



Chattahoochee Hills READER

May 17, 2013 | Promoting Active & Informed Citizenship in Chattahoochee Hills

The State of Our City

Mayor Delivers Address at Recent Council Meeting

(Speech notes: as delivered to the May 7, 2013 Chattahoochee Hills Council Meeting audience).

I'm here to update you again today on the state of the city – and I can sum it up pretty simply – we're doing great.

As I mentioned in this message last year, my first and foremost goal as Mayor continues to be making sure that the city that we envisioned when we worked so hard for cityhood is the one that we end up with. There have been times over the past few years when things have felt pretty rough, but I feel more and more confident now that we're on the right path.

When I spoke to you last year I focused above all else on the budget, because that was the place where the city was in real trouble. When I got elected in November 2011, the city was on pace to lose about \$250,000 in the 2011/2012 fiscal year (remember we work on a July through June fiscal calendar). That was on top of the \$1,000,000 deficit the City had already accumulated in the 4 years up to that point. Before I was even sworn in, I started working with the City finance director and the city manager on an emergency redraft of the budget. The fact was that we were already at the very limits of our borrowing capacity and might not have survived without immediate budget changes.

We focused very closely and specifically on doing just those jobs that a City needs to do, and doing them well. We decreased the size of our office space, reduced our staff in many areas, reduced pay levels where required, and in particular limited the "management" jobs – to focus only on those people that actually do a physical job for the city. We have no "desk jobs" in our public safety department – both Chief Rook and Chief Lyle are on duty and on patrol when they are here. The same is true of Public Works Director Larry Parrott, who you are far more likely to find bush-hogging than in his office.

Our very small office staff has consolidated and cross trained with amazing diligence to be able to handle all of the administrative functions required of a small city with the absolute minimum number of people. Even your elected officials have participated, with all but one of us forgoing our salaries. As I promised last year, with the help of our incredibly dedicated staff, and by reviewing every single line item in the budget, we managed to cut almost \$500,000 out of the city's annualized spending. Many of those changes were made before we had even adopted a finalized budget – the need was that dire.

I also promised in this address last March that we would end the fiscal year with surplus, and I'm proud to say that's exactly what we did, paying about \$150,000 down against that million-dollar negative fund balance, and reducing the city's debt load from over \$1 million to just over \$850,000.

That financial discipline has carried through the current year as well – and we expect to pay down about another \$150,000 against that deficit in the 2012/13 fiscal year. If our timing works out well this year, we may not even need our line of credit – the first time in our city's history that will be able to get by using only our Tax Anticipation Note. The budget I'm recommending for the 2013/14 year is remarkably similar to last year's – it's working well, after all, so needed little more than fine-tuning – and I expect similarly positive results at the end of this coming budget year as well.

Even with all of the budget reductions, by focusing on the basic blocking and tackling of the city's responsibilities we've been able to maintain or even improve the level of city services most areas. We've also begun work more expanded our efforts on many of the basic infrastructure requirements that any city has – with much of that work coming from the city itself, but also much of it through many of the dedicated volunteers in the community.

We've also worked hard to build bridges to our neighboring governments, with great success. One example is the Local Option Sales Tax negotiations, where the cities have really come together to protect their common interests, and protect their funding from Fulton County. I'm now pretty hopeful that, because of that united front, the potential for large losses in revenue because of those LOST renegotiations (which are still ongoing) are minimal.

Another huge example of the benefits of cooperation with our neighbors can be seen in Public Safety. When Fulton County asked to quadruple our emergency radio fees, Chief Rook and Chief Lyle were able to work together with Union City to provide that service closer to home. While it cost us a little bit of extra money in equipment, the change will save the city nearly \$100,000 a year. Because of the close relationship the Chiefs developed while hammering out the details of the emergency radio program, Union City decided to donate one of their fire trucks to us when they got a new one. It may not be new, but it's new to us. It provides a huge improvement in our capabilities, as we now have two trucks on call at all times, even when one is in for repairs. And, while I'm on the subject, we now also have a fully active volunteer firefighter program that has greatly improved our service levels.

I mentioned last year that we were moving back to a community policing model, and away from a revenue-based policing model – a change which is now fully implemented. We are still writing tickets, of course, but we're focusing on safety issues, like DUI's. The focus is road safety, not ticket dollars. We are no longer a speed trap – our officers are spending their time out in the community getting to know the neighbors, and providing a visual deterrent to anyone who might be here up to no good.

We've also improved the level of output and performance from our public works department. This is the only place in the city's 'business' where we have actually added personnel, including a very talented

grader operator who is keeping our gravel roads in much better shape than they had been previously been (keeping in mind that may not be obvious this week, after all of the rain we've had!) You may also have noticed the repaved bridges on Rico road – our first repaving – and there should be more with a DOT grant we expect this fall. You'll also notice later this year the beginning of some crack-sealing work, as we focus on making our roads last as long as they can for the least amount of money.

You have hopefully noticed the results from our Gateway Grant money, too. The Public Works department, with the help from some dedicated volunteers, has planted hundreds of trees and shrubs at the South Fulton Parkway entranceway to the city. As they grow up, it will really let you know that you've arrived! Even the Fire Department has gotten in on the act – using their water cannon to keep the trees watered on those few Fridays we have had this spring. We've also managed to get some other small but very important things taken care of. The Public Works department worked with Community Brickworks to make sure that the walking track behind City Hall is open to the public again! And we added a beautiful new fence next to Rico Park to keep our little ballplayers safely on the field.

We're also close to finally implementing the update of the City's zoning. It's taken a little longer than we had hoped, because we've had to be very tight with the money we've been able to spend on the necessary consultants (City Planner Mike Morton has done great work pulling together all of the disparate pieces), but we're almost there.

That zoning has been incredibly thoughtfully composed, and is directly responsive to our recent Comp Plan update process and the input of the hundreds of Chattahoochee Hills' citizens who were involved. The Zoning adds a huge amount of flexibility with respect to what people are allowed to do in Chattahoochee Hills when compared with the zoning is currently in place. It's been thoroughly vetted by our outside experts, and the fantastic group of volunteers who serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission, and will start its way through the City Council over the course of the next few months.

It's important to keep in mind that the ability to control our zoning is the main reason we became the city. The economic slowdown of the last two years has given us a bit of a breather, but the reality is that the city of Atlanta is projected to double its population in the next 40 years, and because we're the largest undeveloped parcel of land in the metro area, much of that development pressure is bound to come our way whether we want it to or not. No other city in the Atlanta region has been able to maintain even the least bit of its rural character in the face of that development pressure, but this community has been quite clear that it intends to do so. Our zoning's unique preservation program, which uses market forces to ensure fairness, is the only possible way for that to happen. And we have spent a couple of years now refining the program in a way that lets everybody participate (or not participate) to the level that they choose, in a way that is thoughtful, comprehensive and fair.

And you may have heard some weird stories lately – I know I have – about things that are purported to be in the zoning (and which sound utterly ridiculous) – things like fees on agricultural fences and the like.

The fact is that these ideas **are** utterly ridiculous – and they're also absolutely **not** in the zoning. Do yourself a favor – if you hear something that makes no sense, give City Planner Mike Morton a call; he will be happy to show you what is really in the document.

One other thing that I mentioned in last year's update was my intention to re-energize the volunteer efforts in the community, and I can proudly say that that process is not only in motion but already producing results.

We have an amazing new group of Parks Commissioners, who have been energetically planning and implementing improvements in our parks in coordination with the Public Works Department and the newly re-energized Friends of the Parks. We are in the running (with the highest score!) for \$100,000 RTP grant, which will allow us to expand the parking lot at Cochran Mill Park and will fund several trail additions and improvements. The Parks Commission has also recently implemented a pay and display parking program for both Cochran Mill and Hutcheson Ferry Park. This program recognizes that most of the parks users actually come from outside the city, and will raise money for parks operations and improvements from those people that are actually using the parks. Keep in mind, too, that, while donations are certainly accepted, all Chattahoochee Hills residents can continue to use our parks for free.

The Parks Commission also recently hosted a sustainable trails building workshop led by the top trails specialist in Georgia, and between those folks and the members of the Friends of the Parks, we now have a good-sized crew of volunteers with the training needed to maintain and improve our parks trails. They've already replaced a fairly large section of washed out trail on the west side of Cochran Mill Park, and also have begun maintenance projects on the east side.

We've also had some other big volunteer-driven improvements at the Rico Park, with the start of a small trail system in the wooded area next the ball field that the volunteers are continuing to develop and improve.

Another huge area of volunteer energy revolves around the Charter School. We all know people that have moved away from Chattahoochee Hills because of the lack of school options – the Chattahoochee Hills Charter School is the one thing that will change that. Earlier this year we got the great news that our Fulton County charter had been approved. We've been working diligently on getting a site selected – an announcement which we can expect soon – and groups of volunteers are working on enrollment, procurement, teacher and principal hiring – and probably most importantly, fundraising! It's not going to be easy to make everything come together for opening date August 2014, but it's hugely critical to the future of Chattahoochee Hills.

I've been doing everything I can to support the process, and would ask everyone else the community to do the same. Even if your children are well past the age that the school will serve directly, like mine are,

we still need a good school here if we are to have any hope that our kids will want to live here with their children in the future...

I'm also proud to announce that the Chattahoochee Hill Country Conservancy has continued the work with the Georgia Ag Extension Agency that I mentioned here a few months ago, and we will soon have our own Ag Extension Agent to help support the farmers that are still active in Chattahoochee Hills, as well as the new young farmers that are moving here – all at no cost to the City.

There are so many other amazing volunteer activities going on that it's hard to list them all. We have the Our Town grant team, for example – a joint venture between the Serenbe Institute and the City, which is leveraging a \$25,000 Our Town grant to provide a road map for including art and the artistic process into the city's long-term plans. Perhaps most critical right now is the work the group is doing on the creation of a marketing Brand for the city, which will help us better be able to attract the kind of economic development that supports our community's vision.

And there have been so many other programs we've benefited from in the past year. We've been through a way finding exercise program by the ARC, which in conjunction with the Our Town program will lead to signage in the city that is not only more attractive, but more useful in helping you "find your way", among other things. I've also been participating in a bunch of regional programs that may well end up helping the City, like the new Chattahoochee River Valley Alliance, which is working on making the river that makes up 18 miles of our border a bigger asset for the whole community, and several different Economic Development initiatives aimed at promoting QUALITY development in South Fulton, from the Airport's Aerotropolis program, to the South Fulton Parkway Association's initiatives, and the Fulton Industrial Community Improvement District – all of which consider Chattahoochee Hills to be one of the biggest assets in the region.

I recognize, of course, that not everything thinks everything is perfect. I know, for example, that the number of people coming in to 'appreciate our natural beauty' can sometimes be burdensome, particularly when it takes the form of 1000 bicycles riding shoulder to shoulder on a Sunday morning. While I'm proud to live in a place pretty enough that people want to come see it, I do recognize that many citizens feel that there can be 'too much of a good thing'. While there's not much we can do to reduce access to whatever public roads, there are things we can do to reduce the amount of trouble large groups cause. With that in mind, I have asked our Police Department to strictly enforce the traffic laws that apply to bicyclists. In order to raise some revenue from the casual bicyclists, we're asking them to park in the pay and display lots in either Cochran Mill or Hutcheson Ferry Park, rather than illegally in church parking lots. And to reduce the pain of the larger groups, I've asked the Council to double the rates we charge "public road" events, and to add a \$1000 surcharge for any event closing public roads that takes place on a Sunday morning.

I've also asked the City Manager to work with the City Attorney to immediately increase our ability to do something about vacant properties in the city that are becoming both eyesores and safety hazards.

But I have to say, other than those couple of issues, things are going pretty darn well!

As I mentioned last year, the city covers a lot of area, and has a lot of different people in it – different people with different perspectives and priorities; different personalities, and different plans. But were all brought together by a common love for both the land that surrounds us and the people that we love that live on it. It's important that we respect our differences, but even more important that we celebrate what we have in common, and that we work together to protect it.

Remember – we are here to serve you. If there's something that we're missing, please let us know, and we will begin to learn about it. If there's something that is wrong, let us know and we'll do what we can to make it better. If there's something you don't understand; ask, and we'll do the best we can to explain.

Before I close, I want to take a moment to once again thank the city staff for all of their hard work under pretty tough circumstances over the course of the last year and a half – it's both noticed and appreciated.

I want to thank my fellow elected officials for their work, their help and their thoughtfulness. I also want to thank all the people that I've shanghaied into working on the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Tree Board and the Parks Commission (and all of the many other committees and 6 groups). I know they are doing more work than people realize – and probably more than they expected – and I want to be sure that they know how much I appreciate it.

And I especially want to thank all of the people who participate and volunteer in the community in any other way – something that's happening at so many levels that it's literally almost impossible to recognize everyone – but know that, whether you're coming to meetings like this one or reporting problems in an email or call; helping with the kids T-Ball or at the library; volunteering for the charter school, the parks, the food bank, the arts programs, Our Town; or working in one of our local churches' many outreach programs, (or if, like so many people in this amazing community, you are doing three or four of those things!), **you are appreciated and we are grateful.**

One final thing – I want to take an opportunity again to thank everybody here for allowing me to play my part in this process. I love Chattahoochee Hills, and feel privileged to be able to play my small part in making this City great, and making this great City work – THANK YOU!



Tom Reed, Mayor – Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia, USA

Popular Market Marks First Anniversary*Friends and Neighbors invited to Celebrate*

Join us on Fern's front porch and at the Bosch Experience Center for our One-year Anniversary Tastes of Summer Street Party-- featuring cooking demos, food + drink tastings, drawings every half-hour for gifts and logoware from our favorite brands. Come sample, learn about, and vote for products you'd like to see on the shelves at Fern's.

Featuring

Rocking Chair Ranch (cooking demo)
Chinese Southern Bell (cooking demo)
United Natural Foods International
Inland Seafood
Atlanta Foods International
Jailhouse Brewery
Frozen Pints (Beer Ice Cream)
Bocco Wine Distributors
Dreaming Cow Yogurt
King of Pops

....and much more FUN, FUN, FUN for the whole family!

Our Town Committee Requests Residents' Opinions

Submitted By Dana Wicher

Please share your ideas with us at the
**Chattahoochee
Hills: OUR
TOWN
WORKSHOP**

We want to hear your ideas for using art and design to make Chatt Hills even more beautiful, distinctive, & livable.

**TUESDAY, MAY 21
6:30PM 'til ? @ CITY HALL
REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED!**

"OUR TOWN" is a project of the Serenbe Institute and the City of Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, this project will create a multi-year master plan for art and design in the City of Chattahoochee Hills that will strengthen its sense of place and community for both residents and visitors.

Questions? Contact: chatthillsourtown@gmail.com

ARLINGTON GALA FEATURES UGA COACH ANDY LANDERS, BEST-SELLING AUTHOR JON GORDON

Submitted by Maria Hanson

When the Top Dog meets the Positive Dog, it is bound to be a great event. Arlington Christian School will host its third annual Benefit Dinner on Thursday, May 23. UGA's Andy Landers and best-selling author Jon Gordon headline the gala at Foxhall Resort on Capps Ferry Road in Douglas County.

A native of Maryville, TN, Landers' work ethic and love of basketball were forged on a farm...where summers weren't spent lounging. "I grew up as a kid in the rural country," Landers said. "You can't go out and play baseball or football by yourself, but you can shoot hoops. Where there are no other kids and you're looking for something to do, that's what you have. I gravitated towards basketball and fell in love with it at an early age. I played on teams starting in elementary school all the way up through high school."

At any early age, Landers knew that coaching basketball was in his blood and in his future. "I was in sixth grade when I decided that's what I wanted to do," Landers said. "A lot of it had to do with the fact that I had an uncle, A.J. Wilson, who coached at one of the county high schools and had incredible success with both football and basketball. Sometimes experiences like that just stick with you."

Landers' work ethic and love of the game has translated to tremendous personal success and led many of his former players to careers in sports. Arlington Christian's head women's coach Lady (Hardmon) Grooms is just such a success story. She and Landers talk every day, and the chats often center around the life lessons she learned from him. "I don't coach basketball," Grooms remarks, "I coach people." Recounting her first season in Athens, Grooms reminisced about their rocky beginning. "I thought Coach Landers didn't like me. He made me work harder and run farther than anyone else on that Coach Landers saw my potential.

The record of Landers' players in the classroom is even better than their results on the hardwood. All 59 four-year Lady Bulldog letter winners have secured a diploma from the University of Georgia. A standout for Lady Bulldog teams of the late-80's and early 90's, Grooms went on to an extremely successful professional career, both in the U.S. and overseas in Hungary, Italy and Turkey.

When she retired from the WNBA in 2004, one of Grooms' first calls was to Landers to see what she could do to finish her degree, following the birth of her daughter, Gabby, Grooms completed degree requirements in 2009. She has won four state championships while at Arlington Christian, been named GISA Coach of the Year, and been an assistant coach for the New York Liberty.

She, like her famous mentor, takes the greatest pride in steering her players to the right collegiate programs and watching them graduate and go on to succeed in a variety of careers. Arlington Christian alumni are playing at the Air Force Academy, UT-Chattanooga, Belmont Abbey, Truett-McConnell, West Georgia, Point University, Cumberland, St. John's, Christian Brothers in Memphis, and Columbus State.

Jon Gordon is known nationally for his motivational speaking and best-selling books, including his latest, [The Positive Dog](#). A former Atlanta resident who was involved in several restaurants, his career took off as a Moe's franchisee when his four successful operations in Jacksonville were the highest revenue producing units in the

company. Gordon’s Energy Addict seminars have focused on his life experiences. “It’s not the experiences, it’s how you process experiences.”

Gordon has inspired readers and audiences around the world. He is the author of The Wall Street Journal bestseller The Energy Bus, The No Complaining Rule, Training Camp, The Shark and the Goldfish, Soup, and The Seed. A graduate of Cornell University, Gordon holds a Masters in Teaching from Emory University. He and his wife and two children enjoy tennis and lacrosse.

Previous headliners for Arlington Christian have been Ambassador Andrew Young and UGA and NFL standouts Robert Edwards and Hines Ward. This year’s gala evening will be catered by Atlanta’s Finest and includes a reception and silent auction at 6:45 and dinner at 7:30.

Tickets to the gala are available for \$40 (students under 18), general admission (\$60), and priority general admission (\$100). Numerous sponsorship opportunities are available. Tickets are available at www.arlingtonchristian.org or from Arlington Christian School, 4500 Ridge Road, Fairburn, GA 30213. For more information, please call, 770-964-9871.

Saturday Night Music at the Daisy Hang featuring



Dan Duff
June 1, 8pm

Dan Duff is an Atlanta-based guitarist, singer, and sound artist. He currently performs acoustic party music with songs that span from the '60's to the present, including the work of diverse artists like Nirvana, Tom Petty, Jimi Hendrix and Johnny Cash.
www.reverbnation.com/danduff



Special menu of hamburgers and hot dogs along with your favorite Daisy baked goods and libations. Come on out for this special neighborhood hang!

Music brought to you by Chatt Hills Music.
\$5 cover per person at the door.
www.facebook.com/chatthillsmusic

**CHATT
HILLS
MUSIC**



2013 Sessions

Camp Cricket

- June 10-14
- June 24-28
- July 8-12
- July 22-26

Junior Naturalist

- June 3-7
- June 10-14
- June 17-21
- June 24-28
- July 8-12
- July 15-19
- July 22-26

July 29-August 2

Adventure Camp

June 17-21



all summer long @ cochran mill nature center!

Camp Cricket

for rising Kindergarten & 1st graders

Monday - Friday, 9am - 1pm

\$100 per camper *

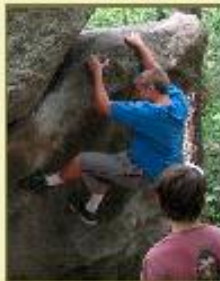


Junior Naturalist Camp

for rising 2nd-5th graders

Monday - Friday, 9am - 3pm

\$150 per camper *



Adventure Camp

for rising 6th-9th graders

Monday - Wednesday, 9am - 3pm

Thursday 9am - Friday 12pm

\$300 per camper *

*member discounts available!

Join us for Camp Open House on May 18th from 2-3pm!

call (770) 306-0914

visit CochranMillNatureCenter.org

Save the Date:

Saturday, June 15
6:00-10:00pm



Colonel Bruce Hampton and Friends!

Opening band:
Parker Smith and
Bandwith



We will have Mac The Cheese Food Truck on site & full bar available for purchase

Advanced Tickets Will Be Available!

Serenbe Pavilion in Chattahoochee Hills
www.serenbe.com
www.facebook.com/chatthillsmusic

GO!

Providence Baptist Church VBS 2013

Grab Your Passport!
Travel the world to learn how other countries learn about Jesus!

Sunday June 16 Kick-Off
10:00AM

June 17-19*
Adventures
6:00-8:30 PM

June 20
Church Wide Cookout
6:00 PM

3 years through 5th grades
**Snacks provided*

“GO
ye into all the world
and preach the Good
News to everyone.”
Mark 16:15

6402 Campbellton Redwine Road • Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia
www.pbcrico.org • providencevbs2013@gmail.com

ChatList

Help Wanted

I need to hire someone to help with general labor work in the area. If you know of anyone needing work please send them my way. 15-25 hours / \$10+ depending on quality! Please contact: dwaynebass@gmail.com for details or to apply.

Room for Rent

Huge room for rent with full access to private bath, kitchen, laundry and family room. Enjoy the good life in this French/Country home, sitting on 4 acres with scenic views in all directions. Great location - 2 miles from Palmetto, 2 miles from Serenbe and 2 miles from South Fulton Parkway. No dogs or cats please. Outside smoking only. For rental info call 770-757-9819

Free Piano

Providence Baptist Church has an antique upright piano free for anyone who will pick it up from the church. Please call David Goode for more information 770-463-3207.

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The Chattahoochee Hills Civic Association works in partnership with citizens, businesses, organizations, and government to protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and land of Chattahoochee Hills, GA. The Bulletin is a publication of the Chattahoochee Hills Civic Association. To receive electronic copies or to share news, please contact: info@chatthills.org. Do you have an event or information you want to add? We are happy to list local events, articles and other submissions that we think are of general interest to Chattahoochee Hills' residents. We post as soon as practical after we receive your material. Contributions to the Community Reader must be received **NO LATER THAN THE NEAREST WEDNESDAY** prior to our publishing date for inclusion in the current edition. We usually publish the Bulletin on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month, with additional editions or limited bulletin emails as appropriate/needed/possible. Submissions are subject to editing for form, content, and space.

Note: We do NOT fact-check outside submissions and take no responsibility for content therein. We make no representations or warranties regarding any item or activity advertised herein – user/purchaser assumes all risk. Anyone posting must comply with Federal and State regulations prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment. ©2011 – the Chattahoochee Hills Civic Association. This issue was compiled by Melea Brett.

Schedule Reminder: the full Community Bulletin is produced at least twice-monthly (first and third week of the month), or more often as time allows. If you want to be sure your event is publicized, please do keep this schedule in mind!

XXX