

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

Published by Georgia Battlefields Association, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of Georgia's Civil War history and sites. Contact newsletter editor by e-mail: info@georgiabattlefields.org

Rezoning decisions affect Cobb County sites

The July newsletter reported on the threat to a section of Johnston's River Line. At the 7 July meeting of the Cobb County Planning Commission, representatives of the River Line Historic Area, Oakdale Neighborhood Association, and GBA spoke during public comment on rezoning proposal Z-107. Rather than opposing the rezoning entirely, GBA asked for modifications to the plan to protect the earthworks during construction, to preserve both the fortifications and their viewshed, and to allow for interpretation of the site.

Hearing GBA's testimony at the 7 July meeting, another attendee contacted GBA about rezoning Z-58 and its affect on a section of the Brushy Mountain Line east of Greer's Chapel Road, just north of the boundary of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. This site was occupied by Confederate troops 4-18 June 1864 and by Federal troops 19 June-3 July 1864.

Because soldiers of both sides were on this land for a month, extensive earthworks were built facing in almost all directions, particularly around the summit of a hill now capped by a Cobb County water tank. A 1981 archeological survey conducted prior to construction of the water tank revealed not only earthworks and ordnance from the prolonged artillery exchanges but also Native American artifacts and burial grounds. While construction of the water tank destroyed some of the earthworks, an almost complete circle of fortifications remains. A developer originally planned 25 townhouses on the western slope of this hill, but because of previously expressed concerns, a revised plan called for 11 detached houses.

The readily identifiable Brushy Mountain Line trenches are uphill from the parcel proposed for rezoning, but Georgia Battlefields Association is concerned about a visitor's ability to stand in the earthworks and envision their purpose. Understanding of the site will be negatively affected if the view from the trenches consists of the roofs and upper stories of densely packed houses. This will be especially true after trees are removed for construction and in the winter, when any remaining foliage is at a minimum. The view from the trenches on the hill's southern slope is already marred by a power line, and the view from the trenches on the eastern slope is impeded by an apartment complex. Our concerns for this area are heightened by the recent bulldozing of trenches in a development across Greer's Chapel Road from this site.

At the 19 July meeting of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners, GBA spoke against Z-58. Commissioner Helen Goreham led the questioning of the developer, with her principal concerns being density incompatible with adjacent neighborhoods, runoff, and the traffic danger resulting from the development entrance being on a curve. Commissioner Goreham moved that the rezoning be rejected until the developer addressed these concerns, and the motion passed 5-0.

Also at the 19 July meeting, GBA and others spoke again against Z-107, which will affect the River Line. As a result of the 7 July Planning Commission meeting, the developer agreed to an archeological survey of the site, to protect two Shoupades and a related artillery redan during construction, and to prepare a one-acre greenspace that encompasses these earthworks in an effort to preserve the line of sight between them. The developer is also working with the owner of an adjacent property to create a buffer to the south and an access path from Oakdale Road. Still, the view from the westernmost Shoupade will be the walls of townhouses, and the potential for connecting these earthworks to a third Shoupade (not in the parcel proposed for rezoning) is reduced. With Commission Chair Sam Olens' stipulation that the site remain open to the public, the motion to rezone passed 5-0. The developer indicated that he might entertain preservation organization offers to buy the 7 acres on the south side of Fort Drive but has suggested a price of \$400,000 per acre. We'll keep you informed as discussions continue.

Jacket found on GBA Bearss tour bus

We recently received word that a jacket—L.L. Bean label, tan shell with blue plaid lining—was left on our Bearss tour bus in March. Call Judy Alderman at 706 694 6455 to claim the jacket.

We're developing the 2006 Bearss tour, which will concentrate on the action in Cobb County in June and early July 1864. Once we announce the specifics, please reserve your seat early.

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Part of Chickamauga battlefield for sale

Land that witnessed action during the Battle of Chickamauga was offered for sale earlier this year. The land includes the wartime crossing point of Chickamauga Creek at Glass's Mill. On 19 September 1863, Helm's brigade of Kentucky Confederates crossed to the west side of the creek and occupied the site while attached batteries engaged in an artillery duel with Federal batteries operating with Beatty's Federal brigade. On 20 September, two Confederate cavalry divisions under Joe Wheeler crossed at Glass's Mill and pushed a Federal cavalry brigade towards Crawfish Springs, capturing nearly 100 prisoners before being ordered to withdraw.

Two parcels are involved: a 65 acre tract with an asking price of \$400,000 and a 19 acre tract at \$100,000. The Civil War Preservation Trust sent a representative to examine the land, and he judged the price to be too high, especially since 45% of the 65 acres and 100% of the 19 acres is floodplain unsuitable for development. On 13 July, Civil War Preservation Trust President Jim Lighthizer visited the site. The parcels are south of the Chickamauga Battlefield Unit of the Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park, but Congress has not authorized the National Park Service to expand the Chickamauga Unit.

Within the past month, the "For Sale" signs on the properties were removed without any indication that the parcels had been sold. While this may indicate a temporary reprieve, it also indicates the threat to sites—even those directly related to a nearby National Park—will persist.

Georgia Civil War Commission has budget and new officers

As reported in the May newsletter, the Georgia Civil War Commission has a \$50,000 budget as of 1 July, the start of State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2006. The bulk of the SFY2006 budget will pay contract salaries for Rich Elwell and Barry Brown, who have provided administrative support to the Commission for several years. During SFY 2005, Messrs. Elwell and Brown were paid under a contract to revise the *Crossroads of Conflict* guide to Civil War sites in Georgia. The greatly expanded publication should be available by the end of the year.

At its 14 June meeting, the Commission voted in favor of sending letters of support for:

- Restoration of Gordon Hall in LaFayette
- Formulation of a historic overlay for Walker County
- Preservation of open space at Glass's Mill (see related article)
- Preservation of Shoupades along Fort Drive in Cobb County (see related article)

At its 12 July meeting, the Commission elected officers for SFY 2006.

- Chair	Mauriel Joslyn	- Vice chair	Jan Loftis
- Secretary	Marla Bexley	- Treasurer	Kelly Barrow

More than the advent of the fiscal year dictated selection of a new officer slate, as SFY 2005 Chairman Dan Childs (also a former president of GBA) was not reappointed when his term expired. With the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house each appointing five commissioners to three year terms, a predictable turnover in commission members has followed the change in party affiliation of the governor and speaker. Most recently, Governor Perdue appointed Jimmy Rhodes of Newton to replace Childs. With this appointment, 8 of the 15 commissioners have come aboard since March 2004.

Finally, the Historic Preservation Division (HPD), which provides administrative support to the Civil War Commission, relocated in mid July. **New address for HPD and the Commission** is: 34 Peachtree St NW Ste 1600, Atlanta GA 30303-2316. Phone remains the same: 404 656 2840.

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