



# MORNINGSIDE LENOX PARK ASSOCIATION



## MLPA News December 2020

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## President's Note

Well, we made it. 2020 is certainly one for the memory books. Thank you to the neighborhood for all of your efforts to keep us safe – hopefully if we hang in there these winter months we will emerge in the spring with the sense of finally getting through this experience. In the meantime, don't let your guard down, and there are other things to think about:

1. **VOTE.** That is all.
2. **Grateful to neighbors.** The response to our toy drive was simply amazing. We are so grateful to all the neighbors who overwhelmed us with donations. Please know that the MLPA also makes a big effort to support the people that help us as well, including bonuses to our security officers and gift cards to our local police precinct and fire station.
3. **“Blown” away.** After mentioning a neighbor seeking support about the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, I subsequently received at least twenty emails from other neighbors who also have concerns for their impact on local climate and of course on

local noise. We have been in touch with Jennifer Ide and I have forwarded all of those emails. Her guidance is that those who want action from the city should focus on the noise aspect of leaf blowers due to the fact state law overrides the city on environmental concerns. Please [email her](#) and [her team](#) with your concerns or examples of noise issues from leaf blowers if this is a concern and she said she would be willing to bring this up with her colleagues when they are back in session in January.

In order to help those interested in justifying more noise restrictions, Sec. 74-133 of [Ordinance 17-O-1555](#) states: "It is unlawful for any person to use or operate any noise-generating, motorized landscape maintenance devices, including but not limited to leaf blowers, lawn mowers, or chainsaws, within 300 feet of any single-family residential, two-family residential, multi-family residential, or mixed-use zoning district from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m." You have every right to address services or neighbors that are violating this timeframe and you can of course use any other personal experience to address your opinion with city officials for what time range is fair given the current circumstances. That being said, I have never received such a strong response on a topic in my three years with the MLPA so there must be some deep frustration out there. Leaf blowers aren't going anywhere soon, but we can all do things to help our collective experience, including the following.

- Avoid usage in those early/late hours, even if allowed by ordinance – I heard many complaints about blowers at the crack of dawn or late at night
- Lower the speed on blowers or use nozzles to reduce noise
- Please be mindful of anything you know about your immediate neighbors, such as home schooling children or people working from home. In fact – if you are a regular gas-powered blower home, why not ask your neighbors about any concerns or issues they are having to ensure you're minimizing any negative impact?

Hope you all have a restful holiday season that brings peace for the time ahead. Borrowing my sendoff for the year from a friend: Stay positive – and test negative!

Ben



**Half-Priced Wine at Varuni Napoli**

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# General Election Runoff

If you haven't already, make a plan to vote in the General Election Runoff.

Fulton County's Mobile Voting Unit: Fulton County's new Mobile Voting Unit is an accessible voting unit that will create a simple, secure voting experience for voters of all ages and voters with disabilities. Find it at the **Morningside Baptist Church Gym** (1700 Piedmont Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30324) on **December 23** from **8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.**


Early Voting: For locations, dates and times in [click here](#) and select your county.

Absentee Ballots: Your absentee ballot must be received by the Department of Registration & Elections by 7 p.m. on Election Day. Residents can return their absentee ballot by mail or in one of the Fulton or Dekalb County Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes. You may not return your absentee ballot at your polling place. Secure drop boxes are a convenient option for voters to drop off absentee ballots, absentee ballot applications or voter registration forms. See a list of drop box locations in [Fulton County](#) in [DeKalb County](#).

Election Day: January 5, 2021



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# Craft Crawl

On a recent sunny Sunday afternoon, neighbors enjoyed strolling the Courtenay Drive area, perusing paintings, handmade crafts, and chocolate baklavas, all while maintaining social distancing. This was the second of what will hopefully be a Morningside tradition – the Craft Crawl coordinate by Suzy Lee and Adina Rudisch. Suzy picks up the story:

Adina and I got interested in doing the show because everyone has been missing the festivals and craving safe, face-to-face social contact. A front yard craft fair on Courtenay Drive and adjacent streets seemed like a great way to do both. We partnered with some crafters and artists with similar ideas from nearby neighborhoods and tried to figure out how to get as many people involved as possible. So many in our neighborhood like to bake, sew, paint, build, etc. -- word got around fast. Our neighbors were so enthusiastic, they started volunteering their yards to expand the show to artists and crafters from around the Atlanta metro. Everybody was happy to follow the safety guidelines (hand sanitizer, masks, 6 ft distance and contact free payment) all while being outside during the beautiful fall sunshine. During the October event, there was a spontaneous cello concert and in November we invited a band. The crafts included masks, dog beds, purses, paintings, branch bouquets, baked goods, jewelry, soaps from a backyard bee hive on Wayne Avenue and more. Our next event will be in the Spring - probably March or April. We're looking forward to expanding participation even more as well as including demos and hands-on crafts whenever possible. Contact [CraftCrawlAtlanta@gmail.com](mailto:CraftCrawlAtlanta@gmail.com) for more information about how to get involved or start your own crawl where you live!



# Funding for Nature Preserves

Upon leaving office as our Atlanta City Councilmember, Alex Wan passed along his discretionary funding for the neighborhoods to use for visible, impactful improvements, including in our old growth forest areas. At our final meeting for 2020, the MLPA board decided to match those funds in order to support two proposals brought forward.

The popular boardwalk in Morningside Nature Preserve has been suffering increasing damage with age, becoming an eyesore and a risk to accessibility and public safety. \$5,000 was allocated to cover materials needed for repairs. Neighbors will work with local Scout groups and the City of Atlanta to develop a project plan and complete these repairs.



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The recent severe storms brought down old trees across the neighborhood and greenspaces, including one which took out a small bridge in the Bottomlands Trail of Daniel Johnson Park. \$5,000 was allocated to repair or replace this bridge, with residual funds to be applied to existing grant money being used to install educational signage around the park.



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## Forest Stewardship Program

Several Morningside neighbors recently completed Trees Atlanta's Forest Stewardship certificate course, a series of four outdoor working class sessions. The goal of Forest Stewardship is to introduce practical concepts for identifying native species versus invasive species, basic science of their environmental impact, and methods for controlling invasive or aggressive species for the everyday community steward. We hope to send more neighbors to the excellent course each year to build up a cadre of workday warriors who can defend against the invasives and help restore our native habitats.

As an urban forest, Daniel Johnson and Herbert Taylor Parks are under attack for a host of invasive species including kudzu, English ivy, Japanese chaff flower, and Japanese hops. This made our nature preserve a perfect classroom for Trees Atlanta's course, in turn providing a much-needed boost for the habitat restoration effort. Trees Atlanta contributed 26 trees and understory plants for placement along the trail and creek near the Pasadena/Beech Valley entrance. The course participants planted 3 river birch, 10 black willow, 6 arrowwood viburnum, 5 silky dogwood, and 2 silver maples. Next time you are in the park with your family, look for the new plants, each sporting a bright orange identifier!



# Parks Committee Meeting

We invite all lovers of Morningside Parks and Greenspaces to join us for the first 2021 Parks Committee meeting, held via Zoom at 7pm on January 7. Let your voice be heard and help set our vision and goals for the year. [Contact us](#) for login details and to offer suggestions and support. Topics for the first meeting will include setting a date and time for monthly meetings and setting 2021 goals and priorities. We need your help to ensure our amazing parks fulfill their potential for all our neighbors.





# Morningside Lenox Park Master Plan Implementation

The MLP Master Plan Implementation Committee has worked hard over the past year to move prioritized initiatives forward. Work focused on a key concern of our neighborhood - safety - largely as it relates to traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians. Committee members have also been involved in other community activities such as input on TSPLOST projects, local development plans and zoning.

- The TSPLOST resurfacing of Johnson and Lenox Roads provided a road with clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks and ADA ramps at intersections. Digital speed readers as well as a HAWK signal near the bridge close to the new Herbert Taylor Park entrance are planned. According to the city, the repaving of Johnson Road with the addition of the bicycle corridor did not leave enough width along the road to create pedestrian refuges. The Master Plan, however, calls for several pedestrian refuges as well as retaining on-street parking on one side of the Johnson Road so we will continue to pursue this with city officials.
  - Funding assistance for the E. Rock Springs roundabout at Cumberland/Beech Valley Way was received from GDOT in the amount of \$400,000 or 70% of the project cost, whichever is less. This high priority project will be managed out of the TSPLOST program because it will use TSPLOST funds. A design and cost estimate from Kimley-Horn (engineering design firm) are due shortly and work on this roundabout will likely begin as soon as mid-2021.
  - Two pedestrian refuges for East Morningside Drive were recommended in the Master Plan for traffic calming and pedestrian safety. Initial cost estimates have been obtained and the next step involving a traffic study for this road has been initiated.
  - Digital speed readers for Wellbourne Drive and the Morningside Elementary School area are being pursued. A potential location on Wellbourne has been identified and the reader near MES would likely be at Sunken Garden Park. Next steps involve securing a traffic study and obtaining funding.
  - Pedestrian safety was supported with the stop sign legislation and approval for the all way stop at the Cumberland and Sussex intersection.
  - Meetings have taken place with city planning personnel, other elected officials and neighboring communities to discuss ways to adopt a zoning mechanism that lowers allowable height for new family construction as recommended in
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the MLP Master Plan and addresses concerns around neighborhood character. There may be new ideas for best ways to move this initiative forward while offering flexibility within the community. Next steps include involving interested neighbors from all four quadrants of Morningside Lenox Park in preliminary discussions.

- The sidewalk refurbishment project has been reinitiated. Sidewalks that have been previously identified as benefitting from repair will be identified. A test for a cost sharing program will be developed in 2021.

Special thanks to all of the Master Plan Implementation Committee members. New volunteers for these projects are always welcome, if interested please send an email to [mbreen@c3marketing.com](mailto:mbreen@c3marketing.com)

MLP Master Plan Implementation Committee:

*Chair* - Sharla Borghorst

*Members* - Jaydeep Bhat, Frederic Bien, Marti Breen, Kim Cobb, Aurelia de Malibran, Sonny Jones, Jeff Kidwell, Vern McCarty, Phyllis Wingo, Pegah Zamani



# Security

## MLPA Supports APD Zone 6 Toy Drive

Each year at holiday time, the Zone 6 Atlanta Police Department does a toy drive for needy families who live in our Zone. This year, residents in Morningside were extraordinarily generous, going all out to donate two van loads of new toys - see the photos. The response was heartening and really quite incredible. In the photo below, Officer Sweet and Officer Stanio are making a toy pickup on Cumberland.



Officer Steven Sweet is managing this effort; he is the Quality of Life Officer for Zone 6. The zone staff will have a holiday party for the families on December 19.

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Thank you, dear residents, a thousand times for supporting this effort. We will most certainly do this again next year. Thank you, Rachel and Michael Hoath, for offering your house as a drop off area.

### **Morningside Security Patrol**

The Morningside Security Patrol has been on your street in the last 24 hours, and of late, has been very busy. In the past month, officers who work our patrol have been on the scene of criminal incidents or suspicious situations on multiple occasions.

On December 7 while working for the Morningside Security Patrol, Officer Stephen O'Hare was scanning a QR\* code on Hillside when he heard gunfire nearby. He immediately went to the Carlyle Heights Condominiums at 1445 Monroe Drive just after 6:00 pm. By the time he got there, however, the perpetrators were already gone. Numerous shots had been fired, and several vehicles inside the complex were damaged by gunfire. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Good things happen as well. Major Ric Vazquez, who manages the Morningside Patrol, visited with numerous neighbors during the popular Craft Crawl along Courtenay, Northview, and Wayne in late November. Recently, Major Vazquez loaded his car with toys donated by Morningside neighbors for the APD Zone 6 Toy Drive, an annual event for needy families living in Zone 6.

MLPA's Security Plus memberships contribute to the continued safety of our community. The MLPA Security Patrol is 100% funded by member dues and staffed by off-duty Atlanta Police Officers. More memberships mean more patrol hours. So, if you have not renewed or want to join, be sure to visit <https://www.mlpa.org/mlpa-memberships/> to sign up for a Security Plus membership.

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\* QR stands for Quick Response code, which is a two-dimensional barcode first designed in 1994 for the automotive industry in Japan. The MLPA Security Patrol installed QR tags in 66 locations around the neighborhood. Specific locations were selected to maximize coverage in all quadrants of neighborhood with the help of software technology and the officers on patrol. When the officers drive around, they scan these locations. All locations are scanned every 48 hours, with most scanned more than once.

## **Zoning**

The Zoning Committee reviewed the following variances in December.

Variance	Address	Comm. Vote	Board Vote
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V-20-156 1159 Cumberland Rd 4/0/0 13/0/0

V-20-136 1746 Noble Dr 4/0/0 13/0/0

Zoning Committee meetings are currently virtual. Contact [communications@mlpa.org](mailto:communications@mlpa.org) for login information. The cases to be covered will be posted at [www.mlpa.org/zoning/](http://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

**Saturdays, 8:00 - 11:30 AM**

[Morningside Farmers' Market](#), Morningside Village

**Tuesday, January 5**

Election Day

**Tuesday, January 5 7:00 PM**

Zoning Committee Meeting. See [mlpa.org/zoning](http://mlpa.org/zoning) for the variances to be reviewed.

**Thursday, January 7 7:00 PM**

Parks Committee Meeting

**Monday, January 11 7:00 PM**

MLPA Monthly Board Meeting, via Zoom. [Contact us](#) for login details.

**Monday, January 18 7:00 PM**

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

This is your newsletter. Please send us your ideas for articles, interviews, and photos for inclusion. Send them to [communications@mlpa.org](mailto: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, with legislative updates and important information on Renew Atlanta work.

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## **Neighborhood Meeting Schedule**

### **MLPA Zoning Meeting**

1st Tuesday of each month, 7:00 PM, virtual

### **MLPA Board Meeting**

2nd Monday of each month, 7:00 PM, virtual

### **NPU-F Meetings**

3rd Monday of every month, 7:00 PM, virtual

## **Quick Links**

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

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

[APD](#) - Atlanta Police website – we are in Zone 2 and Zone 6.

[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, David T Howard Middle School, Grady High School](#)

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

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