



NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING UNIT

Wednesday, August 21, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Please pre-register by clicking [HERE](#)

Meeting ID: 845 9824 9006

Dial In: +1 646-558-8656

Access Code: 845 9824 9006#

CONTACT INFORMATION

Debbie Skopczynski, **Chair** – 404.874.7483 or chair@npufatlanta.org

Doug Young, **City of Atlanta, Planner** – 404.330.6702 or dyoung@atlantaga.gov

Leah LaRue, **City of Atlanta, Director** – 404.330.6070 or llarue@atlantaga.gov

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm

The amended agenda is adopted without objection.

1. Approval of Minutes

The July minutes have not been prepared and uploaded on the NPU-F website. We will review them next month.

2. Announcements

- We learned last night that, as expected, Allure has appealed in Superior Court the Revocation signed by the Mayor.
- We originally expected to vote on the Beltline Subarea 6 Master Plan next month. That vote is now expected to be held in October. Comments can be submitted through the end of the month. A link to the plan and info on where to send those comments is on the consent agenda.
- Club Platinum was on the LRB agenda last night. After an hour of convoluted testimony by 3 attorneys representing Platinum, the application was deferred until early September.

3. Reports from City Departmental Representatives

<p>Atlanta Fire Department</p> <p>Station 19 North Highland, Station 29 Monroe Drive</p> <p>Battalion Chief Derek Harris</p>	<p>Captain Sullivan from Atlanta Fire Rescue provided a brief update with the following key points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reminded people to stay hydrated when exercising outdoors, as there's been an uptick in heat exhaustion cases despite cooler weather. 2. Encouraged checking smoke detector batteries when the time changes in November.
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	<p>3. Promoted the Closed Door campaign, advising residents to close bedroom doors at night for better fire protection.</p> <p>4. Offered to answer any questions from attendees.</p> <p>Captain Sullivan was standing in for Chief Katrier, who would normally present at this meeting.</p>
<p>Atlanta Police Department Zone 2 – Major Vayens Zone 6 – Major Webster</p>	<p>Major Ben Vayens provided the following report for Zone 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crime in Zone 2 is down 12% year-to-date across all categories of part one crimes. 2. There have been 6 homicides so far this year, which is the same as last year at this time. 3. NPU-F had a good month, with only 6 vehicles broken into. 4. Zone 2 leads the city in traffic stops and arrests. 5. Elleven45 Lounge was permanently closed by court order on August 1st and 2nd. 6. National Night Out events were held on August 6th with good participation. <p>Major Vayens encouraged residents to keep their cars clean and not store valuables or firearms in vehicles to prevent break-ins.</p> <p>Regarding Allure, he said they are continuing to monitor the situation based on the latest court filing but didn't want to speculate on whether a judge would allow them to operate during the appeal process.</p> <p>Marla Johnson asked if the police were still doing daily check-ins under the bridges on Cheshire Bridge Road. She mentioned that neighbors have been seeing movement of homeless individuals in that area again, and they weren't sure if these people were just walking through or rebuilding camps under the bridges.</p> <p>In response to the question about homeless individuals under bridges on Cheshire Bridge Road, he confirmed that police are still doing daily check-ins at various bridges throughout the zone, including Cheshire Bridge.</p>
<p>APD Code Enforcement Officer Joseph Young Atlanta Police Department Code Enforcement Section (470) 694-1236 Jeyoung@atlantaga.gov</p>	<p>Officer Joseph Young from Code Enforcement provided the following report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on 2419 Cheshire Bridge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Court date was rescheduled as the responsible party didn't attend on the 14th. - Officer stressed the importance of keeping the property clean. - A major national retailer has signed a letter of intent to lease the property.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They're working with Zone 2 to address issues with individuals on the property. <p>2. Club Platinum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There's an open case for conditions outside the club. - Issues include trash, damage to the exterior, overgrowth, and damaged fence. <p>3. Officer Young asked if there were any questions about specific properties or if he could help with anything else.</p> <p>4. When asked about new legislation concerning blighted residences, Officer Young wasn't sure how it would operate or if his department would be directly responsible for handling those requests.</p>
<p>ATL311</p>	<p>Tamika Merriweather's report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 311 has extended its hours to 7am - 12 midnight. 2. PAD (likely Policing Alternatives & Diversion Initiative) is also planning to extend hours, but no date announced yet. 3. There are now 5 ways to reach 311: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call 311 (or 404-546-0311 if outside city limits) - Email atl311@atlantaga.gov - Chat through the live portal Ava at atl311.com - Social media - New online chat option 4. 311 has updated their phone prompts to help distinguish between emergency (911) and non-emergency (311) calls. 5. 311 can assist with reporting encampments and provide information on living assistance and utility support services. <p>Rui Shen reported on a research project being conducted at Georgia Tech. The project aims to explore citizens' needs regarding the 311 system, particularly focusing on the chatbot feature. They are recruiting participants for 40-minute online interviews, offering a \$15 e-gift card as compensation. To be eligible, participants should have previous experience interacting with the 311 system. Interested individuals can contact the researchers via email or by scanning a QR code, with contact details to be shared in the Zoom chat.</p>
<p>Public Works Code Enforcement</p>	<p>Pete Francis's report:</p> <p>He discussed an upcoming trash, brush, and litter cleanup initiative by Keep Atlanta Beautiful.</p> <p>The registration deadline for this event is Friday, August 24th.</p> <p>The actual cleanup days are scheduled for September 20th and 21st.</p>

	<p>T-shirts and cleanup implements will be provided by the City of Atlanta.</p> <p>There's a QR code and flyer for registration, which has been emailed to the chair.</p> <p>More details about the event will be provided before the collection days.</p> <p>The event is meant to be a friendly competition among NPUs, with potential prizes (though specifics about prizes were not mentioned).</p> <p>People can contact Keep Atlanta Beautiful at KABC@AtlantaGA.gov for more information.</p> <p>The event aims to make community cleanup a fun activity for participants.</p>
<p>Fulton County Solicitor Janel O. Bowles, Solicitor Senior Counsel, City of Atlanta, Office of the Solicitor, jbowles@atlantaga.gov 770-542-7759</p>	<p>Janel Bowles from the Office of the City Solicitor reported that:</p> <p>Their office enforces housing violations and prosecutes traffic violations. She offered to provide her contact information in the chat for any questions. Regarding the new blight legislation, she stated they don't yet have parameters on how it will be executed. She promised to share information about the blight legislation with the NPU once it becomes available.</p>
	<p>Amber Ware is a representative from the Office of the Ombudsman. She attended the NPU-F General Body Meeting and introduced herself at the end of the departmental reports. Amber didn't provide any specific updates but mentioned that she was available if anyone needed assistance from her office. She put her contact information in the chat for attendees to reach out if needed.</p>

4. Comments from Elected Officials – None

5. Consent Agenda

Special Events

Event Name/ Applicant	Class/# Participants	Event Location/Date	Recommendation
<p>Walk to End Lupus Now Teri Edmond</p>	<p>Class D/5,000 Participants</p>	<p>Piedmont Park/Pavilion April 26, 2025</p>	<p>Support</p>

Consent agenda requirements: All Class E events and one-day Class D events that are recurring. Neighborhood events are not eligible.

NPU-F Action: Motion by Rich Sussman 2nd by Kay Stephenson to approve the Consent Agenda carries by a vote of 19 in favor, 0 opposed.

6. Matters for Voting

Board of Zoning Adjustment Applications (BZA)

V-24-84 (Amended) 2236 Melante Drive NE

Applicant seeks a variance from the zoning ordinance to reduce the south side yard and west side yard setbacks from 7 feet to 0 feet.

LMMNA recommendation: Denial due to concerns from neighbors

NPU-F Action: Motion to recommend DENIAL made by Rich Sussman 2nd by Kay Stephenson

Failed by a vote of 6 ayes 13 nays.

Motion to approve made by Jack White and 2nd by Matthew Deal

Motion to support carries by a vote of 18 ayes and 5 nays.

V-24-113 1030 Los Angeles Avenue NE

Applicant seeks a variance from the zoning ordinance to reduce the east side yard setback from 7 feet to 5 feet.

VHCA recommendation: Deferral. Special note on this variance: While the applicant deferred at the VHCA Board meeting, they are attempting to come back with an updated site plan that incorporates additional tree planting. If they send us this version in time, VHCA will have a vote via email and the NPU will be notified.

Comments: The applicants, Molly and Rob Long, are seeking a variance for 1030 Los Angeles Avenue NE to reduce the East side yard setback from 7 feet to 5 feet. They want to build an extension onto their house, which is currently built on the 3 foot setback line. The extension would move in 2 feet and go backwards. The purpose is to add additional bedrooms for their growing family while keeping the house looking mostly the same from the street. They are also reducing the footprint in the front by removing an existing carport. The Virginia-Highland neighborhood board recommended support for this variance application.

- There was a large sweet gum tree on the east side of the property at 1030 Los Angeles Avenue that was recently removed.
- The homeowners had a private arborist assess the tree, who recommended removal due to decay and roots growing under the neighbor's driveway.
- The city arborist denied a permit to remove the tree, finding no evidence of hazard or root damage.
- Despite this denial, the homeowners removed the tree anyway, believing it to be hazardous.
- The city has issued a fine to the homeowners for the unpermitted tree removal.
- Some NPU members were disappointed the proper appeals process wasn't followed to challenge the city's denial.
- The homeowners plan to plant 3 replacement trees (two overstory and one midstory) to mitigate the loss, which is the maximum allowed based on lot coverage.

This tree removal is controversial because it occurred without proper permitting, but is not directly related to the variance application being discussed.

NPU-F Action: Motion to recommend support made by Alex Saucedo 2nd by Kay Stephenson carries by a vote of 22 ayes 4 nays.

V-24-125 1062 Bellevue Drive NE

Applicant seeks a variance from the zoning ordinance to reduce the front yard setback from the required 35 feet to 22.1 feet, and a special exception from the zoning ordinance to 1) allow for a parking bay within the required west side yard, and 2) remove the requirement that the front door shall face and be visible from the adjacent street.

VHCA recommendation: Recommend support conditional on the existing subject tree being replaced with an appropriate caliber of 11 inches of equivalent species of trees

Comments: The applicant is seeking three things:

1. A variance to reduce the front yard setback from 35 feet to 22.1 feet. This is to allow for a reoriented brick front porch facing the street, replacing an existing wooden porch.
2. A special exception to allow a parking bay within the required west side yard. This would actually be used as a patio area rather than for parking.
3. A special exception to remove the requirement that the front door face and be visible from the adjacent street. The applicant wants to remove a false front door and replace it with a window, keeping only the existing operable side door.

The Virginia-Highland neighborhood recommended support for this application, conditional on replacing an existing tree with 11 inches of equivalent species trees. The applicant stated they plan to add a Southern sugar maple in the rear yard to meet this condition.

NPU-F Action: Motion to recommend support made by Alex Saucedo 2nd by Kay Stephenson carries by a vote of 15 ayes and 0 nays.

V-24-143 960 North Highland Avenue NE

Applicant seeks a variance from the zoning ordinance to 1) reduce the rear yard setback from the required 15 feet to 2 feet, 2) reduce the south side yard setback from the required 7 feet to 5.5 feet, 3) increase the lot coverage from the required 50 percent to 56 percent, and 4) seeks a special exception to allow for parking bays within required yards.

VHCA recommendation: Recommend support

Comments: They propose demolishing the existing rear exterior wall and adding a den with a basement extension. They want to add new sub-grade exterior basement access steps, a screen porch, and a small wood deck and stair. They propose adding a carport over the existing rear parking bay. They plan to remove and replace existing rear retaining walls around the parking bay. They want to extend the existing front driveway. The changes are to accommodate a growing family. They recognize stormwater management is critical and propose several mitigation areas on the property. They seek to reduce the South setback for basement stairs and the rear setback for the proposed carport. They request retroactive approval for the non-conforming rear parking bay in the rear setback. They seek approval to enlarge the existing front driveway in the front yard setback.

NPU-F Action: Motion to recommend support made by Alex Saucedo 2nd by Kay Stephenson carries by a vote of 8 ayes 2 nays.

Zoning Review Board Applications (ZRB)

[U-23-26](#) 1492 Piedmont Avenue NE

Applicant seeks a special use permit to operate an outdoor dining terrace. [PROPOSED PLANS](#)

NPU-F Action: Motion to defer made by Rich Sussman 2nd by Kay Stephenson carries without objection.

Special Event Applications (MOSE)

Event Name/Organizer	Class/Participants	Event Location	Event Date
Culture Fest, SITE PLAN Brigette Doss & Terrell Henderson	Gated/ Class E/ 1,500 Participants	Piedmont Park 400 Park Drive	October 5-6, 2024

Comments:

Concerns from neighbors about sound that the Piedmont Park Conservancy is addressing.

NPU-F Action: Motion to support made by Kay Stephenson 2nd by Rich Sussman carries by a vote of 7 ayes 0 nays.

ONE Musicfest MAP Doug Widener & Terrell Henderson	Gated/Class A/ 140,000 Participants	Piedmont Park 400 Park Drive NE	October 26-27, 2024
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Comments:

- It's a large 2-day music festival scheduled for October 26-27, 2024 in Piedmont Park, Atlanta.
- It's in its 15th year overall and second year at Piedmont Park.
- Expected attendance is up to 70,000 people per day, with a total estimated 140,000 participants over both days.
- It's a Class A gated event that uses the Piedmont Park Conservancy's permit and partly benefits the Conservancy.
- The festival footprint includes the Meadow and Oak Hill areas of the park.
- It features 3 stages with nationally and internationally acclaimed musical talent.
- Hours are 11 hours each day, until 11 PM Saturday and 10:30 PM Sunday.
- Organizers have worked with community stakeholders to improve operations, access, and communication compared to the previous year.

The organizers aim to balance the large-scale event with minimizing disruption to the surrounding community.

NPU-F Action: Motion to support made by Kay Stephenson 2nd by Rich Sussman carries by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays.

Alcohol License Applications (LRB) – Review and Comment

Name of Business	Applicant	Property Address	Request
Illy Ponce	Aarmir M. Ali	699 Ponce de Leon Avenue (NPU-N)	Restaurant New Business

Comments: No comments; will support of NPU-N's recommendation.

The Upper Room	Kelsey Maynor	675 Ponce de Leon Ave NE (NPU-M)	Bar New Business
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Comments: No comments; will support NPU-M's recommendation.

- 7. Presentations - None
- 8. Planner's Report – Doug Young, Director, Design Studios

The International Food Festival special event was withdrawn from the agenda.

The NPU 50th anniversary celebration is in its final month, with the "Love Thy Neighbor" phase focusing on celebrating good neighbors and promoting neighborhood pride.

The Department of City Planning is continuing work on the Comprehensive Development Plan update (Plan A).

The city is rewriting its zoning code, with the first module released in May focusing on form, frontage, and use requirements for proposed zoning districts.

Upcoming NPU University courses were announced, covering topics like mortgage challenges, code enforcement, parliamentary procedures, and geographic information systems.

The next Atlanta City Studio Book Club meeting is scheduled for August 27th at 6:30 PM.

More detailed info can be found here:

<https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/neighborhood-planning-units/updates>

<https://coaplangis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/a7ab4e0bb5034b219c63a160a7538708#&NPU=F>

- 9. Neighborhood and Committee Reports

Lindridge Martin Manor	Lindridge Martin Manor will be holding their Halloween festival at Armand Park on October 27th, which will be in competition with the One Music Fest happening the same day.
Piedmont Heights	No report

Morningside Lenox Park	No report
Virginia-Highland	<p>Virginia Highlands has upcoming elections for their Civic Association Board of Directors. Key dates include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - August 30th: Deadline to register to vote - September 1st: Candidates information emailed to registered voters - September 3rd: Voting opens - September 15th: Voting closes <p>Residents are encouraged to register on the Virginia Highlands website before August 30th in order to participate in the election process.</p>
Edmund Park	No report
Emory/CDC area/ Druid Hills	No report
Parks, Trees & Environment (Rich Sussman)	<p>Announced the South Fork Conservancy's annual Creek Rising fundraiser on September 19th.</p> <p>Mentioned the Great Southeast Pollinator Census happening that weekend. Reported concerning news that some insurance companies are threatening to cancel or not renew home insurance policies due to what they deem "hazardous trees" in the Atlanta area.</p> <p>Recommended people facing this insurance issue contact the Georgia Insurance Commission.</p> <p>Expressed concern about the conflict between insurance companies wanting trees removed and homeowners not being able to get permits to remove healthy trees.</p> <p>Also, raising awareness about the emerging tree-related insurance problem in the community.</p>
Education	No report
Communications (Marla Johnson)	No report
Public Safety (Kay Stephenson)	No report
APAB (Debbie Skopczynski, Voting Member)	At the July meeting of APAB, nothing to report. Debbie did not attend the August APAB meeting held last Saturday.
2024 Community Impact Project Status Reports	We are still waiting for the Grant to be sent from the city. Planning has explained that our projects, which are in several of our neighborhood parks, is being funded by Parks and Recreation who apparently didn't have the infrastructure to request payment.

<p>Chair Report</p> <p>Monroe Safe Streets meeting.</p>	<p>Amsterdam Walk: no updates</p> <p>The ABG service road: no updates</p> <p>A group from VaHi, Morningside, and Piedmont Heights and organized by Councilmember Wan, has met with AtIDOT to discuss neighborhood concerns with the Monroe Safe Street plans. AtIDOT project staff and their consultants, listened and explained why some things could not be done, but were open to other adjustments. The focus remains to keep the project moving and within budget as well as providing a street safe for pedestrians and cycling.</p> <p>Piedmont Park Conservancy Master Plan – watch for link to provide input. Will be sent to Neighborhood communication chairs.</p> <p>Trash Bash 2024, sponsored by Keep Atlanta Beautiful on Sept 20 or Sept 21 9-11 am . This is competition between NPUs. Officer Young mentioned during his report.</p> <p>Competition Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each NPU will form a team of 10 members, led by a team captain. • Judging criteria include the amount of litter collected, proper sorting of recyclables, team name, and promotion of the cleanup effort. • Supplies and T-shirts will be provided for each team. <p>Important Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration Deadline: August 24th, 2024 • Supply Pickup: Thursdays from August 29th to September 12th, 2024
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10. Old Business - None

11. New Business

- Proposed Bylaw and Policy Sheet amendments

Proposed Bylaw Amendments

A. Article VIII

The procedures and rules of NPU-F meetings shall be guided by ~~follow~~ **follow** the ~~current edition of~~ **current edition of** *Robert's Rules of Order*. A Parliamentarian may be appointed by the Chairperson of NPU-F to serve until the appointment and qualification of his/her successor and shall be considered a member of the Executive Committee. The Chair may appoint a timekeeper during presentations and discussions, which are restricted by time limits. **The imposition of time limits on speakers for a particular discussion is at the discretion of the chairperson.** In addition to these By-Laws, explicit reference is hereby made to the Atlanta Code of Ordinances, Part 6, Article B – Sections 6-3011 through 6-3019, which governs Neighborhood Units. Where conflict exists between the Bylaws and the ordinance referenced, the city ordinance shall govern.

B. Article X

~~ZONING MATTERS~~ – COORDINATION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS – ZONING AND ALCOHOL LICENSE MATTERS.

There are six (6) neighborhood associations currently recognized by NPU-F within its boundaries, the Edmund Park Civic Association (“EPCA”), the Lindridge-Martin Manor Neighborhood Association (“LMMNA”), the Morningside Lenox Park Association (“MLPA”), the Piedmont Heights Civic Association (“PHCA”), the Virginia –Highland Civic Association (“VHCA”) and the Druid Hills Civic Association (“DHCA”). With respect to matters heard by the Board of Zoning Adjustment or License Review Board, it is NPU-F’s preference that any zoning matters or alcohol license matters within the jurisdiction of NPU-F initially are reviewed by the affected civic association so that NPU-F may be informed of the civic association’s view on any such zoning matter prior to NPU-F making its own independent decisions with respect to any such matters. Further, in the event the property identified in the application is likely to have an impact on an adjacent neighborhood, both should be made aware of the application and have an opportunity to offer a recommendation.

Proposed Policy Sheet Amendments

IV. It shall be the policy of the NPU that the agendas for the monthly meetings shall follow this format:

- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Include changes to agenda when appropriate
- Approval of Minutes
- Calendar Announcements
- Reports from City Departmental Representatives
- Comments from Elected Officials
- Consent Agenda
- Presentation(s)
- Zoning Matters (BZA, ZRB, CDP)
- License Review Board
- Special Events
- Presentation(s)
- Planner’s Report
- Neighborhood and Committee Reports
- Text Amendments
- ~~Old Business~~ Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

At the beginning of each meeting, the chairperson shall set a time limit for reports and presentations.

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XI. Consent Agenda: The NPU will use a Consent Agenda process for hearing certain Variance, Alcohol License and Special Events applications that meet specified criteria. The Consent Agenda would be voted on without hearing an application. Reports to the City would specify the NPU’s support, comments and conditions (if appropriate).

Consent Agenda Alcohol License Applications for Inclusion

1. Deferral of LRB application
2. Change of agent or change of ownership routine applications
3. Restaurants, hotel or retail package businesses routine applications
4. Neighborhood has met with applicant and has no concerns or opposition

12. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm. Motion by Rich Sussman 2nd by Kay Stephenson

PUBLIC NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Provided for informational purposes. Votes/comments are neither required nor expected.

2025 NPU Bylaws
2025 NPU Bylaws must be submitted by September 30, 2024. There shall be no restrictions on a resident's right to vote on Bylaws.
Campaigning by Elected Officials & Candidates
<p>Campaigning at NPU meetings is strictly prohibited by the City of Atlanta's Code of Ordinances.</p> <p>Sec. 6-3019 Prohibition of Political Forums "Neighborhood planning unit meetings shall not be used for political forums or campaigning for city, county, state, or federal elections."</p> <p>Examples of campaigning could include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of elected officials as political candidates in upcoming elections;• Distributing campaign materials and literature; and• Conducting either of the above in City Hall, its rooms or offices. <p>Please contact Leah LaRue at 404.546.0159 or llarue@atlantaga.gov with any questions or concerns.</p>