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By John Schaffner
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John Schaffner At Peachtree Hills Park, landscape architect William Brigham talks to neighborhood representatives about efforts the city of Atlanta has undertaken to stabilize and shore up the badly eroded tributary creek that flows through the popular park into Peachtree Creek.

A dozen or so youths frolicked at the Peachtree Hills Park playground while a smaller group of adults huddled in the shade of a nearby park pavilion to discuss the city's work in shoring up the banks of the creek that flows through and sometimes floods their neighborhood park.

It was a hot June 23 afternoon and no one expected to see a flooding creek that day. But the talk was about steps the city of Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management and Parks Department had taken to minimize flooding and damage to a sanitary sewer line that might spill raw sewage into the creek.

"It took seven years and seven weeks to do the project," explained William Brigham, the landscape architect and project manager for the work done on this tributary that flows into Peachtree Creek.

Brigham, who is in charge of the stream bank stabilization contracts, explained that the Watershed Management department had a plan for shoring up the eroded banks of this section of the creek for at least seven years, but it took that long to get the funding and approval for the go-ahead.

Originally estimated to cost \$250,000, Watershed Management worked in partnership with the city's Parks Department, which handled the contracting and got the price to about half the original estimate.

The work, which included placement of 38 tons of rock in the creek, even provides what the neighbors see as a "beautiful waterfall," but which Brigham calls a "storm water runoff energy dissipater."

"For outfall protection projects, we cannot call it a 'waterfall,'" Brigham said. "It can be justified because there is a 21-inch sanitary sewer line there," which now is being protected from being ruptured and spilling raw sewage into the creek.

Brigham told the group the project worked out the way it did because the 21-inch sewer pipe "was something we had not perceived." They had come to the park in the winter and could not see the pipe because of all the kudzu that had overgrown the creek bed. He said they poked around and discovered that all the creek water crossed the 21-inch pipe.

"It would have been just a matter of time and it would have broken that line and raw sewage would have been running down the creek," Brigham said.

Another part of the project is the planting of about 30 trees to make up for trees removed during the South River Tunnel project. In order to use up some of that recompense, Brigham said they are using about 600 of what are called “live stakes,” which are basically willow branches.

“They root and grow into trees,” he said. “The roots hold the rocks, the rocks hold the roots and stakes and all lead to the stabilization of the creek bank. Eventually it looks like a very natural environment, where the rocks become somewhat invisible. ... It is like building a house where you need that foundation in order to stabilize everything.”

One major reason for the June 23 meeting was for the neighborhood representatives to learn what the city would do to now maintain the creek area and what role they needed to play. Neighbors discovered that the city had little money to maintain the area around the creek. Much of the maintenance will fall to volunteers, according to Brigham and Patricia Katz, who represented the Parks Department on the project.

“We are a team,” he said. “I just gave you the bicycle. Now you need to learn how to ride it...and stay out of traffic.”

The neighborhood representatives expressed an interest in submitting the project for an award because they are so pleased with what has been accomplished. They believe an award would help attract grant money to continue the work down the rest of the stream or provide other improvements in the park.

“The park has increasingly become a centerpiece of our beautiful neighborhood,” Peachtree Hills resident David Goldin said, “with all sorts of people using it for different purposes such as softball, soccer, the playground, tennis, gardening, and dog walking throughout the day.”



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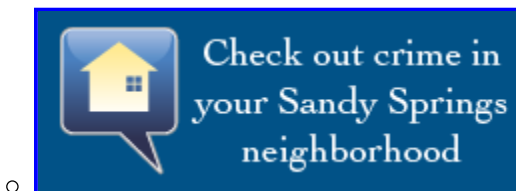


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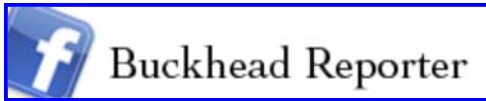
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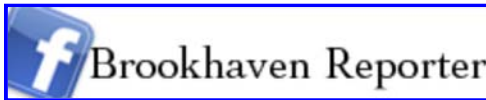
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