

**Greensboro Neighborhood Congress (GNC)  
Meeting Notes  
Saturday, January 14, 2012**

---



**GNC Co-Chairperson Donald Blackstock** convened the January GNC meeting at the Central Public Library beginning with our traditional introduction of all participants and presentations by guest speakers.

**Guest speakers:**

**Julie Lapham** presented a brief video about the incidence of violence against woman and described the newly formed **Violence Against Women Responders Network (VAWRN)** of Guilford County -- a group of professionals and volunteers representing law enforcement, researchers, judges, and nonprofit agencies dedicated to responding to and eliminating domestic violence. Most victims of domestic violence are women, typically suffer multiple violent incidents before leaving the abusive environment, and require a supportive network to break the cycle of violence. Those who grow up around domestic violence are 4 times more likely to commit violence when dating, 6 times more likely to commit suicide, 20 times more likely to commit rape, 24 times more likely to commit sexual assault, and 1,000 times more likely to commit violent crimes. Even youthful "bullying" reflects experience with family violence and can progress to elder abuse and human trafficking.

The VAWRN network engages locally to break the cycle of violence. VAWRN participants aim to provide a single-service point providing assistance such as: free legal aid to any victim, Guilford County judges prepared to prosecute these crimes, NC A&T State University's Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness, UNCG's AmeriCorp ACCESS Program, their Center for Women's Health and Wellness, and their Center for New North Carolinians. The Greensboro Police Department plans to train a Domestic Violence Unit and staff a Family Justice Center in their new Washington Street facility. Anyone aware of a domestic violence situation is urged to "break the silence" of abuse and use these free, coordinated services. **For immediate assistance call 911.** For further information contact [www.vawrn.org](http://www.vawrn.org) or call Julie Lapham (379-1000) or Raleigh Bailey (334-4610) or Paige Smith (334-4736).

**Ben Chavis, Guilford County Tax Director**, explained what to expect from the County's 2012 property tax revaluations which will be mailed to taxpayers in March 2012. Our County has approx. 164,000 residential properties and approx. 44,000 commercial properties with a total tax base of approx. \$44 billion appraised by thirteen appraisal professionals. State law requires county tax revaluations for all real property (land and buildings) every 8 years. Property reassessment is intended to determine the "most likely price that the property would sell for". Although property tax rates may increase slightly, property tax values may be reduced slightly to reflect currently depressed housing sale values. The combination of current tax rates and tax values suggests that most property owners will not experience extreme tax fluctuation. Newly implemented property tax software allows tax appraisers to create more equitable appraisals across 2,500 neighborhoods, to track all real property sales across the County, to see tax anomalies and correct them, and to create a schedule of tax values in which properties are appraised across comparable locations. Every citizen has the right of legitimate property tax appeal. Appeal forms are provided with your tax assessment mailing. After this property tax revaluation, your appeal may be elevated to the County Board of Equalization and Review. FAQ's and significant Guilford County Tax revaluation information is available at [www.co.guilford.nc.us.gov](http://www.co.guilford.nc.us.gov). Click on the Tax Department link.

**Committee Reports:**

**Membership** - Peter Kauber reminds all participants to **always sign in when attending GNC meetings** because that record of attendance determines your GNC voting privileges. Today's participants received a GNC member information update form which Peter requests **each neighborhood complete and return to him by the February GNC meeting**. To obtain a form contact Peter at 336-852-8791 or e-mail [pkauber@triad.rr.com](mailto:pkauber@triad.rr.com). The form gathers information including your neighborhood organization's name, President/Captain/Director, contact phone, contact e-mail, and a list of all of your neighborhood's GNC voting delegates, their phone, and e-mail, signed and dated by your neighborhood's President/Captain/Director. This information needs to be updated to the GNC Membership Chairperson annually in order for your neighborhood to have voting privileges at GNC meetings.

**Treasurer** – Jack Zimmerman reports the GNC has a total balance of \$614.27 as of December 31, 2011.

**Issues & Bylaws** – Marsh Prause reports this committee is becoming acquainted with newly elected City Council members and City Boards & Commissions. Michael Pendergraft is actively pursuing ways to reinstate the effectiveness of Greensboro's Rental Unit Certificate of Occupancy (RUCO) rules. Most recently this committee is discussing how the City could provide incentives for businesses to occupy underutilized or empty commercial property before rezoning residential property for commercial use, to reduce commercial infiltration into residential neighborhoods. One attempt is to map vacant or distressed commercial properties, making their availability obvious to commercial businesses and city zoning decision-makers.

**Nominating** – Voted into GNC offices for 2012 are:

- Susan Taaffe, West Greensboro Co-Chairperson
- Jack Zimmerman, Treasurer
- Michael Pendergraft, Vice Chairperson of the Issues and Bylaws Committee
- Michael Pendergraft, Chairperson of the Finance Committee
- Art Davis, GNC Representative for City Council District 1
- Laura Blackstock, GNC Representative for City Council District 2
- Trudy Atkins, GNC Representative for City Council District 5

In a separate vote, Cyndy Hayworth and Bill Menius volunteered their services as GNC Representative for City Council District 3 with Cyndy winning the vote 6 to 4. All GNC City Council District Liaisons are expected to keep their City Council District representatives informed about GNC issues and events. All elected GNC representatives are expected to attend regular GNC Executive Board meetings, typically 5:30 p.m. at the home of Donna Newton. Meeting dates for 2012 will be announced soon. Membership Chairperson Peter Kauber reiterated the importance of GNC members signing the monthly GNC attendance list which provides evidence of attendance and in turn determines a neighborhood's voting privileges at GNC meetings.

**Announcements –**

- Appreciation was expressed that new City Council members solicited D.H. Griffin to remove an unused, rusted Cone Mills water tower which had been a neighborhood eyesore.
- GNC members are encouraged to contact all City Council members, including 3 "At Large" City Council members, when we have issues of concern.
- GNC members are invited to Zack Brownings front porch at 1229 M.L. King Blvd. to watch the MLK Parade at 11:00 a.m. Monday, January 16.
- All are encouraged to read **The Greensboro Voice**, a publication serving to elevate voices and public discussion on issues such as homelessness and poverty.
- All are encouraged to register to attend the Greensboro Housing Coalition's annual **Housing Summit 2012: Green & Healthy Makes \$en\$e**, Wednesday, February 29, 2012, 8:15 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Emerald Event Center, 2000 E. Wendover Avenue. Registration fee scholarships are available upon request.

**Our next GNC meeting is Thursday, February 9, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at a location to be determined.** The location will be announced by e-mail and posted on the GNC website [www.gnc-nc.org](http://www.gnc-nc.org). Note: The Central Public Library meeting room is **NOT** available for our February 2012 GNC meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Stringfield of the Fisher Park Neighborhood, January 14, 2012