**Chastain Park Civic Association**

**Meeting Minutes: 1/23/17**

**Board in Attendance (visual inspection):**

Ashley Battleson

Jubal Gatewood

Sarah Lynch

Lee Smith

Frank Toye

Mikki Hawkins

John Terry

Jason White

Teresa Joel

Stacy Vaughn

Kevin Greene

Tejas Patel

Brink Dickerson

1. Welcome & Introductions: Jason White (CPCA Co-President)
	1. Jason welcomed everyone, overviewed the meeting topics, and introduced the 1st speaker.
2. Guest Speaker: Christina Gibson, Trees Atlanta
	1. As background, Jason stated that neighbors had expressed interest and concern with the removal of trees in Chastain Park via several NextDoor posts.  He also mentioned that a neighborhood group had recently formed with the focus on protecting trees.  Jason introduced Rosa McHugh, Executive Director for the Chastain Park Conservancy to provide additional background.
	2. Rosa stated that the Chastain Park Conservancy is hosting an Open House at the Chastain Park Conservancy office on Powers Ferry Road on February 14th.  Trees Atlanta will be attending the Open House to discuss protecting our tree canopy.  Rosa encouraged neighbors to attend if they are interested in learning more about Trees Atlanta and their mission.
	3. Jason introduced Christina Gibson, the Canopy Conservation Coordinator for Trees Atlanta.
	4. Christina introduced herself as an arborist who grew up near Chastain Park.  Her role with Trees Atlanta focuses on advocacy and helping citizens figure out how to save trees in their neighborhoods.  She stated that Atlanta is losing a lot of trees due to new developments and single-family residential lots being built out to their setbacks.  She stated that 70% of Atlanta's trees are on single-family residential lots and 61% of Atlanta is zoned single-family residential.  The City of Atlanta has a 48% tree canopy coverage (64% for Chastain Park), which is very high compared to other southern cities.
	5. Christina stated both the City of Atlanta and the City of Sandy Springs have tree ordinances.  The City of Atlanta's ordinance tends to be very complex, whereas the City of Sandy Springs has fewer restrictions.  Both ordinances require community citizens to make sure the laws and restrictions are followed, and hold the cities accountable. Christina stated that one of the biggest problems is illegal removal of trees by builders and tree companies.  The current laws do not require a cross reference of the trees that are marked for removal with the actual building plan that’s submitted to the city for review and approval.  If a neighbor doesn't notice or call this out, the trees are illegally removed.
	6. Christina stated that neighbors have a right to ask tree removal companies for their site permit.  If a tree removal company cannot produce a site permit, neighbors have the right to ask them to stop work and they can contact the City’s arborist, or call 911 and the police can have the work stopped.
	7. Christina provided additional resources: The Atlanta Tree Conservation Commission, which hears appeals that neighbors can file when they see a "tree removal" sign posted on private property, and the Atlanta Parks Department, which hears appeals for public property.
	8. John Terry asked about the process to remove a tree on private property.  Christina overviewed the process: 1. Builder submits a plan to the city for approval, 2. City arborist places an orange sign on the lot that states "Notice of Plan Submittal", which must be visible on the lot for a minimum of 10 days, 3. City arborist reviews and approves the plan and places a yellow sign on the lot stating "Planned Tree Removal" for a minimum of 5 days.
	9. Tejas asked a question about clear-cutting lots.  Christina responded that clear-cutting is permitted when an arborist classifies all trees on the lot as DDH (Dead, Dying or Hazardous).  When this happens, neighbors can request a separate review by an arborist to make sure the trees are actually DDH.  Christina stated that landmark trees could be protected from removal.  Landmark trees are classified as hardwood trees over 27 inches in diameter, a pine tree over 30 feet, or a tree within 75 feet of a stream corridor - full details can be found on the City of Atlanta Tree Conservation Division website or the City of Sandy Springs Tree Ordinance website.
	10. Christina provided contact information for the tree arborist/inspector in Northwest Atlanta, Jason Ernest (404) 330-6079.  Neighbors can contact him to confirm that a tree has been permitted and approved for removal.
	11. There was a question from the audience about who can file an appeal. Christina responded that anyone, or any organization could file an appeal.  She added that the general process is to file an appeal during the 5 days after a yellow sign has been posted on a lot.  Individuals can file the appeal online through the City of Atlanta Arborist Division website and fill out an appeal form.  Christina said it is important to take and include pictures with the appeal, especially information about the tree removal company (i.e. license plate, company logo, etc.).  She stated that the cost to file an appeal is $75 (or a letter requesting to waive the appeal).  She noted that you must cite which section of the tree ordinance is in violation (or misinterpreted by the arborist) or the case will be dismissed as frivolous.
	12. There was a question from the audience asking if appeals are filed often.  Christina stated that, yes; the Tree Conservation Commission has a hearing once per month to review appeals.
	13. There was a question from the audience about the root buffer of a tree.  Christina responded that for every 1-inch diameter of a tree, the root buffer is 1 foot.  When more than 20% of the root buffer is compromised for a tree (due to construction), the tree is considered condemned.
	14. Jason asked Christina if she works with community organizations like the CPCA often.  Christina responded no, that her role is a newly formed position for Trees Atlanta.
	15. Rosa asked if there is a Trees Atlanta approved tree removal service or arborist.  Christina responded that her organization has considered this, but that it does not exist today.
	16. John Terry restated his understanding that every tree in Atlanta or Sandy Springs marked for removal must be permitted.  Christina replied that this is not the case (per the tree ordinances) - smaller trees and certain species do not require a permit.  She added that, in general, large hardwood trees, that look healthy, must be permitted.  She also stated that markings on trees can provide additional information - an orange X on a tree means that it has been marked for removal, but it is healthy.  An orange blaze (or mark, but not an X) on a tree indicates that it is condemned as dying or hazardous.  Christina stated that the website "Accela" is a public database that provides permit information about a property.
	17. Jason asked Brink if they see the tree removal requests/permits through the NPUs.  Brink replied no, that they only see variance and flood plain requests.
	18. Jason requested that anyone interested in establishing a group, within the CPCA, to address tree permitting to please see him after the meeting.
	19. Brink asked Christina if Trees Atlanta would help educate the Police during Arbor Day to make sure they are aware of the tree ordinances in Atlanta and Sandy Springs.
	20. Christina provided 2 arborists that she recommends: Arbor Medics (770) 715-1713 and Bartlet Tree Experts (770) 496-9848.  She also provided the website: treenextdoor.org, which provides information on the tree ordinance in Atlanta.
	21. Jason thanked Christina for coming.
	22. Christina reminded the audience that she will be at the Conservancy Open House on Feb. 14 from 8-11 and that she will be teaching a lunch-n-learn on the tree ordinance on Feb. 9 (visit the Trees Atlanta website for more information).
3. Guest Speaker: Frederick, co-founder of Shotzy
	1. Frederick introduced himself as a neighbor and co-founder of Shotzy (founded in 2016), which is an Uber-like tech App that provides photographers for $99/hour.  He stated that Shotzy would be taking pictures at the upcoming CPCA Winter Gala.
	2. Mikki asked Frederick to explain how the pictures are delivered to the client.  Frederick explained that the Shotzy app could be downloaded via the Apple App store or Google Play.  He stated that Shotzy vets every photographer and Atlanta currently has about 100 approved photographers.  After the client downloads the App, they enter the location of the event and an invitation is sent out to Shotzy approved photographers in the area.  The photographers have the option to accept the invitation or decline.  The job/work order is given to the 1st photographer to accept.  After completing the job, the photographer will edit the photos and upload them (within 48 hours) to a gallery link via the app.  The $99 cost covers all expenses including the digital images (with copy write release).
	3. Tejas asked what the lead-time is to request a photographer. Frederick replied that a 2-hour minimum is requested.
	4. There was a question from the audience asking if the client can input the type of event - to ensure the right photographer is hired for the job (i.e. sports photographer for a sporting event).  Frederick replied that most of the photographers are well rounded, capable of multiple types of photography.
	5. The audience had several questions about the details of the App. Frederick provided additional details.
	6. Frederick stated that Shotzy was looking to sponsor community events by offering free photo shoots as auction items.
	7. Jason thanked Frederick for coming.
4. Guest Speaker: Yolanda Adrean, City Council – District 8
	1. Yolanda introduced herself and stated that she had 2 topics she wanted to discuss with the CPCA.  1. Atlanta hired a new Police Major on January 1, Major Shaw, and 2. Renewal of the Chastain Park Amphitheatre contract.
	2. Yolanda stated that she is excited that Major Shaw is placing an emphasis on leveraging the license plate readers and cameras she recently installed in District 8.  She mentioned several success stories and stated that 5 individuals were arrested last week by utilizing the cameras/license plate readers.
	3. Yolanda stated that Major Shaw also acknowledged the increase in crime in Zone 2, which he plans to address.  The Major has also acknowledged that Zone 2 is too big and there is a shortage of police force.
	4. Yolanda said she is excited to work with Major Shaw.
	5. Yolanda stated that the City has renewed their contract with the Amphitheatre Venture (tenant) for 2-10 year terms (20 years).  The contract was renewed early because the Venture plans to invest over $5 million to modernize the stage and improve the sound and technical equipment to attract bigger and better acts.
	6. Yolanda stated that the concert venue hasn't been as successful in recent years and the Venture is planning to address this.
	7. Yolanda assured the CPCA that the renewed contract would not impact any of the items the neighborhood has fought for including the number of concerts, sound restrictions, length of concert season, hours, etc.
	8. Yolanda said the contract does require the Venture to invest over $5 million before May 2018 to make improvements, including ADA compliance.  She added that the City is also transferring the expense of maintenance, capital costs, and sound/equipment cost to the Venture. The City will maintain responsibility for the roads and parking lots around the venue.  Yolanda stated that this transfer of responsibility would allow the Chastain Park Trust Fund monies to be used toward public safety, the playground, PATH, and other maintenance around the park vs. toward the Amphitheatre.
	9. Yolanda stated that the surcharge per seat would increase from $4.50 to $8.00 ($2.50 will go to the Venture to fund the $5 million investment, $2.00 will also go to the Venture to cover maintenance, the remainder of the surcharge will go toward the Trust Fund ($1.25), the Mayor's Center of Hope ($0.50), and the Scholarship Fund for Minority Students ($1.75)).
	10. Yolanda said the Amphitheatre has generated over $1.6 million for the Trust Fund over the past 6 years. She stated that the renewed contract also requires the Venture to submit quarterly the amount of surcharges and revenue.
	11. Jason added that the CPCA's responsibility is to hold the City accountable to be transparent on the amount of money that goes into the Trust Fund and how it gets applied.
	12. Yolanda stated that the City is reviewing the Trust Fund to ensure the correct monies have been deposited since 2010, and that there may be additional funds going into the account.
	13. Yolanda added that the City has been working with the CPCA and the Conservancy to pave Park Drive (Chastain Memorial Drive) and make it safer for pedestrians.  Yolanda stated that she has submitted legislation to get the road paved, which will be funded through the Trust Fund.  Galloway will fund the engineering and the Trust Fund will fund the construction costs.
	14. Jason thanked Yolanda for her help to make sure the Trust Fund money is allocated to projects like the paving of Park Drive.
	15. Frank Toye asked Yolanda if she has heard anything about the crosswalks on Lake Forrest Drive.  Yolanda thanked Frank for reminding her to look into this.
	16. Yolanda said she was at the Renew Atlanta meeting this evening and they talked about the intersection between Northside Parkway and Mt. Paran. The Renew Atlanta Bond (which the community recently approved) will be funding an intersection improvement to add a dedicated right turning lane from the west side of M. Paran and Northside Parkway to access I-75 south.  The Bond will also help fund other key intersection improvements, like Mt. Paran/Randall Mill/W. Conway. The Renew Atlanta website has additional information.
5. Community Events: Winter Gala Update, Kevin Greene & Stacy Vaughn
	1. Kevin stated that the early ticket sales were good.  Kevin added that the event would be similar to last year.  The event will be held on Saturday, January 28th at 7:00-11:00pm with a live band around 8:00pm.
	2. Kevin thanked the Board for getting sponsors.
	3. Stacy asked the Board to volunteer to help set up and clean up.
	4. There was additional discussion amongst the Board about the event details.
6. Advocacy: Frank Toye (NPU B), John Terry (Sandy Springs)
	1. Frank stated that Buckhead Redefined is looking for input from the community and he said to visit their website for additional information.
	2. John Terry stated that Sandy Springs was looking at a roundabout at Mt. Vernon and Powers Ferry.
7. Next Meeting – February 27, 2017 at 6:30 pm, location TBD.
8. Meeting Adjourned