



# Candidate Questions and Answers

## *Responses Submitted January 2012*

### **1. How do you envision The City of Peachtree Corners in 20 years?**

I envision the City of Peachtree Corners as a place that is a destination highly desired by both businesses and home owners. This desirability would be the result of forward-looking leadership that took decisive steps to ensure that Paul Duke's vision of a place to live, work, and play would be continued and enhanced into the future instead of just becoming another nameless, faceless Atlanta suburb that USED to be great.

What I prefer to see is a city that in twenty years still is very limited in its scope of service delivery and continues to purchase the bulk of its services from Gwinnett County. Of course, this depends on the continued delivery of high quality, relatively low cost services from the county. This is an area where the city (and its forty thousand residents) will only have limited influence in a county that is approaching one million people. If the service delivery begins to decline, then other options will have to be considered. This is where the selection of leaders with a vision, instead of just a myopic reactionary view of the situation, will be important.

### **2. What is the biggest problem we have to solve to get there?**

Currently the bulk of Peachtree Corners is still a very attractive place for businesses and residents, but some of the surrounding areas have started to decline which, if not addressed, will ultimately negatively impact the entire area. This was, in my mind, was one of the main reasons to incorporate. Addressing the decline in some of the peripheral areas of the city is one of the keys to ensuring that our entire city can be the "destination" alluded to in the previous question.

How to address the decline? The best way to address decline is not through heavy-handed government meddling, but instead through the benefits of private development and the free market (a.k.a. "the invisible hand"). The Peachtree Corners name already has attractive name recognition, but its potential value is not being maximized because up until November 8<sup>th</sup> Peachtree Corners was just an area that was ill-defined and not marketed aggressively. With proper marketing of our area's very attractive income and crime (for the most part) demographics and very business friendly government, we will undoubtedly attract even more high end residential and commercial development. This development will come in the form of redevelopment of existing properties which are well past their prime. This will create a virtuous cycle of increasing home values and improving schools, which will further reinforce the underlying income and crime demographics which has made this area attractive in the first place.

### **3. What changes in zoning from the current County regulations would you propose? How do you propose to manage and enforce them?**

I believe, that in general the existing zoning laws in place with Gwinnett County are sufficient. The main thing Peachtree Corners needs is a master plan that is specific just for Peachtree Corners and focuses on our residents' wants and needs instead of just being a small part of a bigger Gwinnett plan that might not always put our best interests first. Once that master plan is in place future zoning decisions should result in land use that increases home values, attracts high quality businesses, and is in line with the vision for our city that the residents want.



**Alex Wright**  
**Post 3**

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**4. What changes in permits and fees from the current County fee structure would you propose? How do you propose to manage and enforce them?**

Under the existing charter the new city will have limited ability to charge for fees and permits since we will only have three services, all of which should be outsourced.

There will probably be some minimal revenue generated from code enforcement violations but in general I do not see the city being focused on nickel and diming its citizens with fees and penalties.

As far as managing and enforcing any fee structure, I envision outsourcing the three city services and adding and contracting the level of service based upon the need and demand in the marketplace.

**5. What changes in the garbage plan from the current County service would you propose? How do you propose to manage and enforce them?**

I believe that ALL trash options need to be examined. This includes going back to the “free agent” system we had before the county plan, looking at what other neighboring cities do for trash, and also considering staying on the county plan. In my mind the key determinant to what the best trash plan is should be driven by 1) what gives our residents the best quality product at the best value and 2) what do the residents prefer. If we make those two considerations paramount in our decision making, the result will certainly be satisfactory.

**6. What office space do you think is appropriate for the City government?**

I am envisioning a very small footprint for the city government. If all services are outsourced then there should only be the need for a handful of city employees. A city hall would need office space for a few employees, some storage areas and a few areas to hold meetings with contractors, employees, etc. City Council meetings should be held in public in a large area so as to encourage engagement from the public.

I certainly do not think any type of new building needs to be constructed. There is a large amount of available commercial space in our area that can be had for very attractive rates right now. In general my view is; “Less is More”.

**7. What do you think is the best use of the land across from the Forum?**

The land is currently zoned for apartments. I hesitate to ever tell a landowner what he or she should do with their property. That being said, I do believe that 1) the city should not be in the business of trying to purchase the land and 2) I believe our area already has plenty of apartments so I would hope an alternative use could be found for the land. Several other cities have small green spaces that are used for concerts which has benefited these respective cities greatly. So when the land does get developed I do believe that it would be very beneficial from a land value standpoint for both the landowner and the homeowners nearby if part of the land was used for some type of green space.

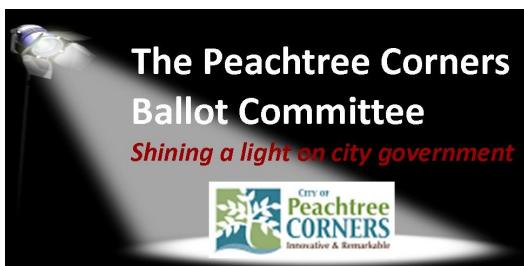
**8. How many full time employees do you foresee needing to manage city operations, Zoning, Permits, Fees, Enforcement, Fines, etc.?**

The number of full time employees should always be kept to the absolute minimum needed to successfully execute the three required services. I envision a City Manager, a City Clerk, and some minimal administrative support.

The three city services most likely will be outsourced, thereby eliminating the need for full time employees to actually carry out these activities.

**9. What is your position on taxes?**

Taxes should always be kept to the absolute minimum possible. End of story. If the city is run properly the current data suggests that in the long run the city can be funded by franchise fees without a property tax increase being needed.



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**10. How would you propose the issuance of City Bonds? When would you find it appropriate?**

As the city charter is currently constructed, I can see no reason for city bonds to ever be issued. Trash, zoning and code enforcement are not capital intensive activities. Additionally, the financial data currently available indicates that the city should be able to run surpluses on franchise fees alone. If, for whatever reason, additional funding was needed, the possibility of adding the 1.0 mill property tax could be examined.

**11. How will you incorporate the views of the disparate communities that now make up Peachtree Corners? In particular, the communities that are very skeptical of the value a city government can bring?**

The cityhood debate is now over. There are no longer 'Yes' or 'No' people. There are just residents of Peachtree Corners who are friends and neighbors just like we were before the vote.

I have already been reaching out to people who were against the idea of the city in an effort to help move things forward. One of the things that I think former opponents of the city have found out about me is that we have many, many things in common when it comes to issues like the role of government, the size of government, government spending, etc.

I think one of the best ways to incorporate the views of others is simply by being willing to listen to any and all viewpoints. During the cityhood campaign I had an ongoing blog on the Peachtree Corners Patch where I argued for the city. For those that followed it, you will remember that I actively engaged those against the city in a manner that was courteous, logical, and open-minded. I followed the rule of "disagree without being disagreeable". This would be the same approach I would take as a councilman. I would listen to any and all viewpoints and then at the end of the day I would make decisions based on facts, logic, and what I thought was best for ALL the residents.

