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**Planting
Trees In
Lenox
Park**

Brookhaven
GEORGIA
spring 2021
city news

PLUS:
**CARES
Act
Relief
Continues**



Brookhaven Recognized for Inclusion - Page 2

From the Desk of the Mayor

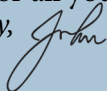
Celebrating our 'Vision'

As you can see from the cover of this newsletter, Brookhaven was recently honored with a "Visionary City" designation from the Georgia Municipal Association as a result of our efforts toward more and better inclusion. You can read about some of our initiatives below. I am truly proud of my fellow elected officials, our residents, and our staff for embracing these goals - we truly are better together.

On a more somber note, this is usually the issue of the City News where we preview our marquee event, the Brookhaven Cherry Blossom Festival. While we are sadly canceling it for the second year in a row due to the continued pandemic, I truly think brighter days are just around the corner. I encourage you to get your vaccine as soon as you are able - the shots are widely safe, effective, and an important tool to getting back to normal, in addition to continuing to mask up, washing your hands frequently and avoiding large gatherings. When we get out of the pandemic, hopefully by this summer, we are going to have one hell of a celebration in Brookhaven

Don't hesitate to contact me at John.Ernst@BrookhavenGA.gov or at 404-637-0710 with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for all you do to make Brookhaven better!

Yours truly, 



John Ernst, Mayor
John.Ernst@BrookhavenGA.gov

Brookhaven named Visionary City

On Jan. 25, during the Georgia Municipal Association's (GMA) virtual Cities United Summit, the City of Brookhaven was honored with the large Visionary City Award by GMA and Georgia Trend magazine.

Brookhaven was recognized for addressing one of its early challenges of engaging the Buford Highway corridor. With a poverty rate north of 13%, and 30%+ of households reporting a language other than English spoken at home, this underserved area had little positive experience with government. Brookhaven was able to increase outreach and accessibility for Spanish-speaking residents by partnering with local Latino community groups and provided City information in Spanish, including City forms and social media posts. The Brookhaven Police Department developed a Spanish-language Citizens Police Academy that has produced 80 graduates since 2016.

"It's certainly an honor to be recognized by an organization of peers for the important work we are doing to ensure government is responsive to the needs of all of its

residents," said Mayor John Ernst. "Language and culture barriers are huge obstacles to overcome, and we have a long way to go. However, we are making steady progress."

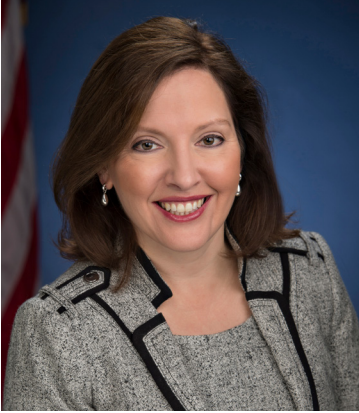
Some of the accomplishments that Brookhaven achieved toward the goal included:

- The Brookhaven Spanish-language Citizens Police Academy.
- The outreach prior to and during the construction of the Peachtree Creek Greenway, a multiuse path which provides a safe pedestrian route towards job centers.
- Brookhaven's formation of the Affordable Housing Task Force, which led to the adoption of the first citywide affordable housing ordinance in the State.
- A Latino outreach position was added to create Spanish translation of City reports and social media channels.
- Brookhaven acquired a vacant gas station on Buford Highway and partnered with DeKalb County to provide an ambulance staging area.
- Brookhaven integrated Chamblee and Doraville transportation plans and joined in submitting an important proposal for high-speed bus transit along the corridor to ATL Link.
- When COVID-19 hit, well-established partnerships supported distribution of food, masks, and free testing for this high-risk population.
- Brookhaven also facilitated the immediate injection of \$4 million in CARES Act monies to provide hunger relief, eviction protection, healthcare, and local business stabilization within three weeks of receipt of funds.

"If ever there was a time for unity and togetherness, it is now, and these nine cities have illustrated this unity through their visionary projects," said GMA Executive Director Larry Hanson. "It's our privilege to honor the elected officials, city staff and community leaders who made these initiatives possible."



Mayor John Ernst pictured at the Latin American Association in Brookhaven



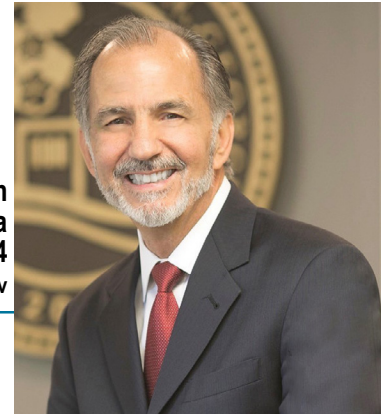
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The Brookhaven City Council generally meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 3:30 and 7 p.m. at 4362 Peachtree Road. Visit www.BrookhavenGA.gov for schedule changes.

City meetings are streamed online and archived at www.BrookhavenGA.gov.

To access meetings and videos, go to the Meetings & Agendas tab near the bottom of the homepage.



City Vision and Mission

The following are vision and mission statements of the City of Brookhaven.

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.



Volunteers plant 25 new trees including oaks, pines, hickories, magnolias, and maples at a Lenox Park tree planting event Jan. 16 as part of a MLK Day community service effort.

Lenox Park planting event adds to Brookhaven's tree canopy

Project coordinated by Trees Atlanta, Lenox Park Owners Association

On Jan. 16, a cold and blustery Saturday morning, nearly 30 volunteers gathered in the Central Park area of Lenox Park to participate in a MLK Day community service-related tree planting coordinated by the Lenox Park Owners Association (LPOA) and Trees Atlanta. The determined group may have been bundled, gloved and shivering in the 40-degree weather, but they were all ready to roll up their sleeves and make an impact on improving Brookhaven's vibrant tree canopy.

Before the morning was over, 25 young trees in containers dotting a small hillside had become permanent additions to a small portion of the park, just off Lenox Park Boulevard near North Druid Hills Road. The trees were a mixture of native Southeastern species, including oaks, pines, hickories, magnolias, and maples, which Trees Atlanta selected based on the characteristics of the site in Lenox Park that needed to be reforested.

"We are planting during winter to give the dormant

trees more time to establish their root systems in their new home before they 'leaf out' in spring," said James Moy, Trees Atlanta NeighborWoods Project Coordinator. "The coming growth in the spring requires lots of nutrients and water. Even while trees are leafless above ground, they are still growing new roots below."

Before the planting began, Moy conducted a socially distant briefing where he talked about the objectives of the planting and demonstrated proper planting practices for the volunteers.

"Lenox Park is a neighborhood of single family and multifamily homes and commercial buildings, located primarily in the City of Brookhaven and just east of the northern border of Atlanta's Buckhead district," noted Florence Barbour, Property Manager for the LPOA and Area Property Manager for Bridge Commercial Real Estate, the company that manages commercial properties in the park. "It is a unique, mixed-use community developed on 164 wooded acres. The commu-

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nity blends a prestigious business environment with a variety of residential options in a tranquil, park-like setting.”

LPOA is an umbrella organization over the commercial and residential owners in the park who all partnered together to coordinate and help fund the Trees Atlanta planting. The LPOA manages all of the common areas, including the park where the planting was being held. “The tree planting event was a beautification project to plant trees in this common area enjoyed by residents, tenants and the public as a whole,” Barbour added.

“Each residential community has their own HOA where they own and manage their own communities. The LPOA and AT&T are sponsoring today’s Trees Atlanta event.”

Surrounding the park area are a number of high-end home/apartment/condo communities such as Villa de Vista, The Bluffs, The Arbors, and Fairway Estates, in addition to commercial offices of businesses such as AT&T, the Residence Inn and the American College of Rheumatology. Central Park is the keystone of Lenox Park and contains 22 acres, a portion of which is the “Great Lawn,” a large open space for outdoor recreation that now hosts the new trees.

From Baby Boomers to grade school students, those planting the trees ranged from local Brookhaven residents to those who just wanted to come help on a Trees Atlanta project. Shawn and Addison Moore, from the Poncey-Highland Midtown area, just moved back to the Atlanta area from Seattle. “We had been wanting to do volunteer projects like this, but the pandemic had made that difficult to do,” said Addison Moore. “We love being able to help Trees Atlanta do beautification projects like this that let us give back to the community, whether we live here or not.”

Also on hand was Karstin Bodell, president of the



Brookhaven City Councilwoman Madeleine Simmons chats with Steve Peters, an active Brookhaven parks volunteer, prior to the beginning of the tree planting.

HOA at The Arbors and active in the Brookhaven Tree Conservancy and the current Brookhaven tree ordinance rewrite project. She was joined in planting one of the trees by Sheryl Cook, a former board member of The Arbors HOA who has lived there seven years. “I helped on a previous Trees Atlanta tree planting along the Fulton County side of Lenox Park Boulevard and all along the Roxboro median,” said Cook. “I realized we needed help here, and with Florence (Barbour), Trees Atlanta, and involvement by AT&T, we have been meeting for about the past 18 months to put the plan together. We look forward to doing more great things like this working together with Bridge Commercial Real Estate and the City of Brookhaven.”

“It was a wonderful day of service for MLK weekend at the Lenox Park tree planting event with Trees Atlanta,” said Brookhaven Councilwoman Madeleine Simmons, whose district includes Lenox Park. “I am so thankful to the neighbors and the Lenox Park Owners Association for organizing an effort that will benefit Brookhaven’s cherished tree canopy for years to come.”

Many of those at the event were familiar with other Brookhaven reforestation efforts. In addition to the Tree Ordinance Rewrite currently underway, the City has a number of ongoing tree preservation initiatives. The City currently participates in Tree City USA through the Arbor Foundation, the One Million Trees Initiative, and the Trees Atlanta Front Yard Program.

Brookhaven also manages a tree nursery, tree rescue program, tree plantings, memorial tree program, and a tree fund.

Now, that number of trees has grown just a little bit more.



Shawn and Addison Moore help with the tree event.

Brookhaven provides direct relief to residents and businesses using all CARES Act funds

By the end of 2020, the City of Brookhaven made use of all the \$6.3 million in CARES Act funds, Assistant City Manager and Chief Financial Officer Steve Chapman reported to the Brookhaven City Council during a recent business meeting on Jan. 12. Brookhaven used \$2.2 million of these funds for direct economic support for thousands of families and over 100 local businesses. More than \$1 million of the funds were used for medical expenses and public health efforts.

“I am proud of the work Brookhaven has done to meet the needs of our community. We have efficiently used all of our CARES Act funds by collaborating with many of our partners so that relief efforts could reach those most affected by this horrible pandemic,” said Brookhaven Mayor John Ernst. “Although the relief we provided does not undo all the hardships of 2020, many of which will follow us through 2021, Brookhaven will continue to seek ways to provide support for our residents and businesses. If Congress is to pass another round of relief fund for local governments, Brookhaven will once again effectively and efficiently reach residents in need.”

Brookhaven was able to use all the CARES Act funds before the Dec. 30 deadline despite the delay from DeKalb County in allocating the funds to Brookhaven due to unrelated political reasons. Brookhaven received the funds in September.

In October, the City of Brookhaven worked with Georgia power to pay off overdue power bills for 2,446 residents and 110 businesses using \$776,508 in CARES Act funds. The City also partnered with the Latin American Association and the Cowart Family YMCA to provide weekly food distribution events to fight the current hunger crisis using \$91,144. The weekly food distributions ran through Dec. 10, serving 1,688 families and distributing 118,407 pounds of fresh food. Additionally, the City partnered with St. Vincent du Paul using \$439,701 to pay off past due rent bills for Brookhaven residents. A total of 142 families received



this assistance.

Brookhaven also focused its relief efforts to help local businesses; the City dedicated \$245,176 for business relief efforts through a partnership with the Brookhaven Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber provided more than 150 COVID Care Kits that included hand sanitizer, PPE, temperature gauges, and signage. A second round of kits has been ordered to be distributed soon. Also offered was a deep cleaning service for business establishments, for which approximately 85 businesses participated. Currently, the Chamber is offering \$5,000 grants for restaurants that need to renew their alcohol license. So far, 18 businesses have taken part in the grant program. Interested businesses can email info@brookhavencommerce.org.

Brookhaven also used \$998,596 in funds to support Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and establish a free COVID-19 testing site at the Brookhaven MARTA station parking lot, as well as, \$550,000 for public health expenses, such as thermal scanners and sanitation services for public buildings.

The remainder of the funds were used for the cost of public safety during the state of emergency, necessary IT equipment for remote working, and the new drone system used by the Brookhaven Police Department.

Planning underway for future 'City Centre'

Following a first round of public input meetings in December, the City of Brookhaven has launched a project website for City Centre Vision 2021 at <https://sycamore.mysocialpinpoint.com/brookhaven>.

While an initial online comment period is now closed, additional public input opportunities and planning updates will be announced through fall.

“Public input is important in this process as the



Brookhaven City Centre will guide future developments in the area around the Brookhaven MARTA Station for years to come,” said City Manager Christian Sigman. “The plan will provide a frame of reference to help determine what we all want the City’s central area to become.”

Residents can visit the website for future updates, initial findings, past meeting recordings, and an overview of community input so far.

MLK Day Drive-In Celebration

Brookhaven's annual MLK Day event and dinner was dramatically different this year due to the pandemic, but that didn't stop residents showing up to the City's "drive-in" event at the Brookhaven MARTA station. The audience - outdoors in the parking lot in about 90 cars - was able to tune in on their vehicle radios while listening to speakers such as Brookhaven Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission Chair John Funny and keynote speaker Liane Levetan, and various talented musicians.



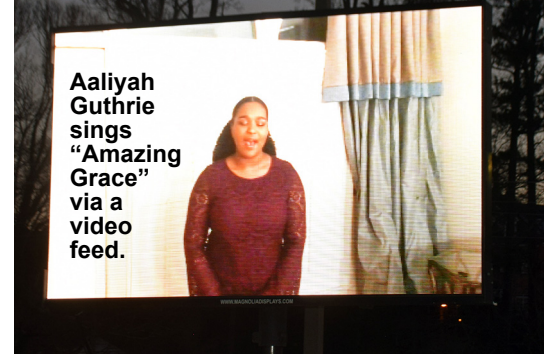
Photo memorial of Parks staffer Emmanuel Wallace, who passed away in 2020.



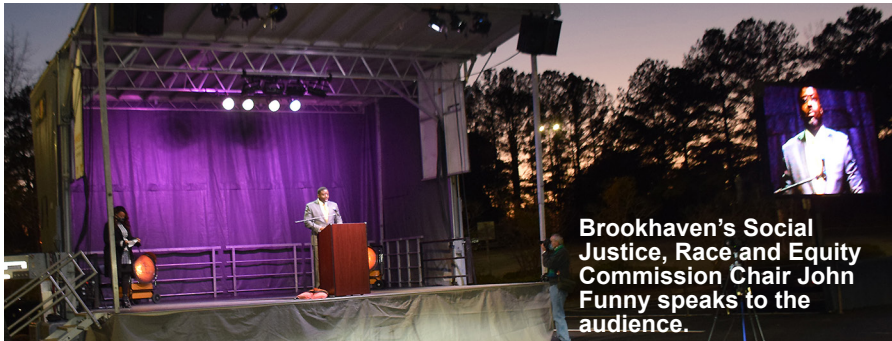
District 1 Councilwoman Linley Jones thanks the Lynwood Park Trailblazers for successfully hosting a safe event during the pandemic.



Brookhaven Mayor John Ernst welcomes the crowd.



Aaliyah Guthrie sings "Amazing Grace" via a video feed.



Brookhaven's Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission Chair John Funny speaks to the audience.



District 1 Councilwoman Linley Jones and keynote speaker Liane Levetan.



Some 90 vehicles participated in Brookhaven's MLK Day drive-in event.

'Light Up Brookhaven' goes virtual in 2020

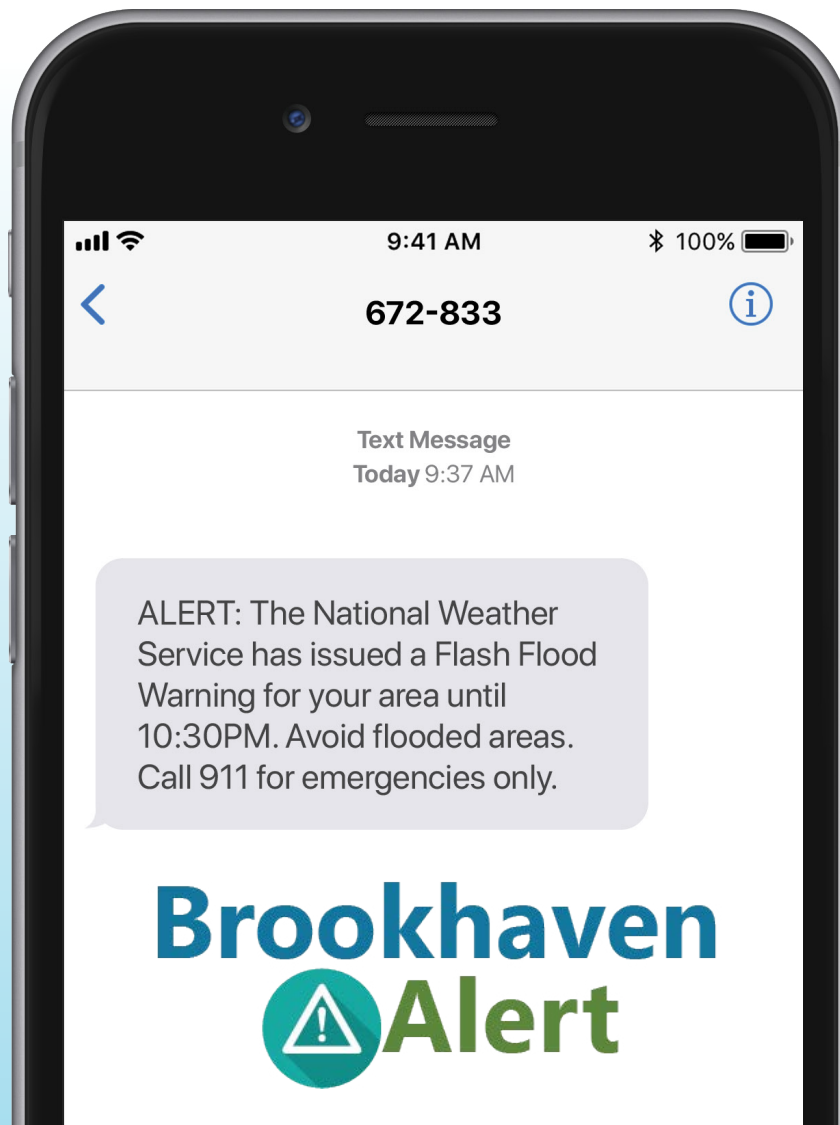


This past year's Light Up Brookhaven was held virtually via Facebook Live and Zoom due to the pandemic. Left, Santa and Mayor John Ernst light the giant tree and menorah in Blackburn Park. Above, City Council members deliver holiday messages via Zoom.



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