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Ramona

December 11, 1997

Commissioner Gale Walldorff
DeKalb County Commission, District 2
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030



RE: South Peachtree Creek Multi-Use Trail

Dear Commissioner Walldorff:

We, the undersigned, are the appointed representatives from the Willivee Place neighborhood on the Steering Committee supposedly charged with determining the final route of the above referenced trail. We wish to bring to your attention a matter that is of great concern to our neighborhood of homeowners, taxpayers and voters.

We believe this Steering Committee is a façade only being used to demonstrate due process and really lacks any serious intent of pursuing another alternative. At this point it is almost a certainty that the final choice for this multi-use trail route will utilize Willivee Place for a portion of the route. This choice is being made despite the overwhelming rejection by the Willivee Place homeowners (please see the enclosed results of a neighborhood opinion poll). We are alarmed and very displeased that DeKalb County officials continue to allow a private group to seemingly control the process and outcome of a situation that a plurality of the people most affected by it have firmly rejected.

There is actually a better alternative route available, but it is not being given serious consideration by the trail organizers and county officials that have been involved in the route selection process so far. Enclosed you will find a tax plat map of our neighborhood area with the proposed trail route and this alternative route shown. There are some terrain grade change challenges to using the power line easement as a route, but it has not been proven that it could not be made to work. Apparently there is less effort and expense for them to use existing county streets than it is to use the power line easement.

As our representative on the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, we ask you to meet with us to more fully discuss this unwanted challenge our neighborhood is now having to confront. We will call on you soon for an appointment.

Yours truly,

Ramona Semones

Ramona Semones
2244 Willivee Place

Terry Mann

Terry Mann
2175 Willivee Place

cc: Liane Levetan
Judy Yates

c:\walldorff

SOUTH PEACHTREE CREEK MULTI-USE TRAIL

This opinion poll is taken of the residents of Willivee Place in response to the proposal that the path of the South Peachtree Creek Multi-Use Trail will make use of the Willivee Place roadway as part of the route. This proposed multi-use trail path will enter Willivee Place off of Willivee Drive and exit through the abandoned roadway to the northwest of the circle between 2194 Willivee Place and 2202 Willivee Place.

* The results of this opinion poll will be used to guide your representatives from Willivee Place on the Steering Committee planning the trail.

- I support the general concept of a multi-use trail for the South Peachtree Creek area.

26 YES 16 NO

- I support the proposed path of the multi-use trail that uses Willivee Place as part of it's route.

1 YES 38 NO 3 Abstentions

- I support the proposed path of the multi-use trail that uses Willivee Place as part of it's route if there is not an alternative route.

6 YES 36 NO

- I support the path of the multi-use trail that uses the Georgia Power easement as part of it's route.

30 YES 12 NO

Name _____ Address _____ Willivee Place

Please return this form completed to Terry Mann at 2175 Willivee Place, Phone: 315-1200, or Ramona Semones at 2244 Willivee Place, 248-9656.

* 42 out of 46 possible responses are recorded.

Position Statement of the Willivee Place Neighborhood to the Steering Committee Regarding the Proposed Multi-Use Trail Route

The results of the signed, neighborhood opinion poll that will be submitted to you shows that, whereas the majority of the homeowners and residents on Willivee Place are not opposed to the general concept of a multi-use trail, they are *overwhelmingly* opposed to a route for the proposed trail that uses Willivee Place as part of the route. They are *overwhelmingly* opposed even if there is no other alternative route, which there is.

- One of the main attractions of our neighborhood is that Willivee Place is a short, closed circle street that doesn't have any through traffic and is very quiet. You hardly even know it is there.
- There is only one entrance and exit to the neighborhood now and that, according to Sergeant Ray Lee of the DeKalb County Police Department who recently helped organize our Neighborhood Watch, is a discouragement to crime.
- The proposed multi-use trail route shows that the 50 foot wide abandoned roadway to the northwest of the circle would be improved to allow for another means of entering and exiting the neighborhood. The proposed improvements would include a 12 foot wide concrete path that is the same as the lane widths on major roads and interstate highways. It has been stated that the multi-use trail will be constructed so as to have less than a 5% grade change which is the same maximum grade change limit as found in the entrances and exits of parking lots. There can be no guarantee that this multi-use trail would not be used by motorized vehicles and motorcycles to enter and exit Willivee Place. It has been noted that at some of the street crossings along the Stone Mountain trail route there are posts on either side and in the middle of the trail. In most places these posts could be circumvented by vehicles and in all places by motorcycles.
- Whereas the intentions of the vast majority that would use the multi-use trail are probably legitimate, there can be no guarantee that other, illegitimate activities could not be "piggy backed" onto those intentions by the additional access and exposure to Willivee Place that this multi-use trail route would provide.
- We do not want to see the additional right of way that extends into our yards beyond the street curb turned into a sidewalk that would primarily benefit others that do not live in our neighborhood. There is minimal, and basically local, traffic on Willivee Place now and there is no need for a sidewalk in our neighborhood.
- Our investigation shows that all of the alternatives to this route have not been sincerely and earnestly explored even though it has been presented to us that they would be. Furthermore, we have found out that this route through Willivee Place already has de facto approval even though we were told that this route, as shown on the presentation board, was only a preliminary one and in Ed McBrayer's own words "is there only to have something to show for discussion purposes".

- We are appalled at the lack of planning oversight by the appropriate county officials that have allowed this project to proceed to this point by allowing a private group, regardless of the loftiness of their stated intentions, to take the lead in a matter of *great* concern to our neighborhood of homeowners, taxpayers and voters.
- A substantial number of the homeowners, taxpayers and voters on Willivee Place hereby put on notice DeKalb County, Path Foundation and any other sponsor or provider of funds for this project through our neighborhood that we will exert any lawful means necessary, including legal action, to keep this multi-use trail off of Willivee Place.

We are aware of Path Foundation's effort to bring the multi-use trail across Willivee Drive and either side of the South Fork of Peachtree Creek. Several of the homes on the north side of the creek, and the south side of Willivee Place, were contacted. *All but one, not just one*, of the affected homeowners were opposed to this route. These homes directly overlook the creek and the homeowners didn't want a multi-use trail there for privacy and security reasons. The one homeowner that wasn't opposed does not overlook the creek, but this same homeowner *is* opposed to a route that would utilize Willivee Place. There is an alternative route that is actually much better than trying to use Willivee Place.

- Ed McBrayer of Path Foundation has twice shown in his slide presentations that they like to use easements for their routes, so we are wondering why the Georgia Power easement, that runs behind Willivee Place from Willivee Drive to the railroad tracks, hasn't been seriously explored for this use. We are also wondering why Willivee Place is the only route shown on the presentation board if Path Foundation is truly sincere about it's stated intention of exploring every alternative.
- Use of the Georgia Power easement, and other undeveloped property beside it, would eliminate the need to use a major traffic connector like Willivee Drive for several hundred feet of the trail's route. It would also enable the multi-use trail to have a perpendicular crossing of Willivee Drive that could be defined by painted lines and signs like at a school crossing.
- A power line easement route would allow the path users to have a nature experience while a route on Willivee Drive and Willivee Place would not. This power line easement is already being used as an unimproved multi-use trail by loggers, cyclists and hikers.
- A power line easement route would provide direct access to the multi-use trail for two apartment communities totaling 704 units and an estimated 1,150 residents. One of the communities is owned by Post Properties that also owns another apartment community on East Ponce de Leon Avenue in Stone Mountain with direct access to the multi-use trail there.
- Several of the homes on the north side of Willivee Place have property lines that extend several hundred feet all the way back to the railroad tracks where the power line easement

crosses it. These homeowners have said that they would consider allowing this multi-use trail route to come across the rear of their back yard provided they are assured that Path Foundation and the people that would use this multi-use trail will be "good neighbors". At the same time they are adamantly opposed to it coming across their front yard, meaning Willivee Place.

- Improvements, not involving permanent structures such as buildings, are allowed under power line easements and over gas line easements. Pavement, such as that proposed for the multi-use trail route, is a fairly common occurrence under and over such easements. The construction standards required by Georgia Power and Atlanta Gas Light are generally considered simple and relatively easy to follow. The contacts at Georgia Power and the requirements for the use of land under their transmission line easements have been forwarded to DeKalb County Parks and Recreation.
- Property values on Willivee Place continue to appreciate at a very acceptable rate and the homeowners enjoy the convenience and quiet solitude of their "off the beaten path" location. It is their intention to continue the quiet enjoyment of their homes and to protect their property values. As taxpayers and voters they expect their county officials to safeguard their rights and to defend them against unwanted intrusion.
- Therefore the position of the Willivee Place neighborhood is encouragement to pursue the multi-use trail route utilizing the power line easement and *strong* and *committed* opposition to the route utilizing Willivee Place.