

# NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING UNIT –T

Atlanta, GA 30310  
(404) 414.3289

January 11, 2011

Atlanta City Council  
55 Trinity Ave  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear City Council Members,

We are writing to express the deep concerns of the citizens of NPU-T regarding the departure of existing process and procedures by some members of City Council. While we acknowledge that it should remain within the purview of the Atlanta City Council to make changes that impact the city, we do find issue when those changes are made without apparent regard for Atlanta's citizens or process.

There are a number of recent situations where street names were proposed to be changed. In the case of the proposed change that was within the NPU-T boundaries, while the community feedback was sought, NPU-T residents were only communicated with *after* an unveiling event had been scheduled and special guests had made travel plans. According to the council member who had proposed the change, the NPU-T input was requested so that the decision to rename the street would be done with community participation. It is unfortunate that that participation appeared to have been done as an afterthought.

In the other situation where a street name change to honor a living Atlanta resident was proposed, there appears to have been a breakdown on behalf of the proposing council member to follow the ordinance, established procedures, or even common courtesy of their fellow council members. With the proposed renaming of a downtown street, one person being honored was advised that they would receive a street named after them *before the legislation had been written or reviewed by the council or the Urban Design Committee.*

While we can debate the positive and negative impact to the citizens and visitors to the City of Atlanta created by renaming streets, the real negative impact concerning this issue comes about via the departure from normal process with drafting and soliciting community feedback for these proposals. Within NPU-T, we have seen firsthand what happens when decisions are made without any NPU review.

An incident that unfolded a few years ago with the Townhomes at Laurel is a perfect example. With that project, there was a need for a variance, rezoning and assemblage of several parcels of land. The impacted community voted against it and the applicant never appeared before the body of NPU-T. Despite the applicant's failure to show, the zoning and land use changes were approved by City Council. Today, there are two (2) of the 8-10 units that are occupied. The property has foreclosed multiple times and the development has become an area where frequent crime has occurred. Had process been followed, we believe that input from the NPU would have given City Council additional information, which may have altered the plans or even denied the requested changes for this property.

The Executive Committee of NPU-T is not expressing our concern out of a misguided attempt to thwart change and growth. We are making it known that the processes that our city has adopted have validity and should be followed at all levels of city government. We are also looking for a more open dialogue so that we can determine how we can work together to help necessary changes be made as smoothly as possible, rather than feel that communicating with the NPU or neighborhood is an afterthought or considered inconvenient.

## NPU-T Officers:

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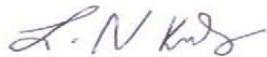
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We are also asking for a dialogue so that we can constructively and creatively identify things relating to zoning and land use that are not working today. One such example is the grandfathering of applications. Within NPU-T, there are two stores selling alcohol that are less than 200 feet from a school because "grandfathering" is done without regard to the current circumstances or the end-result.

The Executive Committee of NPU-T does agree to work within and to support the processes. We will continue to strive towards making informed decisions in as timely a manner as possible so that our community can grow and ultimately realize its greatness.

Sincerely,



Nia Knowles  
NPU-T Chair



Larry Carter  
NPU-T Vice Chair

cc: APAB, Ashview Heights Neighborhood Association, Booker T. Washington Neighborhood Association, West End Neighborhood Development, Westview Community Organization, Atlanta University Center Neighborhood Association, West End Coalition, West End Neighborhood Association, West End Merchants Coalition, College Town Neighborhood Association