

East Atlanta Community Association 2015 Year-end Review

The East Atlanta Community Association works on behalf of our members to increase the quality of life in the East Atlanta Neighborhood. This all volunteer organization has been serving our neighborhood for over 32 years! EACA committees work together with members to fulfill our mission, which is to promote a high quality of life for all residents of the East Atlanta Community regardless of race, age, sex, or economic status. 2015 was an exciting year and we wanted to share our accomplishments.

EACA encourages well planned residential and business development, and the renovation of existing dwellings and businesses. EACA insists on a safe community where residents do not fear crime or intimidation. EACA requires that the Atlanta Public School System meets the educational needs of our community. EACA seeks the highest quality of city and county services for its residents. Above all, EACA promotes a sense of community pride within East Atlanta.

East Atlanta residents contribute through their participation in EACA meetings, activities, events and annual membership dues. Membership dues cover the operating costs of the organization, such as maintaining our website, newsletter, organizational insurance and supplies. Our goal is to keep membership accessible to East Atlanta residents, while demonstrating your commitment to an active community association. When we have additional funds, we sponsor neighborhood activities, programs and events that contribute toward the organization's mission. The budget for EACA is developed annually and approved during our regular monthly meetings. Our contributions are often leveraged with grants and other resources to stretch our capacity. You can find our organization's by-laws and financial information on our website www.eaca.net under the financial and legal tab.

Without our members, EACA would not be the organization that it is today. In 2015, our goal was to grow membership and create a demographic that reflects our neighborhood. At year end, EACA represented over 575 individuals, or 271 households; 143 of those households were new members. This is a 40% growth over the 193 households in 2014. Raising membership awareness was accomplished through our spring membership drive and at this year's Strut festival. EACA believes that a growing membership reflects our neighborhood's desirability as a place to live.

The Membership Committee conducted a survey to assess how familiar East Atlanta residents are with EACA's activities. The survey results were published in the Porch Press and used to improve our responsiveness to the needs of the neighborhood. The Membership Committee also manages products that contribute to our neighborhood brand and identity such as T-shirts and yard signs.

The Arts and Culture Committee organized two events in 2015. In August, we hosted a Great American Campout location, marking our second year of participation. The site was located on the grounds of the historic Zuber-Jarell House and featured a tour for interested residents. In October, we organized the EAV-o-Ween, a tradition which continues to get bigger every year. This alternative to trick-or-treating, draws countless children and participation of local business partners contributes to this success. EACA events are a good way for neighbors to learn about EACA and for others to see what our neighborhood has to offer.

In 2015, EACA sponsored some of the neighborhood's most notable events and services such as the East Atlanta Farmers market, the East Atlanta Strut festival, EAV Runfest (5k), East Atlanta Santa and Eav-o-Ween. EACA also applied for grants to support the East Atlanta Strut festival and the organic garden at

Burgess-Peterson. EACA also hosts a monthly Bingo night for the residents of Brannon Towers with snacks and prizes.

The Parks and Greenspace Committee continued to make Brownwood park a space our neighborhood can be proud. EACA organized four volunteer work days that contributed over 600 volunteer hours to park maintenance and improvements that included replacing the decking on the bridge, conducting trail maintenance and controlling invasive species that are replacing native vegetation. The committee also coordinated with Trees Atlanta, as a grant recipient, for park improvements that will focus on long-term invasive species removal and control, stream restoration and native tree plantings. Their efforts this year have set the stage for continued improvements in the park over the next several years.

The Transportation Committee continued to track and advocate for transportation issues in concert with other planning organizations. We helped to organize community liaisons from other neighborhoods to provide input to initiatives such as the Memorial Drive redesign, the Moreland/Glenwood intersection realignment and safety improvements on Bill Kennedy Way. The committee served our residents by relaying and tracking requests to the city. Issues related to sidewalk conditions, damaged light poles, missing cross walks, traffic circle signage and parking issues were resolved over the course of 2015. EACA representatives attended meetings and tours of the Beltline to stay apprised of its impact on our neighborhood and also helped to build a bus stop shelter for the East Atlanta Corner Project.

One of the focus areas for 2015 was to bring attention to the preservation of the Old Atlanta Prison Farm (OAPF) as a public development that benefits East Atlanta residents. EACA representatives led tours of the OAPF and met with mayoral candidates and county commissioners to discuss potential uses. EACA also participated in the "Wild South East Atlanta" project to identify neighborhood greenspace and their walk-able/bike-able connections. We worked with other organizations to advocate for new connections within our neighborhood through the Brownwood/Entrenchment Creek Path project and the BATL East Atl./Kirkwood Monument Path project. EACA volunteers lead tours of the walking and biking trails along Entrenchment Creek.

The EACA Education Committee continued to contribute to the schools that serve our neighborhood. Locally, EACA representatives advocated for increased academic and social performance in Burgess-Peterson Academy and King Middle school. EACA members served in the local PTA, chaired and participated in the school council, and served on principal and teacher interview panels.

EACA Education representatives supported the greater APS system by providing leadership to the Southeast Atlanta Communities for School (SEACS) committee, where stakeholders from the Jackson Cluster schools worked to improve the integration of the kindergarten through 12th grade education system. They worked to ensure that all of the cluster schools participated in the International Baccalaureate program which will provide enhanced opportunities for the children of our neighborhood. The Education Committee represented East Atlanta's concerns in forums such as the Jackson Cluster Planning committee, the Atlanta City Council/APS Joint committee, the APS Charter System committee, the APS Local School Council Summit, and the King Middle School International Baccalaureate Informational Session.

The Education Committee continued to build relationships and utilize opportunities to advocate for our local schools into 2016, such as the Burgess-Peterson Academy new and perspective parent forum, the

King Middle School Current and Prospective Parent Meet and Greet, the Parkside Elementary School PTA and the Whitefoord Elementary School Neighborhood Meeting.

The Beautification Committee continued to keep East Atlanta beautiful by organizing five clean-up days during 2015. Individual committee members contributed more than 20 hours per month to keep the business district clean. Committee members also worked with other organizations to host clean-up days for the Village. EACA received a grant from the East Atlanta Foundation for equipment to support the cleanup efforts and to maintain the planters in central locations in the Village.

The Beautification Committee met with designers to develop designs for East Atlanta signage and engaged with the Keep Atlanta Beautiful organization to address a shortage of trash and cigarette receptacles outside of village establishments. EACA members participated in the Earth Day Tire Round-up sponsored by Council woman Archibong's office. In addition to these efforts, over 100 hours of service was recorded by participants of the Adopt-a-Street program throughout our neighborhood.

Neighbor in Need (NIN) is an initiative hosted by EACA to help senior and low-income homeowners with emergency housing needs and repairs. In 2015, NIN raised over \$28,000 through private donations, grants and fundraising events. The NIN program provided assistance to 9 homeowners with over \$19,000 in home repairs. One of the most popular fundraising events is the Poker Tournament, so we upped the ante with two events in 2015. The contractors that contributed to the success of this initiative in 2015 include Bell Roofing, M. Cary and Daughters Plumbing, Tom Bunch, Gate City Construction, Thomas Babineau Builders and Home Repairs Ministries.

EACA's Land Use and Zoning Committee is an active committee because of the input that city residents are afforded in the permitting process. Sometimes there can be high levels of citizen interest in the permitting and zoning issues we receive. Over 11 different permits were reviewed and vetted by EACA in 2015, and in many instances, individual residents contributed comments that were adopted by EACA as our official position on the applications. EACA also continued to explore the possibility of creating a Community Improvement District so that local tax revenues could support infrastructure improvements or shared public services.

The Land Use and Zoning Committee hosted two presentations about the vision for commercial development and growth that was formed over the last 15 years by the community, and embodied in the EAV Master Plan (2000), the NC-2 zoning ordinance (2001) and the South Moreland LCI Master Plan (2008). Sharing this information with our members is important to help shape and encourage participation in planning efforts and to continue to interpret the vision of our neighborhood, a continuing effort in 2016.

There is no doubt that our neighborhood's commercial and residential areas will continue to see change over the coming years. EACA believes that commercial development and zoning issues will be some of the most interesting areas to be a part of over the next few years. While any Atlanta resident can participate in the NPU, EACA representatives worked to bring forward East Atlanta's collective voice by serving on the NPU-W, which is a citizen advisory council that makes recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on zoning, land use and other planning issues.

EAV experienced a fresh breath this year with some exciting new business openings and some sad departures. This is natural for an active commercial area and will continue to bring opportunities to our

residents. 2016 will also bring new residents to the neighborhood in the opening of more than 120 apartment units being built on the old John B. Gordon School property. To support future commercial expansion, EACA is conducting a parking survey to inform our community on the parking options available to meet zoning regulations. The results will be used as a foundation to explore alternative parking options and to attract additional commercial interest.

An ever changing neighborhood is exciting, but for a look back at where the EAV has been, local authors Henry Bryant and Katina Van Cronkhite have captured this history in their book *Images of America: East Atlanta*. You can find it for sale in the village or on-line. Occasionally tours of the neighborhood are offered where you can see and live the changes over the last 150 years.

EACA sponsors a representative to serve on the board of our neighborhood newspaper, The Porch Press. This is a wonderful asset that is the envy of other neighborhoods. Many times people mistake it for a professional for-profit paper rather than the volunteer non-profit that it is. With the support of community advertisers, the paper is printed and mailed to over 6000 households in NPU-W. This is an effective forum to engage residents on EACA news and East Atlanta neighborhood activities. EACA believes that an informed resident is an engaged resident and the Porch Press allows us to reach an audience that is not served through electronic media.

Over EACA's history, our initiatives have yielded two separate non-profit organizations that continue to serve our community, share members with EACA and a sense of purpose with our organization. These two organizations have specific purposes but help to fulfill the EACA goal of improving the quality of life in our neighborhood.

The BATL organization was born from EACA over 10 years ago. In 2015, the BATL organization concentrated on raising funds to restore the two battlefield monuments in East Atlanta instead of holding an annual event. BATL has raised over half of the \$192,000 required to complete the project. BATL has been working with the PATH Foundation to create a new trail that will connect East Atlanta to other area trails and neighborhoods while telling the story of the Battle of Atlanta. The project is funded and awaiting final permitting. In 2016, BATL will begin a yearlong series of scheduled battlefield tours, several will feature the East Atlanta neighborhood.

The Friends of East Atlanta Library is not an official EACA committee, but it is another of the community organizations that began in EACA. Without EACA there might not be a library in the East Atlanta Village today. Those first volunteers fighting for our library formed the Friends group. This year the organization hosted many programs, provided many volunteer hours at the library and over \$4,000 for additional programs and materials. The annual Book Sale was expanded to 4 times in 2015.

Thank you EACA members, EACA volunteers, and EACA Committees for making the 2015 year a success. We look forward to continuing this momentum into 2016.