

# PROGRESS

Chronicling Smart Growth and Development in Fairburn

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## Development Authority Charges Ahead in 2010



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This quarterly newsletter is designed to inform Fairburn residents, property owners, business owners and others about events, challenges, changes and facts relating to Development in our City. This publication will keep you up-to-date on all development issues including news, highlights, events, business tips and tourism efforts.

### Freight Depot Restoration

The Freight Depot, pictured above, located in the heart of downtown Fairburn, will undergo interior restoration with a grand opening target date set for April, coinciding with the celebration of Georgia Cities week, April 18-24.

The project will preserve an important piece of Fairburn's history and will enable the creation of a new welcome center serving as an attraction and anchor for our historic downtown area.

Fairburn's Downtown Commercial District is listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The district includes approximately 20 different commercial buildings and the two train depots located along West Broad Street between Smith Street and Dodd Street.

Fairburn's future was assured when the Atlanta and LaGrange Railroad (later to become the Atlanta and West Point Railroad) was chartered in 1849, and a depot on that line was constructed in Fairburn.

Fairburn's current separate passenger and freight depots, both with tile roofs and wide, overhanging eaves, were built in 1916-17 by the Atlanta & West Point Railroad. The two depots stand on opposite sides of a downtown rail bridge constructed at the same time.

### Events Committee Launched

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) recently hosted a Volunteer Recruitment "Kick-off" meeting at the Freight Depot in an effort to attract citizens interested in planning special events. The DDA seeks to create new "citizen driven" events for our community and to provide support for existing events.

Volunteering for one of these special community events is an opportunity for you to meet other individuals with similar interests and skills. Volunteers make these events successful and help build a sense of community. Community members interested in working on specific events or helping to assist with planning new special events are encouraged to become involved. If you are interested in lending your talents to our special events committee you can access a volunteer application on the Development Authority page at [www.fairburn.com](http://www.fairburn.com).

## Excerpts from an interview with Jean Barkley Russell, Development Authority Chair and member of City Council

### How are you able to serve a member of City Council and the Development Authority?

State law allows one member of the municipal governing authority to serve as director of the Development Authority as well. It also helps provide enhanced communication between the two entities.

### What are the Authority Goals in 2010?

Our initiatives are driven by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and by the Development Authority (DA) roles; each authority has slightly different responsibilities but complement each other in many ways. The DDA is focused on our downtown area. The DA focuses on the city as a whole.

The DDA is currently working on three projects; providing oversight on renovation of the Freight Depot as our Economic Development Office and City Welcome Center; support for implementation of a Special Events Committee and the People TV *Sidewalk Stories* documentary. The DA will be launching a website and other initiatives marketing the entire city and seeking to attract new companies in order to increase our business tax base and broaden the types of businesses and services located in Fairburn.

### What else do you hope to accomplish?

As we move further into the year we will focus our efforts on creating a directory enabling our business owners to market their services to the visitors staying in our hotels and to our community as a whole. This information will be made available in public places such as City Hall, our Development Office and Welcome Center located in the Historic Freight Depot and other locations.

We are developing plans which will enable us to host a series of meetings and tours later in the year which will showcase Fairburn for site selectors, restaurant real estate brokers, developers and others seeking to bring additional commercial establishments to our city.



## Authority Members Education Continues

The Authority January meeting provided members an opportunity to learn from two of the best in the Economic Development business. Attorney Dan McCrae, a partner in Seyfarth Shaw LLP, and Bob Simmons, Business Development Manager for the Development Authority of Fulton County, delivered a presentation on *Confidentiality, Open Meetings and Open Records*.

McCrae and Simmons are principal presenters for the UGA Fanning Institute Development Authority Training program which provides educational for economic development professionals and authority board members as part of their ongoing training.

Their presentation stressed that governing bodies of state agencies, local governments, entities and organizations that carry out functions on behalf of local governing authorities like a development authority are subject to the open meetings act. These agencies are also subject to the open records act as well.

Confidentiality issues were an important part of the presentation. Authority members learned that in certain circumstances information may be safeguarded against unauthorized disclosures which could prove prejudicial to the parties involved.

## Authority initiative enables City to take part in 2010 People TV Sidewalk Stories Project

The Atlanta metropolitan area is filled with a wide variety of communities that have countless stories to share about their beginnings, collective accomplishments and future visions; and Fairburn is most assuredly one of them.

Originally launched in 2008 by People TV, *Sidewalk Stories* provides cities and organizations an opportunity to share stories about their communities in ways that accurately reflect their memories, values and ideals. Fairburn is the only city in the Atlanta region chosen to participate in this prestigious program in 2010.

Fairburn residents Anthony Bazydlo, Brenda Cooper, Tundra Jenkins, Gwendolen McCloud, Kent Richards, Roberta Smith and Janna Turner are the principal participants and will receive access to equipment, video production training and support from experienced People TV production staff to document stories about Fairburn history and community development initiatives.

If you have a story to share or know of someone whose experiences would be of interest for this project please let us know. Contact the production team by accessing a link on the Development Authority page located on the city website at [www.fairburn.com](http://www.fairburn.com).

This documentary production will be released by June of this year with regional and local grand opening premier events planned. Locations have not yet been determined.

*Sidewalk Stories* is supported in part by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of Fulton County Arts Council, the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs, and Georgia Council for the Arts (GCA) through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. GCA also receives support from its partner agency, the National Endowment for the Arts.



The Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority meets at 4:00 p.m. on the third Monday of every month at the Freight Depot. *The public is encouraged to attend. We're on the web. Visit us at [www.fairburn.com](http://www.fairburn.com).*

The joint Authority is composed of seven (7) members appointed by the City Council and recognized by the State of Georgia as a public corporation with a specified set of powers and a specific purpose and mission to:

- Revitalize and redevelop the central business district
- Develop and promote for the public good and general welfare, trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities within the city
- Issue bonds to finance projects within the city

#### Authority Members

Jean Barkley Russell, Chair, Steve Thomas, Vice-Chair, Hal Shields, Secretary-Treasurer, Lawrence Byrd, John Carr, Sr., Jeff Couch, Ray Hannah

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Or Current Resident

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## Authority Website Development Underway

The Development Authority recently issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking the services of an experienced website design firm to design, develop and implement, a user friendly Development Authority website.

This project will involve utilizing Development Authority information posted on the existing City website as well as the implementation of new information, products, and features as suggested by the Authority and the firm selected.

The Authority seeks to utilize new

design elements and satisfy the growing demand for electronic services. The website will support e-government transactions such as on-line surveys, on-line forms and applications, and a variety of other activities.

The information on the website will be directed towards site selectors, developers, prospective businesses, current businesses, residents, government agencies, civic groups, associations, and others seeking to conduct business with or obtain information about the Development

Authority of Fairburn.

Following the review of the proposals, presentation and interviews, the Authority will invite a firm(s) to formally meet with Authority representatives to address additional inquiries by the Authority and to discuss terms and conditions for a final contract.

Once the final selection has been made it is anticipated that the site will go “live” no later than the beginning of May. Additional updated details about the project forward will be readily available on the city website at [www.fairburn.com](http://www.fairburn.com).