

## Dresden East Civic Association (DECA) Quarterly Meeting

**Date:** April 17, 2013

**Location:** St. Pius High School

**Attendance:** About 35 people were in attendance.

Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Mary Valles Jones was introduced to welcome DECA to St. Pius. She thanked us for having our meeting at St. Pius and said we could contact her anytime with questions about the high school. Jordan introduced the new 2013 DECA Board. The positions of President and Vice President are still vacant.

### Chamblee

- 1) Van Pappas, President of the Chamblee Business Association addressed the group. The CBA was formed to advance the business community in and around Chamblee, Georgia. They promote their members, keep them informed of local events, and encourage new business to locate in, and work with, our community. The CBA is looking to form a Chamber of Commerce that would include Doraville and the Dresden East area. They are working with Chamblee City Council Rep, Thomas Hogan, who was present for the meeting, on this project.
- 2) State Rep Mary Margaret Oliver talked about the status of HB-619. The bill would allow residents in the Dresden East area to vote on a referendum regarding annexing into the City of Chamblee. Rep Oliver presented the bill in the Georgia House primarily because last year's vote regarding Chamblee annexation was so close and there were several complaints regarding voting irregularities. She also felt there was still a very strong interest from our area to annex into Chamblee.

The bill passed nearly unanimously in the Georgia House and the Georgia Senate, but it was not presented properly in the Senate. It did not have the signatures of enough Georgia Senators when it was voted on in the Senate, which has led some state Senators to ask Governor Deal to veto the bill. Rep Oliver and State Rep Scott Holcomb have asked Governor Deal to sign the bill and she thinks he still may do so. He has until May 7<sup>th</sup> to sign it. If he does not sign it, she is confident a similar bill will pass without issue and be signed by the Governor in 2014.

### Clairmont Community Alliance (CCA)

Lori Muskat and Cheryl Huvad from the CCA updated the community regarding serious safety concerns about an Atlanta Gas Light (AGL) gas regulator station that is being built near Clairmont Road and Buford Highway. The precise site of the construction is land parcel 36, which is located between Clairmont North Condos, Tanglewood Circle and Shalimar Drive in Clairmont Terrace. This is part of AGL's Eastside Pipeline project where many miles of pipeline throughout the state are being replaced. Lori and Cheryl talked about AGL's lack of communication with residents including failure to provide promised weekly updates to those affected by the project.

In the presentation, Lori showed footage of a news cast from when a similar gas regulator station in San Bruno, CA exploded a few years ago. Firefighters in the area were unable to adequately stop the blaze because the water lines were ruptured in the explosion. Someone also tried to blow-up a gas regulator station a couple of years ago in Plano, TX.

Residents of Tanglewood Circle, Blanche Collins and Marge Gabbett, talked about a gas leak in their neighborhood in early March and the AGL project as a whole. Blanche expressed concern that the AGL gas leak was handled poorly. For 4 hours residents who were in their neighborhood could not get out and those who were outside their neighborhood could not get in. Residents were not supposed to start their cars, but that message was not effectively relayed to residents. Overall she felt that AGL did a poor job of handling this gas leak, which made her feel more uncomfortable with a gas regulator station being placed in her neighborhood.

Marge said that AGL had been in communication with her and about 9 other households regarding the project for over a year. She also mentioned that they agreed to reimburse her for the damage done to her yard during the construction and are doing the same for the other 9 households. She felt that AGL would not do anything that would leave residents in danger for fear of a lawsuit.

Lori mentioned that a recent hearing in front of the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) was not very helpful, as the agency basically said it had no authority to regulate AGL. Because of AGL's failure to address these serious safety concerns and the PSC's inability to regulate AGL, despite the request of residents and local elected officials, the CCA has started a legal fund to explore the possibility of taking legal action on this issue. If anyone wants more information or to donate to the legal fund, they can send an e-mail to [clairmontcommunityalliance@gmail.com](mailto:clairmontcommunityalliance@gmail.com)

Jordan noted that at its most recent Board meeting, the DECA Board voted unanimously to donate \$1000 to the CCA legal fund so that these serious safety issues can be adequately addressed.

### Georgia Watch

Former State Rep Elena Parent and Bill Rencher from the Georgia Watch spoke about the organization and some of the bills they are working on. The Georgia Watch is the state's leading consumer advocacy organization. They focus mainly on issues that impact us financially and our quality of life such as health care, energy and utility issues, identity theft, foreclosure, predatory lending and access to civil justice. They are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works to protect Georgia families by developing pro-consumer policies and advocating for Georgians at the state Capitol and the Public Service Commission. They also conduct consumer protection workshops across the state, providing much needed education and assistance.

Elena talked about how Georgia Watch has worked to keep our energy bills down since the state stopped supporting the Citizens Utility Council in 2008. Georgia Power spends a lot of money lobbying our elected officials, so it is critical for Georgia Watch to lobby on behalf of citizens. They have worked with State Rep Jeff Champman on HB-267, which would limit the amount of profit that Georgia Power can make on cost overruns for projects like the Nuclear Power Plants they are building in south Georgia. Currently Georgia Power makes 11.15% profit even if their projects go over budget.

Bill talked about the changes that are going into effect when the Affordable Healthcare Act (aka Obamacare) goes into effect in 2014. Since Georgia decided to have the Federal Government create its healthcare exchange instead of creating our own, we will lose millions of dollars of federal resources. Once the bill takes effect, many Georgia residents without health insurance will be able to get it. Georgia Watch has a wealth of healthcare access information on its website: <http://www.georgiawatch.org>

### Business Meeting

- 1) Jordan read the March Treasurer's Report from the April DECAzette. Our beginning balance was \$5673.37 and our ending balance was \$5973.88. At the April DECA Board meeting, the DECA Board voted to give \$1000 to the CCA, \$150 to Wakefield Forest for a beautification project and \$25 to Hospice in memory of Marty Locker.

#### DECA Forum

- 1) Judy Brooks announced that she had plants in the back that she wants to give away to meeting attendees.
- 2) Nikki announced that anyone who wants to pay membership dues can give checks to her since Susan and Todd are both not at the meeting. She is also planning another workday on the Shallowford Road Islands.

Jordan adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.