

Business Breakfast March 8

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Possible Tucker Incorporation Joins Dunwoody for Attention [PDF](#) | [Print](#) | [E-mail](#)

Tom Doolittle

Monday, 26 February 2007

An administrative assistant on a lunch break reports seeing a Jaguar with a male driver slowing to have a discussion with a young woman in front of a Northlake Parkway hotel. The manager of the office park across Northlake Parkway from the hotel says he has seen two and three police cars in the hotel's parking lot on several occasions, sometimes accompanying emergency response vehicles. A local website discussion forum <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TuckerDiscussions/> has 23 comments about crime and code issues at the hotel, questioning how it has evaded "nuisance laws".

If Northlake Parkway includes such enterprises, can Tucker really want to incorporate the road into a new city? The answer is apparently "yes". An incorporation feasibility report (<http://heather.home.mindspring.com/tucker/>) by Georgia Tech's School of Public Policy states that the feasibility of success for a City of Tucker might depend on it capturing hotel and commercial property-related taxes.

Northlake Parkway and Crescent Center Boulevard is a commercial corridor with five hotels and one undeveloped property zoned for a hotel—both are in Tucker's 30084 zip code. The density of hotels was one factor that the DeKalb Convention Center Authority's preference for a possible meeting facility in Northlake, according to Development Authority Chairman Eugene Walker in October, 2004.

Recently, website "postings" have reflected a growing concern about business areas adjacent to Tucker/Northlake neighborhoods. One such resource is www.hendersonroad.com. The website, run by Jenni Wasmer (a 12-year Tucker resident), provides a wide array of information about the Tucker/Northlake area in addition to becoming a repository for immediate crime alerts and reports by individuals and neighborhood associations.

Messages reflect that local residents are now relying on conversations with merchants for their crime news, particularly regarding Northlake Parkway. The issue was brought out into the open in January at a large meeting in Tucker, where complaints were aired about weakening retail services, vacant property and crime.

On January 9, between 300 and 400 people crowded into a building at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Tucker for what was advertised as a "Town Hall Meeting" via crime-watch e-mail networks and local websites. Two newspapers and this website were represented. The meeting agenda promised a "Crime Analysis in (of) the Northlake Business District." According to meeting organizer and Tucker homeowner Keith Kosicki, police officials were invited to provide the report and answer public questions.

Kosicki spoke about the impact of underperforming commercial property as a predictor of crime—and ultimately stagnating home values. No police officials attended the meeting, which occurred while the department was transitioning between chiefs. Former Dallas, Texas police chief Terrell Bolton took over operations in mid-January from Acting Chief Nick Marinelli, who resigned a week later. Apparently, the decision for police not to attend the Tucker meeting was Marinelli's, as he issued a statement to the press, reaffirming a commitment to attend "Neighborhood Watch meetings."

Asked about Marinelli's statement, former State Rep. Paul Jennings took issue with the former Acting Chief comparing a public meeting to a regularly scheduled neighborhood meeting. Jennings responded, "We would never waste the time of police representatives by routine invitations." The police department may handle crime information in large business with more sensitivity than information related to neighborhood crime.

Dan Johnson, a 34-year Shenandoah Valley resident, had been eagerly anticipating police department answers to public questioning. Johnson, the first at the meeting in line to speak, had recently pressed the Code Enforcement Division into handling an issue, but only after being publicized in the Atlanta Journal Constitution's DeKalb Section.

District 2 Commissioner Jeff Rader, who attended the Town Hall meeting, wrote GoDeKalb, "I regret that the police department did not attend. When I asked Deputy Chief Marinelli why they did not attend, he said that it was his understanding that the meeting's focus was on incorporation..." (GoDeKalb was unsuccessful reaching Marinelli prior to his resignation and the department's public information officer has not returned later messages.)

Asked what means he had pursued getting a commitment from police prior to not being represented at the meeting, organizer Kosicki replied, "It was clear during the last meeting that crime is a huge concern to most people in attendance. As a result, we are putting together another town hall meeting (tentatively scheduled for late April) that will have the full support and participation of the DeKalb County Police Department and top county government officials."

For a report of the January 9, 2007 Tucker Town Hall Meeting, go on-line to: <http://www.hendersonroad.com/northlake%20tucker%20meeting.htm#Highlights> .

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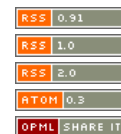
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The Tucker Avenger said:



Please, Please, PLEASE can we get this ball rolling? The Tucker/Northlake area has seen crime go up and property values stagnate. Vox Populi is right that Tucker needs effective policing, code enforcement, etc. Funny that we have the police and code enforcement right there on Crescent Center, isn't it?

"Northlake Parkway and Crescent Center Boulevard is a commercial corridor with five hotels and one undeveloped property zoned for a hotel—both are in Tucker's 30084 zip code. The density of hotels was one factor that the DeKalb Convention Center Authority's preference for a possible meeting facility in Northlake, according to Development Authority Chairman Eugene Walker in October, 2004."

What about Pine Grove subdivision? is this the "undeveloped property" Tom Dolittle is talking about? Anybody interested in putting a convention center there? I'll be the first to sign the buy-out papers. Or better yet, how about getting rid of the Northlake Crackhouse Inn and putting the convention center there? Getting rid of that one location would do so much good for the area. Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. CEO, that's not within walking distance of your private booth at Seasons Bisro and Hoochie, I mean SPORTS Bar.

"We are putting together another town hall meeting (tentatively scheduled for late April) that will have the full support and participation of the DeKalb County Police Department and top county government officials."

Oh really? Participation from the Police Department? They couldn't even participate in getting the drug dealers out of my subdivision after being provided videotapes of "suspected" drug transactions.

Bottom line on Tucker cityhood? The sooner the better!

February 27, 2007

Puritan said:



It's at least partly about race--partly a class issue (a constant theme from Dunwoody, ever since the real estate community "branded" it in the late 1960's--and has had a great PR machine since). It's probably a bigger race issue for the Republican and rural whiter legislature than Dunwoody leadeers.I don't know what Watson expects to accomplish with this line. Gets his name in the news--Jones has shown that to be successful.

February 27, 2007

Open&Transparent said:



More race baiting from arguably the top candidate for CEO in 2008, State Rep. Stan Watson. We should expect more from a state representative. After eight years of Mr. CEO, this county needs someone to unite, not polarize things even more than they are now.

Guess if Stan gets elected, it will be more of the same. Not sure of one piece of legislation of note than Stan has passed while in the house that has really benefitted the county, even from back when Dem's controlled all three branches of state gov't.

Thanks for debating this issue on its merits or lack thereof, Stanley. Way to raise the discourse!

<http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/dekalb/stories/2007/02/27/0227dunwoody.html>

Dunwoody cityhood disturbs south DeKalb

"I'm not a racist, but this is about race," said state Rep. Stan Watson (D-Decatur). He accused Dunwoody residents of wanting to "secede from the Union" after blacks seized power in DeKalb.

February 27, 2007

Vox Populi said:



No doubt, Tucker should incorporate. It is the only way to save the area. Someone needs to start paying attention to what's going on, and it will only be local citizens with a major stake in Tucker who will be motivated and capable of correcting this situation.

Every business owner should support every homeowner in the Tucker area to work in obtaining cityhood and local control over the area. It is obvious that under a big, inefficient DeKalb County government that things are continuing to go downhill. Clearly, this is a case for the citizens to begin to do the right things to save their community from demise.

You should also note that a township alone will not address the serious problems Tucker faces. Tucker needs a full city to start getting the neighborhood back up to the level it should be. Tucker needs effective policing, code enforcement, zoning, city administration and other powers to be sure that what the citizens in the community desire is what happens.

You will never get this type of detailed involvement under our DeKalb County government. It is time for change for the better.

February 26, 2007

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