

Creating a Dynamic Business Community!

More than 30 people attended the June 24 Greater Hidden Hills Community Development Corporation (GHHCDC) meeting on creating a dynamic business community. DeKalb County Interim CEO Lee May opened the meeting with praise and encouragement. He has been involved and supportive of our efforts since we first began the overlay zoning process in 2006.



DeKalb County Interim CEO Lee May kicked off the GHHCDC meeting June 24.



(from left, Gerald McDowell, Honey Van De Kreke, and Charlton Allen)

We were delighted to hear the success stories and visions of **Honey Van De Kreke** and **Charlton Allen**, co-general managers of the Main Street Tucker Alliance. Both are active in the Tucker Community Investment District (CID). These people transformed downtown Tucker into a walkable, dynamic, vibrant area that businesses and residents love.

Gerald McDowell, the executive director of the Lilburn CID, and a Hidden Hills resident of 22 years, also spoke.

All photos by Nadine Rivers-Johnson



GHHCDC President Jan Costello tells of recent accomplishments, such as getting the organization registered as a nonprofit corporation in Georgia and working with two businesses to ensure that the overlay vision is followed.

Diagram Right: The GHH Overlay District includes special zoning (orange outlines) to enhance development.

Great Ideas to Move Us Forward

We heard many good ideas, and they are listed below. You can respond to this post, or email GHHCDC@gmail.com, and let us know your favorite ideas or any others you would like to share.



Top Ideas, posted by Nadine Rivers-Johnson, Mainstreet Community

1. Identify a primary area that will be our “Main Street” focus; this can be done in phases. I think we’ll get the best bang for our buck at the intersection of Redan Road and S. Hairston, because of the direct link to public transportation, identifiable landmarks already in place (i.e., the “car” on the pole), and volume of daily traffic by consumers.
2. Develop a festival to build a sense of community. If Kroger is willing to sponsor the August 4th National Night out date, it could be a great starting point leading up to our next meeting on September 23. The fire trucks and emergency trucks will be a great attraction for kids, because they give them tours; this will attract parents and residents. We could also easily get Redan’s band or drumline to perform. We could get our publicity for the event through OneDeKalb and refreshments from Kroger and/or other vendors in the area.
3. We should set up repeated visits to the business community. I agree with Honey that building familiarity will break down some of the walls we are facing. Also, we should think of a creative and uniform way for our communities to identify themselves as consumers within the GHHCDC that represent commercial income whenever we shop.
4. Devise an updated communications database of the strip mall/business owners in the GHHCDC and the communities represented.
5. Solicit professional expertise from our community. We have a retired lawyer in Mainstreet who has expressed an interest in free legal advice and expertise. This would be a perfect opportunity to reach out to him. As discussed last night, we need to be on the lookout for expertise in the areas of law, architecture, engineering, etc. As we’ve already witnessed, many can be found right in our own backyards!

Top Ideas, posted by Charlene Taylor, Scarbrough Community

1. Develop relationship with developers -- contact with Halpern is a great start
2. Target a location to do street-scaping - since a Kroger manager attended maybe we work in collaboration with Kroger to focus on cleaning up that shopping center. On a personal note, Scarbrough Square has completely re-landscaped their entrance (we are working on the worn/torn fencing next). We even got positive feedback from one of the awful looking used car lots about cleaning up their area.
3. Work on getting some business members on the Board.
4. Keep county (i.e., May, Davis) aware of our efforts.
5. I believe one of your emails Jan mentioned ARC - reestablish relationship with them.

Think the meeting went very well. Everyone seemed so excited! Maybe also have at least quarterly general meetings to keep the buzz going.

Top Ideas, posted by Joyce Russell, Muirfield Community

- 1) Street festival - Redan/Hairston area
- 2) Community wide clean-up month, hit one area each weekend for one month & involve Clean & Beautiful, Redan HS
- 3) Work on getting more businesses (start with larger businesses - Dollar General, Family Dollar, Pizza Hut, Papa Johns, Zaxbys) to partnership
- 4) Participate as a community in county/national events - I agree with Nadine on National Night Out
- 5) Get our 501(c)(3)!

These are great ideas. The Touch-a-Truck event sounds appealing and doable for one of our first community activities. Tucker said showcasing a firetruck, police car, sanitation truck, and ambulance for two hours brought families out in droves.

The surveys indicated that at our next quarterly meeting, the top issues people would like to have addressed are First Impressions, Curb Appeal, Zoning Compliance, and Customer Service. We will put the survey online for greater participation as soon as possible.

Our next meeting is July 26, 10 a.m., at the Mainstreet Community Center, 5001 Mainstreet Park Drive, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30088

Please join us as we prioritize these ideas.

Jan Costello
President
Greater Hidden Hills Community Development Corporation