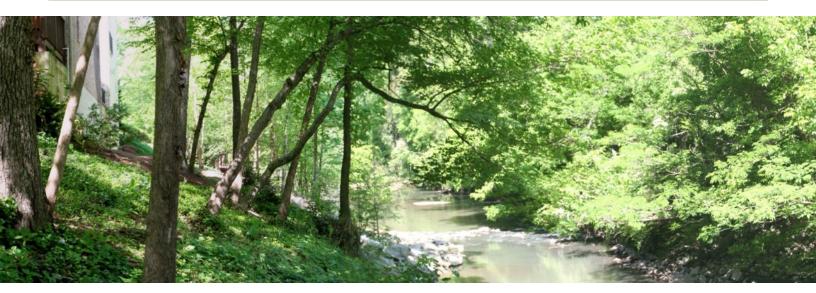


## CITY NEWS



Above, a section of what will be District 4's first park, Peachtree Creek at Brookhaven. Below, top, residents gather for a public workshop for the Bike, Pedestrian & Trail plan. Below, bottom, city and neighborhood representatives and consultants kick off the Murphey Candler Lake Study.

# Planning underway for park upgrades, trail system





Planning is underway in Brookhaven that will ultimately result in improved parks and a network of multimodal trails.

In September, the Brookhaven City Council stated its intent to create a linear park. The Peachtree Creek Greenway at Brookhaven is slated to become District 4's first park, and encompasses the 2.7 mile stretch of the north fork of the creek located in the city limits. The entire stretch is 12 miles and could ultimately give path users a connection to the Atlanta BeltLine.

An engineering firm is working on a master plan for the linear park with public open houses scheduled for September and December.

Also in the works are master plans for each of Brookhaven's parks. Part of that effort are citizen committees that will present plans and ideas.

Likewise, work continues on

an overarching Bike, Pedestrian & Trail Plan that will provide residents and visitors with a means to reach the parks and other destinations via alternative transportation.

The health of the Nancy Creek Watershed, including Murphey Candler Lake, is the focus of another study. Citizens are encouraged to attend public meetings for this and the other plans so they can give input on how the city funds will be spent.

"It's important that we obtain as much input as possible for this study, which will ultimately identify a list of capital improvement projects that the city can undertake to improve conditions within the watershed, including the lake," Public Works Director Bennett White said.

To learn more about these plans and upcoming public meeting, visit www.brookhavenga.gov or email news@brookhavenga.gov.

## From the Desk of the Mayor

It is an honor and privilege that I write my first column to you as Brookhaven's mayor. Since I was sworn in June 9, I have made it my mission to get our city on the correct course, to re-focus on the reasons the city was formed and make sure we follow our core values of honesty and ethics

There have been some recent missteps and errors in judgment, but the council has been part of the clean up, not any kind of cover up. I am personally working hard to earn back whatever trust we may have lost.

Within a week of being sworn in, I led the effort to terminate our former city attorney, who admitted he made mistakes in not fully complying with Georgia's Open Records laws. He offered his resignation and we accepted it, as we have no room for error on a matter of such importance to our city.

I also authored a "Sunshine Resolution" passed by council that clearly spells out that Brookhaven will go beyond the requirements of the state law to always err on the side of disclosure when it comes to open records requests. The council also released executive session minutes and a privileged email to remove any doubt that the city had anything to hide.

At my urging, the council recently passed the city's first employee policy handbook, with a strong anti-harassment policy. This was long overdue, and had stalled on the former city attorney's desk.

The second week in office I nominated a new city attorney, Chris Balch, a former city and county attorney with extensive experience in ethics and open meetings law. Chris has started training all our boards and commissions on Georgia's Sunshine laws to make sure all our city appointees understand how they, too, are covered by these laws.

As part of our effort to run our government like a business, we have commissioned a study to create perfor-



mance measures for all our departments. While we get monthly reports on our departments, we will soon have better metrics by which to set and measure whether we are achieving our goals of effective and efficient delivery of city services. Last year, I lobbied for a performance review process by which all our employees only receive raises based on merit.

You will read more in this newsletter about the many plans and activities underway, but don't forget that every day the city runs smoothly with dedicated staff filling pot-

holes, inspecting buildings, paving our streets, maintaining our parks and keeping our citizens safe.

My goal as mayor is to do the right thing for the right reasons every day and to work hard to prove that we are a city of ethics, transparency, efficiency and good government.

As we get ready to set next year's budget I want to hear your concerns, ideas and questions. I've been holding "Chat with the Mayor" sessions in the hopes of meeting everyone in person, but don't hesitate to email me at rebecca.williams@brookhavenga.gov or come see me at city hall at Monday's with the Mayor.

Warm regards,

### Rebecca

### rebecca.williams@brookhavenga.gov



Rebecca Chase Williams hosts a 'Chat With the Mayor' at Lynwood Park.

## **Around Town**



The popular Food Truck Round-Up event continued this year in Blackburn Park and runs through Sept. 30 on Wednesdays, 5 to 9 p.m.



From left, District 4 Councilman Joe Gebbia, Georgia United Credit Union CEO Debbie Smith, and District 3 Councilman Bates Mattison at the credit union's School Crashers makeover event at Woodward Elementary in July. Pictured is a gazebo donated by the city to the school.



About 30 volunteers pitched in when the City of Brookhaven's Stormwater Division hosted its inaugural Stream Cleanup on May 2 at a tributary of West Nancy Creek. Volunteers pulled out 24 tires and many bags of trash along the way.



District 1 Councilwoman Linley Jones, fourth from left, and Activities Coordinator Cassandra Bryant (right) gather with young campers at Brookhaven Parks & Rec's daytime campout and school supply drive at Lynwood Park in August.



More than 100 runners signed up for Parks & Rec's 'It Starts in the Park' 5K race in July in Blackburn Park.

### **Council Views**



Linley Jones, District 1 linley.jones@brookhavenga.gov

I have been honored to serve as the Brookhaven City Councilperson for District 1 since June, when I was appointed by Mayor Williams and unanimously confirmed by the City Council to serve out her unexpired term. The term lasts only through the end of the year, so I immediately undertook to understand as much as I could about our district.

As part of this effort, my family and I began spending time walking through District 1 neighborhoods and parks. While I had certainly driven through the neighborhoods before in my 22 years in Brookhaven, I had not walked them all. In the process of doing so, I have been reminded of the words of Paul Salopek, a journalist walking across the globe on behalf of National Geographic's Out of Eden Walk Project:

By walking, I am forced to slow down. The world blurs and flattens with speed. On foot there is clarity.

I have found this to be true. The pace of a walk has given me the opportunity to stop and chat with neighbors we encounter. It has also illuminated for me the differing characters of our neighborhoods and the issues that face them. I have seen firsthand recent city improvements as well as areas of need in our increasingly pedestrian-friendly city.

I have been glad to hear from residents face-to-face and have also encouraged residents to take advantage of the City Sourced app, a method for reporting issues to the city (it replaced our previous See Click Fix app). To install it on your smart phone, just go to the App Store and download City Sourced. Reporting issues to the City this way is very efficient for you, the citizen, and helps make our city a better place when we all participate.

The next six months represents an important time in our City's early history as we turn our attention to creating in-depth plans for each of our parks. The park planning will focus on incorporating citizen input (past and present) with the professional guidance of our parks consultants to create specific, detailed, long-range plans for each of our parks. The goal is for our park plans to preserve and honor the individual character of each park while creating a map for maximizing its potential. I encourage all citizens of Brookhaven to give input and attend the public meetings that are soon to be scheduled.

Meanwhile, the re-paving of selected roads throughout Brookhaven will soon resume and you can expect to see the paving crews working hard to improve our city streets. This is your HOST tax dollars at work!

In closing, I always welcome your feedback and input, as well as your questions. Please feel free to e-mail me anytime at Linley. Jones@BrookhavenGa.gov.



John Park, District 2 john.park@brookhavenga.gov

Brookhaven is changing and we can hear it: from the cars that speed through our neighborhoods, the 7 a.m. start of new construction, and the hustle and bustle from neighborhood restaurants.

We're about to cross the Rubicon where Brookhaven could become another victim of

unbridled urbanization.

There is another path, but only if we visualize what we want and make prudent decisions today to fulfill Brookhaven's potential.

This means working together to manage growth in a smart and holistic way, improving options for getting through the neighborhood, and acquiring greenspace to maintain a proper balance so that Brookhaven can be an oasis in a concrete desert.

Let's find new and creative ways for getting around the city as well as key points of interest -- more specifically, our parks. Let's envision a day where we ride a bike or walk to a park to visit the new playground, then go just down the street to grab a bite to eat on Dresden, and stop by and visit our neighbors along the way. Many of us do this already, but let's make it safe, travel shorter distances, and without the need for cars and parking.

Once the paths are complete, imagine riding 1.5 miles from Ashford Park (half a mile from Drew Valley) to the planned Peachtree Creek Greenway and then enjoy a scenic three miles to connect to the Atlanta BeltLine.

The city is currently formulating three very important plans, which will have permanent ramifications for Brookhaven and especially District 2. These include (1) a master plan for each park, (2) a citywide bike-pedestrian plan, and (3) the Peachtree Creek Greenway Plan.

Each plan has a steering committee comprised of your neighbors to set the direction.

These plans will guide our budgeting and infrastructure for many years and it will allow for other forms of funding such as private and public grants. And as a living document, these plans will be amended as needed.

You can get involved by attending any of these meetings. Check our website at www.brookhavenga.gov for a schedule or to sign up for city updates.

Or you can contact me at john.park@brookhavenga.gov. Now is the time to educate ourselves, discuss possibilities, and to hear your thoughts and ideas.

Let's get excited. Let's work together.

The Brookhaven City Council generally meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 3:30 and 7 p.m. at 4362 Peachtree Road. Visit www.brookhavenga.gov for schedule changes.

### **Council Views**



Bates Mattison, District 3 bates.mattison@brookhavenga.gov

On Aug. 26, the Georgia State Charter School Commission voted to approve Brookhaven Innovation Academy (BIA) as an independent state charter school. I spearheaded this effort, with the support of the Mayor and Council, to help improve public school options. There have been many questions regarding BIA, which I have attempted to answer below. Thank you, Bates

What is BIA? BIA is a state-au-

thorized, state-funded, public charter school opening in August 2016 with 420 students in K-6, growing a grade a year until it reaches full enrollment of 540 in K-8. Subject to board review and the approval of the charter commission, BIA plans to eventually grow to a K-12 model. BIA will offer a research-based, college preparatory, blended learning curriculum with a complimentary project-based learning focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math ("STEM"), incorporating computer coding from kindergarten onward.

What are public charter schools? Charter schools are tuition-free public schools that are held accountable for improved student achievement in exchange for the freedom to be flexible and innovative. They are nonsectarian, offer open enrollment and cannot discriminate based on race, religion or disability.

#### Why do we need a public charter school?

- Our state has a tremendous demand and need for STEM proficient personnel at every career level from entry-level skilled workers upwards. Our existing system is not producing enough STEM prepared graduates.
- Many of the public schools that serve our community are overcrowded and will become more so.
- Additional educational options are needed because a onesize-fits-all model does not work for every family.

What has/will BIA cost Brookhaven's taxpayers? Recognizing the vital role that education plays in economic development, the city has invested \$60,000 for a feasibility study for a city school system, development of strategies for strengthening our existing public schools, and the development of BIA to the point of its approval by the commission. The city has no ongoing commitment or liability to BIA. The operations of BIA will be entirely funded by the State of Georgia via the State Charter School Commission, which derives funding from the State of Georgia Education budget, funded by our state tax dollars.

Will BIA take financial resources away from existing schools in the area? Since BIA will be funded entirely with state funds, the DeKalb County School System will have the same amount of local property taxes to spend on fewer students.

Isn't BIA a brand new school with no track record? BIA is overseen by an accomplished board of directors with a diverse range of experiences as educators and business and community leaders. The board will hire an experienced head of school who will be responsible for all day-to-day operations and will hire and supervise the faculty and other employees.

For more information, visit http://brookhaven.education/.



Joe Gebbia, District 4 joe.gebbia@brookhavenga.gov

Looking at other recently created cities here in the metro area, it seems as though the start-up phase lasts about five years. This appears to be true for Brookhaven. Even though all hasn't been smooth sailing, each bump in the road has been a valuable lesson for those of us working to create the city that we all dreamed possible just a few years ago. Even with our challenges, our city has grown quickly, soundly

and responsibly. This is substantiated by the level of services provided to our residents, all while lowering taxes every year.

The City of Brookhaven is not only growing, it is evolving quickly to position itself as a place people want to live and where businesses want to locate. But there is a great deal of work to do. Look at the issues we are addressing: committing to save valuable green space and tree canopies for future generations; creating citizen advisory boards to take our parks to a higher level; and working to maximize our impact to improve educational opportunities.

Even with that, most critical is our economic development strategies along the Buford Highway corridor. This will largely define how well Brookhaven taps its future potential. Some of the opportunities in the works include:

- The January 2005 annexation of Children's Health Care of Atlanta (CHOA), Executive Park and Regency (formerly Loehman's Plaza). The addition of these three major players, along with 160-plus additional businesses, has dramatically changed the landscape for economic development within the corridor.
- The pending completion of the Peachtree Creek Greenway at Brookhaven, which will spark economic development along the entire corridor. Once connected to neighboring trails and bike paths, this "statement park" should produce similar results as currently experienced by other BeltLine routes.
- Redevelopment of Executive Park, which has the potential to be an excellent site location for large international corporate headquarters and with the unique advantage of being Inside The Perimeter (ITP).
- The development of CHOA's International Headquarters. It's estimated this project will add 400-600 jobs over the next five years.
- Working to secure the State of Georgia Opportunity Zone designation for as much of the corridor as possible. This is a state-financed tax abatement program incentivizing companies to move to Brookhaven and create new employment.

Along with this current activity, Brookhaven has many more economic development opportunities, especially with those existing along the rest of Buford Highway. Development in this area has the potential to contribute more to the city's tax base than our current largest contributors located on the north side. This will significantly impact our ability to continue lowering our residential tax rate.

At present, Brookhaven is the largest city in DeKalb County and the 16th largest in the state. As an ITP city we are blessed with real estate assets that have fantastic locations with great accessibility. The key question our city government and our citizens face is what can we do to positively influence outcomes that we'll have to live with for the next 50-plus years. The future looks bright....

City meetings are streamed online and archived at www.brookhavenga.gov. Go to the "City Government" tab near the top of the homepage and click on "Meetings & Agendas."

## City News

### **Brookhaven sets dates for 2016 Cherry Blossom Festival**

The City of Brookhaven on Aug. 25 announced March 26-27, 2016, as the dates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

"This will be an event that families can embrace," Mayor Rebecca Chase Williams said, noting that the advantages of that particular weekend is that it's blooming season for the cherry blossoms; there won't be competing soccer and baseball games, school plays and other events; and that it will not occur over DeKalb Schools' Spring Break when many people leave town.

It will also coincide with the timing of the Cherry Blossom Festival in both Macon and Washington D.C., and takes place over Easter weekend.

The inaugural festival earlier this year drew an estimated 10,000 visitors to Blackburn Park over the three days, helping to infuse as much as \$185,000 into the local economy. Some 95 percent of survey respondents rated their festival experience as "good" to "excellent."

Discover DeKalb will assist with marketing and promoting the festival, and the city will issue a Request for Proposals for an event planner.

"I look forward to an even bigger and better festival next year," Williams said. "Any money that we spend on it will come from the hotel-motel tax, which can only be used for projects that draw visitors to the city."

While the city is dedicating \$123,866 from hotel/motel tax funds for the 2015 festival, more than 60 businesses contributed \$128,192 through sponsorships, vendors and concessions.

"We are proud that the business community stepped up to match dollar for dollar what our tourism





Visitors of all ages enjoy the 2015 Cherry Blossom Festival. Photos by Matt Alexandre

funds are accomplishing, even a little more. It was a true public-private partnership, and we consider this a long-term investment," Williams said.

### City adds \$600,000 to reserves after budget adjustment

Following City Council approval of its mid-year budget adjustment on Aug. 25, Brookhaven will add more than \$600,000 to its reserve.

According to City Manager Marie Garrett, a budget adjustment became necessary when the city council adopted a lower millage rate earlier this year.

"We wanted to be sure we had sufficient funds to carry out all services agreed on in the budget, and we 6 • Brookhaven City News • Fall 2015 were able to do that," she said.

The city is receiving higher-than-expected revenues in parts of the 2015 budget, including the tax digest, and currently has about \$4 million in reserve.

Earlier this year, the city approved a 2.74 millage rate, lowering it for the third year in a row and tying Brookhaven with Dunwoody as having the lowest among DeKalb cities.

## City News



### **Inaugural Citizen's Police Academy graduates**

Graduates of the Brookhaven Police Department's first Citizen's Police Academy were recognized at City Hall on Aug. 11 for successfully completing 10 weeks of classes covering all aspects of law enforcement.

Graduates included: Stacy Phelps, Shawn Perkins, Riley O'Connor, Armand Noah, Cassandra Bryant, Bayyinnah White, Patrice Tanner, Ivan Balga, Helena Balga, Greg Barnes, Raquel McClendon, Rosalind McIntyre, Christopher Uno, Sandra Bryant, John Peter Tansey, Joseph Haas, Emilie Haas, William Whaley Hines Jr., Zachary William Graber, Diane Erdeljac, Robert Bean, Corinna Matthies, Diana Hernandes, Leah Taylor, David Schurer, Jason Amerson and Rossana Morales-Romero.



## Family donates playground in memory of son

Children visiting the City of Brookhaven's Lynwood Park are getting to enjoy new playground equipment that includes multiple tube and wave slides.

The playground was provided by the Shinnick family in memory of their son, Liam Shinnick, and was designed by Landscape Structures.

Sara and John Shinnick and daughter, Catherine, were on hand for the playground's ribbon-cutting ceremony (left) as were city council and staff and residents from the Lynwood Park neighborhood.





## **Staff Notes**

### **Brookhaven Police Chief forms international partnerships**

This summer Brookhaven Police Chief Gary Yandura traveled the globe to study the latest techniques and technologies as well as to help in setting up an exchange program.

In July the chief joined a delegation of sheriffs, police chiefs and others from 17 Georgia public safety agencies in the 23rd annual peer-to-peer program organized, sponsored and paid for by the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchanges of Georgia State University. GILEE hosts public safety exchanges, conferences and experts who introduce new, best practices in law enforcement to police and other public and private safety professionals to enhance their capabilities to serve citizens in this area.

"I was excited by some of the new technologies and possibilities I witnessed in Israel," Yandura said.

In May the chief joined Georgia Bureau of Investigations Director Vernon Keenan and other Atlanta area police chiefs on a trip to The Republic of Georgia. The purpose of the visit was to assess their police services, leadership and management with the hopes of setting up an exchange program.

The trip was coordinated by the U.S. State Depart-



Brookhaven Police Chief Gary Yandura traveled to Israel earlier this year to observe the latest in crime-solving techniques and technologies in that country.

ment through the U.S. Embassy of Georgia and paid for by the State Department.

Chief Yandura and the others toured their criminal justice facilities, including their dispatch center, K-9 facility, morgue and crime lab. Their work sessions focused on sharing ideas of how The Republic can improve their police services and management.

"This trip made me thankful for what we have in Brookhaven," Yandura said.

### **City Vision and Mission**

The following are vision and mission statements crafted and adopted by the Mayor and Council during their council retreat in 2014.

#### **Vision**

Brookhaven will be nationally recognized as a beautiful community where multiple generations can live in safety, flourish in business and succeed in a historic, sustainable environment with exceptional education and transportation options.

#### **Mission**

In support of the Brookhaven vision the City government shall: encourage and maintain a beautiful community, meet public safety needs, develop an environment for business success, promote sustainable projects and activities, identify and preserve historic and neighborhood resources, facilitate educational opportunities, and improve transportation conditions, connectivity, and options while listening to and communicating with the public.

## City Hall 'goes greener' with new recycling containers



Brookhaven Facilities Director Brad Middlebrook recently instituted a recycling program for non-paper goods at City Hall and placed 64-gallon bins on every floor. Paper recycling was already in place, including a system to securely shred documents.

## **Staff Notes**

### Stormwater Manager leads student team to victory

City of Brookhaven Stormwater Manager Gregory Anderson recently led a team of competitively selected students to victory at a STEM camp.

Each summer, the Society of American Military Engineers sponsors engineering/ STEM camps for exceptional students who plan to study engineering in college.

The camps are run by industry professionals to give students hands-on experience in engineering and related fields. At the SAME Engineering and Construction Camp at Camp Lejeune, NC, Anderson, a member of the U.S. Marine Corps, led his Bravo team to victory in the stormwater event.

Anderson, pictured with the winning streamer, described the experience as "intense but rewarding."





### **Tourism Manager wins big at Motorcoach Show**

City of Brookhaven Tourism Manager Mike Vescio recently came home with two awards after attending the Georgia/Alabama and South Central Motorcoach Meeting.

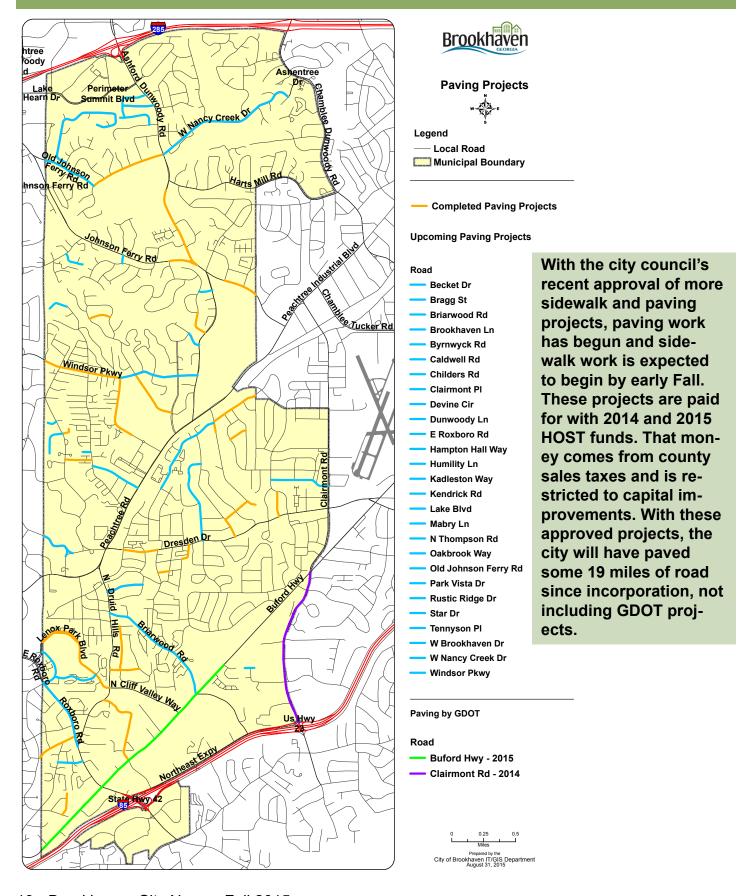
The event was held at Lake Lanier Islands with some 400 attendees, - including tour operators and group leaders - from six states attending.

Vescio, who is in his fourth year serving on the Georgia Motorcoach Operators Board of Directors, won the Marketplace Associate of the Year and, for the second year in a row, Associate of the Year.

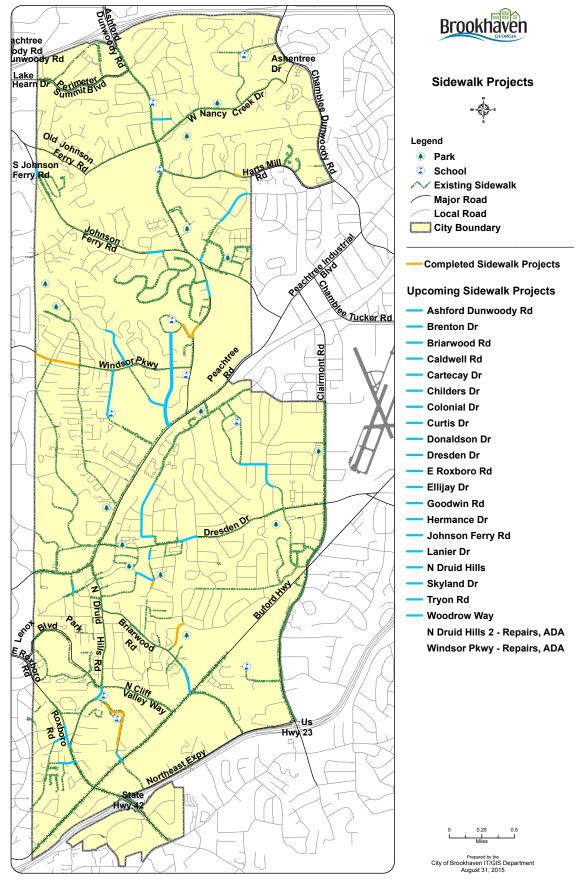
Vescio, whose role with the city is to "put heads in the beds" of Brookhaven hotels and to promote special events, says he looks forward to bringing more bus groups and revenue to the city.



## **Brookhaven: Working For You**



## **Brookhaven: Working For You**





### We want to hear from you!









www.facebook.com/BrookhavenGAGov www.twitter.com/BrookhavenGaGov www.youtube.com/user/CityofBrookhavenGA www.flickr.com/photos/cityofbrookhavenga

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS . . .

### **Brookhaven Farmers Market** Saturdays through Dec. 12;

9 a.m.-noon

### Dresden Drive & Fernwood Circle Apple Valley Road behind

Sip, shop and savor the flavors of fresh, local produce, baked goods. artisan cheeses and more.

BrookhavenFarmersMarket.com

### **Brookhaven Chili Cook Off** Saturday, Oct. 10; noon-6 p.m. **Brookhaven Park**

### 4158 Peachtree Road

Free family friendly festival features Lynwood Park chili tasting spoons for purchase. live music and adult beverages with a portion of proceeds going to Releash Atlanta.

BrookhavenChiliCookOff.com

### **Brookhaven Arts Festival**

Saturday & Sunday. Oct. 17 & 18

## **MARTA**

This juried event features fine arts and crafts from 150 artists across the nation as well as food, music and a kids corner BrookhavenArtsFestival.com

### **Fall Festival**

**Saturday, Oct. 24, 1-5 p.m.** 3360 Osborne Road

Fall celebration will have food. a bounce house and other activities.

### **Thanksgiving Day Meal**

Thursday, Nov. 26 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **Lynwood Community Center** 3360 Osborne Road

Don't have plans? Stop by **Lynwood Community Center** and pick up a free meal.

404-637-0542

### **Red and White Ball**

Saturday, Dec.12; 7 p.m.-midnight **Lynwood Community Center** 3360 Osborne Road

The ball will feature a dinner and jazz band, and donations will be accepted for Toys for Tots. \$30

For more information about these and other events, visit www.brookhavenga.gov or call 404-637-0508.