progressing, or feeling they're on track to getting their business plans developed. They're on a fast-track to development."

Rudolph and Sheryl Morton, (pictured at right) owners of Kreative Koncepts, thought they knew how to run a business well. After all, they'd been doing it for 17 years. VBI training sessions helped them sharpen their accounting and marketing skills. "I'd definitely recommend the program to anyone interested in starting a business, or learning how to run their business better, Mrs. Morton says.

Mr. Jones says helping businesses like the Mortons' become more successful will be a boon to all of Southeast Raleigh. "Businesses like theirs will be shining lights that will light the way for others in the community, Mr. Jones said." ■



Here's a list of businesses currently enrolled in the Pacesetters program:

James & Laurence Adkins Remote Management Service
Erica E. Noble Raleigh Insurance Authority

Rosalind Blair Beginning & Beyond Child Development Center

Muriel Boyd JK Transportation Service

Garion Bunn The Immanuel Group

Terry Carter CPC Enterprises

Tyrus Clark The Smoked Turkey Grille

Cheryl Henson Beautiful U Hair Salon

Michelle King Eyebrowz, Inc. (pictured below)

Rudolf & Sherry Morton Kreative Koncepts, Inc.

Julia Nyaga Capital Staffing, Inc.

Ola & Angela Owokoniran Akanni Realty

Denise S. Robinson SR Accounting + Tax Service

Wanda B. Short Sherrill's University of Barber & Cosmetology

Shelby S. Taylor Joy! Transportation

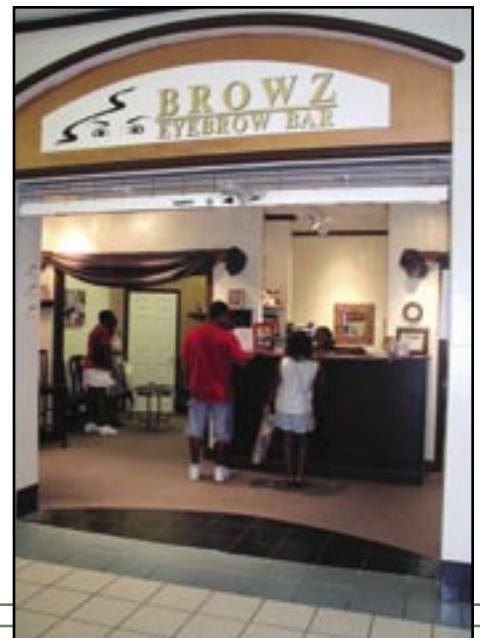
Charles Tucker Tucker Video Productions

Sylinda Wall Sylinda's Touch of Beauty

Joselyn Williams Joselyn Marketing Group (JMG)

Charles Wilson Intellus, Inc.

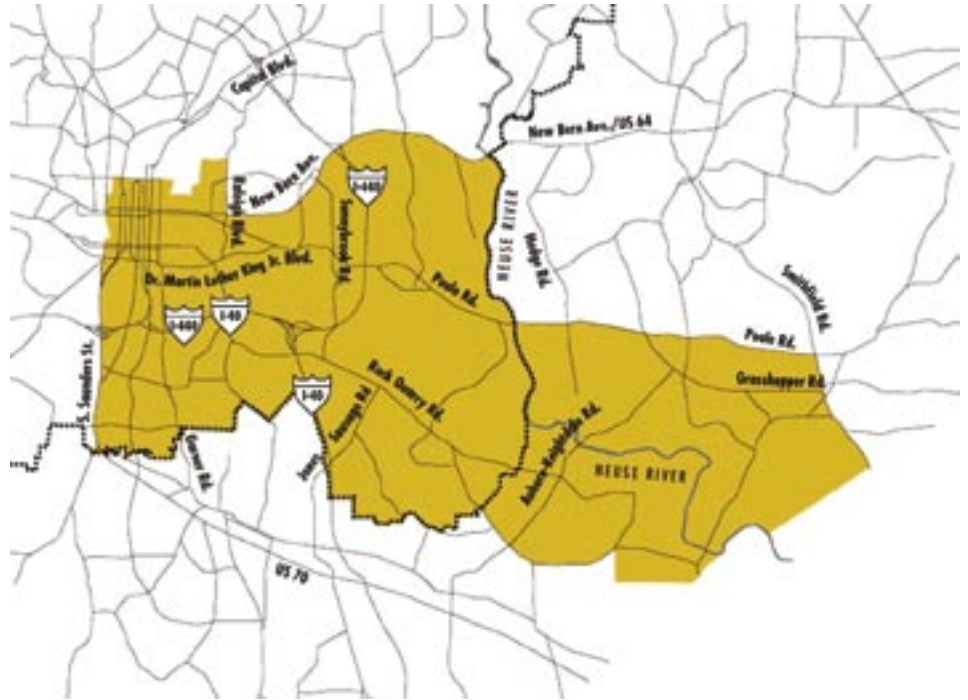
For more information about the program, contact the Raleigh Business & Technology Center at 836-8618, or go to www.raleighbtc.com.



Do you live in Southeast?

SouthEast Raleigh Assembly Area

The area of interest of the Southeast Raleigh Assembly encompasses the existing Southeast Planning District, Central Planning District and part of the East Planning District. The boundaries of the Southeast Raleigh Assembly are Saunders Street, Peace Street, Glascock Road, Milburnie Road, New Bern Avenue, the Neuse River and both the short and long range Urban Service Areas that extend from the Neuse River east to the Wake County/Johnson County line and just east of Smithfield Road, bounded by Poole Road on the north and just south of Old Baucom Road to the south.



DIRECTORY OF IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency	911
Driver's License	733-4540
Postal Service Information	420-5333
Senior Citizens Resources.....	872-7933
Taxes (city & county).....	856-5400
Vehicle Title & Registration.....	733-3025
Voter Registration	856-6240
Light Outage or Repair	508-5400
Light Installation (new).....	890-3430
Police Sub-Station District 24	
General Assistance	857-4455
Non-Emergency.....	831-6311
24 hour Police Information	890-3335
Complaints.....	890-3077

Do you have ideas or a program to share or that we can assist you with?

Please contact Lillian Thompson, SouthEast Raleigh Assembly resource, with your ideas at 919-890-3160 or email: lillian.thompson@ci.raleigh.nc.us

We look forward to working with you!

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