



MORNINGSIDE LENOX PARK

ASSOCIATION



MLPA News February 2020

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President's Note

Another winter month ... another reason to endlessly talk about how wet the weather is. While we wait for spring I'd like to share some highlights from our February board meeting.

1. **Security Patrol.** Hopefully you read this in our security update, but earlier this month after an MLPA member realized his house had a late night prowler and called 911, our patrolman on duty, Officer Jemmy Haagsma, was the first to arrive on the scene and eventually located the perpetrator. This is a great example of how our patrol team can act fast to address a situation.
2. **Zoning 101.** The board spent a fair amount of time re-educating ourselves on key City and Master Plan land use standards to ensure we are reviewing variance cases objectively. We have had many cases of late without proper blueprints or hardship proof – we will soon be stating very clear expectations for what to bring to the MLPA as far as variance approvals, but in the meantime if you are working on your home we ask that you ensure that your builder understands what we and the NPU need to review to make the process easy and straightforward. (Side note: we also hear from the city that Morningside is the neighborhood that most often violates construction without the appropriate permits. If you see a project in the neighborhood without a permit post or a tree coming down without the appropriate notice, please call 311.)
3. **Save the Date!** A neighborhood event is in the works for the evening of **Saturday, November 7**. More to come but expect a fun new way to interact with neighbors thanks to the thoughtful work of many of our new MLPA board members and other volunteers. (In fact, with so many new board members we are reviving our board profiles in this issue.)

Lots coming up in the neighborhood – please read below for details of the February 18 meeting hosted by MES PTA and MLPA and next month's start of our concert series in Sidney Marcus Park. We just need some dry weather in the meantime ...

Ben



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Save the Date: November 7, 2020

Morningside's 1st annual fall evening event

An exciting new event will be hosted by the Morningside Lenox Park Association and the Morningside Beautification Committee. The event will benefit our fabulous parks and green spaces.

On Saturday, November the 7th, the evening begins with dinners at several Morningside homes, followed by a dessert party with drinks, and a live and silent auction in a central location. It is a night you will not want to miss.

We are looking for ten neighbors who will volunteer to host dinners on November 7th for six, eight or ten guests. Hosts will cover the cost of the dinner and wine, but these expenses are tax deductible through our 501(c)(3) nonprofit. These private dinners can raise a lot of money for our neighborhood. Plus, they can be great fun! So, please consider hosting. You can meet new (and old) neighbors and give back to the neighborhood all at the same time.

Of course, we need volunteers to help us with the silent auction, the dessert party and sponsorships. Join our committee and you can enjoy the fun of this event all year long! To volunteer for a committee or to host a dinner, please contact [Jan Hogan](#) or [Alan Smith](#).

Thank you and mark your calendar so you won't miss the most spectacular night of the fall!



Half-Priced Wine at Varuni Napoli

Stop by Tuesday and Wednesday for half-priced bottles of Montepulciano and Pinot Grigio with a purchase of any artisan pizza.



MLPA Salutes Officer of the Month - Officer Jemmy Haagsma

Early one morning last week, Officer Jemmy Haagsma, Atlanta Police Department, was working a second job with the Morningside Security Patrol, when he took a call from a resident on N Morningside. At about 2:00 am, a Ring floodlight camera set off the motion detector at the resident's house. The resident then checked the footage that showed a suspicious person dressed in all black walking down his driveway and entering a neighbor's driveway. He called the police and, while still on the phone with the police, saw the suspicious person return to his driveway. The suspect hurried off when the neighbor's floodlight lit up again.

The police arrived promptly, and the first responding officer was Jemmy Haagsma with the Morningside Security Patrol. Officer Haagsma and another officer on duty for the City canvassed the area, and located the suspected prowler coming out of a property near the intersection of N Morningside and N Highland. The neighbor confirmed the identity of the suspect, who was arrested and will likely be charged with prowling. Morningside extends a heartfelt thank you to Officer Haagsma with Morningside Security Patrol and to the Atlanta Police Department for the quick response. The neighborhood is recognizing Officer Haagsma as our Officer of the Month, a new program designed to honor the officers who work to keep our neighborhood safe. Please look for our new Officer of the Month signs.

Officer Haagsma grew up in Jakarta Indonesia. His grandmother was Dutch, hence his last name. He came to New York in 1999, where he was a handyman for 15 years, and a policeman for several of those years. He has been with the Atlanta Police Department since 2017. When his first marriage was over, he pursued a childhood dream of becoming a cop. "I was really happy when the Atlanta Police Department called me. I am honored to do this job and will continue to give my best." He lives in Lilburn with his wife and son, and they are expecting a daughter this month. He has two children from his first marriage and enjoys being his own mechanic in his spare time. He owns several cars and motorcycles and can frequently be found in his garage doing repairs and maintenance.

Officer Haagsma was able to respond quickly because of procedures that the Morningside Security Patrol follows. When the MLPA Patrol Officer comes on duty each day, this is a second job for him. He carries his City of Atlanta radio and checks in with the City dispatcher to report what hours he is on duty for Morningside. That way, he shows up on the dispatcher's screen as available in our neighborhood. He cannot take certain types of calls, such as accidents or any other calls that require a City of Atlanta vehicle with blue lights. MLPA Patrol officers can get dispatched to an incident in several ways. In this case, the dispatcher knew Officer Haagsma was in the area and available. Another officer on duty in the area could also get the call. The MLPA Patrol officers frequently step forward to assist the City policemen who are patrolling in the neighborhood.

The Morningside Security Patrol is 100% funded by MLPA memberships. More memberships mean more patrol coverage. If you would like to join, please go to <https://www.mlpa.org/mlpa-memberships/>. This incident provides a good example of how the Ring camera and the quick responses of the Morningside Patrol and the City of Atlanta worked together to capture this suspect. As always – neighbors need to call 911 when they see something suspicious!!



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Parks – grants, nature walks, and more!

These are exciting times for our recreational parks and nature preserves. Our active Friends of Park groups are hard at work ensuring the health and beauty of our local ecosystems and activation of the parks to engage all of our Atlanta, Dekalb County, and outside friends. We could never do this without the help of groups like Park Pride, Trees Atlanta, municipal governments, South Fork Conservancy, and most importantly you! We need *you* to join a committee, grab a lopper, snap a photo, take a walk. Here we present a snapshot of what's happening. Stay tuned for our upcoming special edition devoted to deeper dives into Morningside parks and greenspace.

Friends of Sidney Marcus Park Valentine's Day Social

Please join us for a Valentine's Day Social at Sidney Marcus on Sunday, February 16, 3-5 PM. Bring an appetizer to share, and the Friends group will provide treats. Enjoy the cool, sunny weather and fellowship with other park lovers.



Take a Walk in the Woods

Friends of Herbert Taylor Park will continue their series of themed walks through the nature preserves, guided by local experts. Each walk will meet and begin at the Pasadena Ave park entrance. Learn, engage, and enjoy!

Saturday, March 21, 8:30 AM, Bird Watching Walk led by Teresa Mayes and [Atlanta Audubon Society](#)

Saturday, March 28, 10:00 AM, Ephemeral Flowers Walk led by Rev. Leigh Campbell-Taylor

Saturday, April 11, 2:00 PM, Champion Trees Walk led by Frederic Bien and [Trees Atlanta](#)

Saturday, April 25, 2:00 PM, [Restorative Wellness Walk](#) led by Frederic Bien

Saturday, May TBD, Archeological Walk led by Ansley Abraham and John Mayes for [Greater Atlanta Archeological Society](#)

We will also have volunteer workdays 9-12 Saturday mornings March 14, April 11, and May 9. For more information, [visit](#) or [email](#) us.



Sunken Garden Receives Park Pride Grant

An obvious first battle for the new Friends of Sunken Garden is drainage. The group has announced that they've received a Park Pride Community Building Grant (supported by The Home Depot Foundation) in the amount of \$10,000.

Currently, Sunken Garden Park is unusable after each heavy rain. With this grant, new drainage lines will be installed to help eliminate the resulting flooding, pooling and mud. Additionally, a granite seat wall will not only act as a barrier between the play area and a slope plagued by water runoff and soil erosion, it will also provide a natural, integrated play element for children and additional seating for all.

"We are on a mission to help neighbors rediscover, restore and reclaim this 'sunken' treasure," said Marla Johnson, a founding member of the Friends of Sunken Garden Park group. The Community Building Grant from Park Pride will enable necessary improvements so the park can once again become a space that engages residents, builds relationships and creates memories.

If you are interested in supporting Sunken Garden Park and/or would like to receive updates on the park's progress, volunteer workdays, and other special events, please contact [Marla Johnson](#) or visit us on [Facebook](#).

Lenox-Wildwood Volunteer Workday March 7

Join your neighbors to help keep our beautiful nature trail healthy and inviting. We will spend Saturday morning removing ivy from the trees and the surrounding area. All skill levels are welcome and needed! Please bring your own tools such as gloves, pruners, loppers, and shovels. Some extras will also be available. We will meet near the tennis courts at 9am.

This is the first of many volunteer workdays to come, arranged by our new [Friends of Sunken Garden and Lenox-Wildwood Parks](#). The ivy removal is a relatively simple task but will keep us plenty busy as we plan other improvements to the nature area, e.g. attacking other invasive plants and drainage issues.



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Meet MLPA Education Chair Kristen Pollock

To further engage with the community, this year MLPA will continue to feature a board member each month to let you get to know some of the passionate neighbors working hard to keep our community wonderful. This month we introduce our new Education Chair, Kristen Pollock.

Kristen and her family have been Morningside residents for six years after relocating to Atlanta from New Jersey. Her husband was born in Atlanta, and his father grew up in Morningside in the 1950s & 60s. Kristen's son and daughter attend Morningside Elementary and Inman Middle School. She is excited to serve on the board as the Education Chair to build on the community's strong relationship with its local schools. She has already hit the ground running, providing critical situational awareness to our community through MLPA and social media and co-hosting a [neighborhood engagement meeting](#) February 18 at MES. With the upcoming school moves, including the opening of the new Howard Middle School and the temporary relocation of MES to the Inman facility next year, it will be more important than ever to make sure the community is aware of the changes happening within APS and the Grady cluster.

Kristen has over 20 years of experience in luxury marketing and eCommerce and is a REALTOR® at [Engel & Völkers Intown Atlanta](#) in Morningside Village. She enjoys volunteering with her children's schools and also at [Congregation Shearith Israel](#) where she is a member. She's also an avid reader and belongs to several book clubs. In her time off she loves to travel with her family and bike on the BeltLine.



Education News

UPCOMING ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACILITIES DISCUSSIONS

It's no secret that the school buildings in the Grady Cluster are bursting at the seams and our neighborhoods are poised for even more growth. But did you know that Atlanta Public Schools is in the middle of their next long-term Facilities Master Plan - the process that guides how the school district manages school capacity, plans for student enrollment and makes decisions about school building additions, renovations, and closures?

Morningside Elementary students will be at the Inman property for the next two school years during our renovation. But what happens with the Inman property when it becomes available in 2022 and how does that impact our existing schools? Don't miss these two important opportunities to first learn more about the facilities planning process and hone in on our neighborhoods' priorities and concerns on the 18th, and second to have our voices heard in these important meetings with APS stakeholders on the 25th.

Please join us for both meetings.

Tuesday, February 18, 6:00 PM

MES & Neighborhood Community Conversation, MES Auditorium

Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 PM

APS Conversation on the Future Use of Inman Middle School, IMS Auditorium

GRADY CARES

What is "Grady Cares"? Grady Cares is a group of neighborhood volunteers who work with Grady High School's Principal, Counselors and Social Worker to help the nearly 300 homeless and impoverished students at the school get groceries, clothing and basic supplies.

Through a Facebook group of over 800 members, individual student's needs are anonymously described and those who are able and willing to help do so with the click of a button. Grady Cares also has an Amazon Wish List that includes items regularly needed by these students (toiletries, jackets, school supplies, etc.) Lastly, a team of volunteers is working to open a Grady Cares free thrift store inside the VH Church (across from Inman Middle School) to provide the school's neediest students with free shoes, clothes and coats. This is expected to open in April 2020 and updates will be provided about how to donate goods.

To learn more, or to help, please join the [Facebook group](#), check out our [Wish List](#), or email gradycaresATL@gmail.com.

Concerts in the Park Return March 27 in Sidney Marcus Park

The first MLPA Concert in the Park for 2020 will be March 27 in Sidney Marcus Park, with the band kicking off around 6:00 PM. Thanks to our presenting sponsor, Sonny Jones with [Dorsey Alton Realtors](#) and to our MLPA members, these events are free and open to all.

Families, couples, and crowds will gather for an evening of music and entertainment featuring Carter Rude & Friends Band. [Nakeemi](#) will be painting smiles on little. Southern Crust Catering's [fantastic pizza](#) will keep everyone full as we enjoy the music.

Besides food and entertainment, you can stop by the Friends of Sidney Marcus Park table to learn more about the efforts to [renovate our fabulous park](#) to ensure it can host gatherings of neighbors for many years to come. Ask them about buying a brick to memorialize a child's birthday/achievement or favorite pet. The MLPA table will be on hand to help you help the hard work of our volunteers, security patrol, and events like the MLPA Concerts in the Park.

We have four concerts scheduled for 2020 on March 27, May 1, September 11, and October 16.



AJC Peachtree Road Race Gift to Morningside: Upcycled Benches

By Natalie Cabanas, Atlanta Track Club

The 50th Running of the AJC Peachtree Road Race was a once-in-a-lifetime event, a milestone so significant that [Atlanta Track Club](#) upcycled the plastic water bottles they collected from the finish line into park benches for the Atlanta community.

With the Club hosting nearly 150,000 participants annually, 60,000 of them at the Peachtree, the largest 10K in the world and largest road race in the country, they realized the importance of taking steps to promote greater environmental responsibility within the city. Thus, the Green Initiative launched last spring, a multi-faceted plan to reduce and reuse waste and materials at Club events and programs. Since then, the Club has developed recycling plans for each of its events, but nothing compares with the massive scale of the Peachtree. With thousands of participants crossing the finish line, the Club knew they were up for a challenge. So, a list of goals was formed specifically surrounding sustainability for the 50th Running – one of which was to upcycle all the plastic water bottles into something meaningful for the community.

In the heat of a July 4 in Atlanta, everyone knows the importance of staying hydrated; a total of 1.01 tons of plastic water bottles were collected from the finish line at Peachtree this year, with a dedicated group of Green Team volunteers deployed to help participants place their bottles into the appropriate recycling container. Not everyone, however, knows what happened to them. Sit down: The plastic collected was upcycled into 64 park benches in two different styles, 32 of which will be donated to sponsors, community partners, parks and tracks throughout metro Atlanta to serve as a legacy of the race and a gift to the running and walking community. And soon enough Morningside Lenox Park Association will be home to one of these benches.

The remaining 32 benches will be offered as a gift to the first 32 people who make a \$1,500 donation to the Club. It's your chance to support the Club's mission, endorse its Green Initiative and own a piece of the 50th Running.

Visit atlantatrackclub.org/give-back.



Varuni Napoli

Morningside Lenox-Park is a neighborhood well-known for our mid-century architecture, amazing greenspaces, and excellent school. While not as seemingly hip as some neighborhoods, we can also justifiably claim the greatest pizza in the Atlanta Metro Area. Located alongside Monroe Drive is one of Atlanta's most authentic Neapolitan pizzerias, [Varuni Napoli](#). Born and raised in Naples, Italy, veteran maestro *pizzaiuolo* Luca Varuni planted roots in Atlanta in 2009 and later opened Varuni Napoli in 2014. Through this chic and popular restaurant, Chef Luca is able to share his love of Southern Italian culture and food with patrons. Celebrating its sixth year in business in April of this year, Varuni has become a local favorite for Morningside neighbors and beyond. Beyond feeding us amazing Neapolitan cuisine, they have been a strong community member, sponsoring MLPA over the years and bringing their pizza oven truck to the Concerts in the Park. Just this month, Varuni was named The Atlanta-Journal Constitution's [Best Pizza in Atlanta](#) for 2020, which was voted on by Atlanta residents and neighbors like you! Varuni is open everyday except Monday at their Morningside location, so if you haven't been yet, stop by soon. You'll enjoy mouthwateringly delicious Neapolitan pies, irresistible cannoli, and Negroni cocktails you can write home about.



Social News

The Morningside Dining Club enjoyed a January evening at [Nowak's](#) in Morningside Village. The February dinner will be a potluck hosted at Sarah Chatel's house at 5:30 PM Sunday, February 16. Contact [Sarah](#) for details and RSVP.

The MLPA Garden Club kicked off the year with our most enjoyable meeting yet. Our invited speaker was Barbara Bohannon, horticulture therapist for Hillside. [Hillside](#) has been [an area institution](#) longer than Morningside Lenox-Park itself, providing residential and community mental health services for children and adolescents. The [horticulture therapy](#) program is by far the most popular for the kids, and we learned why. Gabriela Marvin gave us an overview of Hillside and their history. Barbara then presented the benefits of horticulture (preaching to the choir) and how she practices it as part of the therapy program at Hillside, which includes both indoor activities and getting their hands dirty in the garden. We ended with an activity – Pounding Pansies. A fun, noisy hammering of pansies and fennel leaves to produce beautiful bookmarks. The next meeting will be at Micah Coleman's house, 1177 E Rock Springs Rd, 7pm on Feb 27, to learn about the history and current efforts in Herbert Taylor and Daniel Johnson parks. Please [RSVP](#) if interested.



A new **Parents Group** is forming in Morningside, a reboot of the [Virginia Highland Morningside Parent Association](#). Any interested parents are encouraged to watch Nextdoor or contact communications@mlpa.org for details.

If you have an interest not currently shown, consider starting a group of your own.

Lastly, you can always meet neighbors by volunteering with MLPA.

Write volunteer@mlpa.org with your interest in the subject line and we will be happy to help you spread the word and find like-minded neighbors.

Zoning

The zoning committee had no variances to review for February. The next zoning meeting will be held at Morningside Presbyterian Church at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 3. The cases to be covered will be posted at www.mlpa.org/zoning/. Any neighbors interested in the outcome should come to these meetings.

New committee members are always welcome. Simply come to three meetings to qualify to vote.

Events

Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

[CHARM Recycling](#), 1110 Hill Street, SE. Check the website before visiting for accepted items and schedule changes.

Saturdays, 8:00 - 11:30 AM

Morningside Farmers' Market, Morningside Village

Every Fourth Saturday, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Morningside Nature Preserve [Volunteer Workday](#)

Sunday, February 16, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Valentine's Day Social, Sidney Marcus Park

Tuesday, February 18, 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

[MES & Neighborhood Community Conversation](#), MES Auditorium. Hosted by MES and MLPA.

Saturday, February 22, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Volunteer Workday - [Forest Restoration](#) in Morningside Nature Preserve

Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

[APS Conversation on the Future Use of Inman Middle School](#), Inman Auditorium

Tuesday, March 3, 7:00 PM

Zoning Committee Meeting, Morningside Presbyterian Church.
See mlpa.org/zoning for the variances to be reviewed.

Saturday, March 7, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Volunteer Workday in Lenox-Wildwood Park. Hosted by [Friends of Sunken Garden and Lenox-Wildwood Parks](#).

Monday, March 9, 7:00 PM

MLPA Board Meeting, Morningside Presbyterian Church

Monday, March 16, 7:00 PM

[NPU-F Meeting](#), Hillside Center, 1301 Monroe Dr. NE. All neighbors are invited and those 18+ have a vote.

Saturday, March 21, 8:30 AM

Bird Watching Walk, Herbert Taylor Park

Saturday, March 28, 10:00 AM

Ephemeral Flowers Walk, Herbert Taylor Park

Friday, March 27, 6:00 PM

First 2020 Concert in the Park, Sidney Marcus Park

Saturday, April 11, 2:00 PM

Champion Trees Walk, Herbert Taylor Park

April 24 – 27

City Nature Challenge

Saturday, April 25, 2:00 PM

Restorative Wellness Walk, Herbert Taylor Park

Friday, May 1, 6:00 PM

Concert in the Park, Sidney Marcus Park

Friday, September 11, 6:00 PM

Concert in the Park, Sidney Marcus Park

Friday, October 16, 6:00 PM

Concert in the Park, Sidney Marcus Park

November 7

MLPA Fall Dinner Event and Auction

This is your newsletter. Please send us your ideas for articles, interviews, and photos for inclusion. Send them to communications@mlpa.org.

News from Atlanta City Council District 6 Representative Ide

[View and sign up](#) for the latest newsletter from our Atlanta City Council District 6 Representative, Jennifer Ide.

Neighborhood Meeting Schedule:

MLPA Zoning Meeting

1st Tuesday each month, 7:00 PM, Morningside Presbyterian Church

MLPA Board Meeting

2nd Monday each month, 7:00 PM, Morningside Presbyterian Church

NPU-F Meetings

3rd Monday of every month, 7:00 PM, Hillside, 1301 Monroe Drive

All neighborhood meetings are open to the public, and your involvement is always welcome.

Quick Links:

[**MLPA**](#) - Morningside Lenox Park Association website

[**NPU-F**](#) - Neighborhood Planning Unit F website

[**APD**](#) - Atlanta Police website – we are in Zone 2

[**PEDS**](#) - A quick link to report pedestrian hazards to city

[**City of Atlanta**](#) - City's website

[**Atlanta District 6**](#) - Our City Council District website

[**Senate District 36**](#) - Nan Orrock, Georgia State Senator

[**House District 57**](#) - Pat Gardner, Georgia State Representative

[**House District 83**](#) - Becky Evans, Georgia State Representative

[**Atlanta Public Schools, Morningside Elementary School, Inman Middle School, Grady High School**](#)

[**VHMPA**](#) -Virginia Highland Morningside Parent Association
