

April 2010 Newsletter

The birth of spring brings a sense of optimism and renewal. The long winter and rainy weather has given way to trees, shrubs and flowers bursting with color. The sights and sounds of nature remind us why we choose to live in Newton County. We have a quality of life here that other counties envy. Yes, we have challenges and the leadership of Newton County has been working hard to address those challenges. As with any problem solving exercise, the first step is assessment followed by planning. During the past six months, the Leadership Collaborative, comprised of representatives from the Board of Commissioners, Board of Education, Water & Sewer Authority, Chamber of Commerce and the five cities of Covington, Oxford, Porterdale, Mansfield, and Newborn have adopted a 2050 Vision. This vision sets road map for decision-making on all levels of government for the next 40 years. If you are a member of a civic group and would like a presentation of the 2050 Vision, please contact Kay Lee at The Center or visit www.thecenter-newton.org.

ALMON/CROWELL OVERLAY

In the 2050 Vision, future development will be directed toward specific development nodes, villages, and character areas. This concept of consolidating development directs infrastructure expenditures to specific areas, thus decreasing the financial burden on government.

A group of stakeholders from the Almon/Crowell Road corridor worked with the Planning & Development Department for over a year to create an overlay district. On March 16, 2010, the BOC unanimously approved the adoption of the Almon/Crowell Overlay District. This ordinance will require stringent building standards for new construction. In exchange for these stringent building standards, increased density will be allowed within the overlay. In addition, a mixed use ordinance was adopted by the BOC and incorporated into the overlay. This overlay will serve as a template for overlay districts in Salem and Oakhill.

For more information on the Almon Overlay visit http://co.newton.ga.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=192&Itemid=31

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

According to the senior planner in the Planning and Development Department,

“Newton County’s NSP program has acquired 8 properties to date, 6 of which are currently undergoing rehabilitation to bring them up to code and make them marketable for new owners. Potential buyers are taking homeownership classes and other training to prepare them for purchasing these homes. We anticipate making our first resale sometime in May or June.”

FY 2011 Budget

The BOC began hearing presentations for the FY2011 Budget on Monday, March 29, 2010. We will continue to hear presentations from Department Heads and Appropriations through April 19. Overall, we are anticipating about a 10% reduction in revenue from FY2010. This will be difficult since a 20% reduction was made last year. Many departments are already functioning as “bare bones”. Since many services and expenses are mandated by the state and federal government without corresponding funding, the local government will be forced to make very tough choices. **Services will be affected.** Determining how best to balance the budget (a state mandate) without significantly damaging the county’s ability to provide for its citizens will be a difficult task. I am asking for your thoughtful input. So as to better understand the priorities desired by the citizens of District 3, I am hosting a Fireside Chat on Thursday, April 29, 2010 at The Oaks Course at 7pm. The topic will be “FY2011 Budget Priorities”.

I look forward to seeing you at this event. Meanwhile you may contact me at nschulz@co.newton.ga.us