

## Clarkston Selected to Receive Urban Land Institute mTAP Program Technical Assistance for Town Center Redevelopment

The City of Clarkston's proposed Town Center Redevelopment planning effort is slated to begin in January 2017. This transformative redevelopment plan was originally identified in the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) community planning document completed in 2015. "As a result of this selection, Clarkston will receive some valuable technical assistance which will be the basis of a Town Center Redevelopment plan. Winning this technical assistance award means that Clarkston will not only get a jump start on our redevelopment plans, but will do so at no cost to the taxpayers," states Mayor Ted Terry.

On November 17th City Manager, Keith Barker delivered an exciting presentation to the 2016-2017 Urban Land Institute (ULI) mini Technical Assistance Panel (mTAP) at the offices of Nelson Mullins at Atlantic Station, regarding how the City of Clarkston would benefit from this year's technical assistance program.

On December 8th, the City was notified that it had been awarded the opportunity to work with participants from the mTAP program. The mTAP is a nine (9) month program wherein a five (5) person team selected from the 2016/2017 ULI Leadership Development Class, will provide technical analysis, research and recommendations based on

their respective professional areas of expertise. City staff will use the results to develop and submit an Urban Redevelopment Plan to the Clarkston City Council and residents.

Building upon the successfully implemented ULI Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Report, completed in 2013 for the City of Clarkston, the City presented a request for assistance in developing detailed elements of a town center development plan. The elements included; providing recommendations for the redevelopment plan area boundaries, comparing and contrasting the use of the powers of a Downtown Development Authority and an urban Redevelopment Authority to achieve redevelopment goals, to provide recommendations for redevelopment plan financing and funding options, how to integrate existing buildings into the soon to begin streetscape project plans to include façade improvements, as well as identifying options for improved/increased parking in the town center area.

The program will start in January 2017 with a kick-off meeting with City staff and the mTAP team.

**Shawanna N. Qawi,**  
Planning and Development Manager

## Clarkston City Council Approves Friendship Forest Redevelopment Plan

The Clarkston City Council voted unanimously at its December meeting to approve a redevelopment plan for Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, a 18.7 acre former county park located only a half mile from the Clarkston Town Center business district. The vote



occurred after a public hearing which provided residents an opportunity to comment on the proposed plans. This potential community and regional asset has largely been underutilized due to its underdeveloped condition and lack of visibility from the street.

*Continued on page 3*



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Beginning in July of 2015, the City of Clarkston began a series of public meetings designed to gain input regarding the redevelopment of this valuable greenspace. This community engagement effort included the appointment of a Steering Committee and involved three separate community meetings where Clarkston residents discussed their vision for the forest. This effort culminated in the development of a “Master Plan” which was completed and submitted to the Clarkston City Council in January, 2016.

The estimated cost to complete all phases of the Friendship Forest Redevelopment Plan to include design, permitting, construction and legal/financing costs, is approximately \$1,350,000. In order to obtain funding to implement the “Master Plan” the City of Clarkston will exercise its powers under the State of Georgia’s Urban Redevelopment Law. The City of Clarkston adopted a resolution at its December 6, 2016 City Council meeting designating Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary as an “urban redevelopment area,” which is an area that has been found to be appropriate for

an urban redevelopment project and which fits the definition described in the Georgia Redevelopment Act law.

“Although Friendship Forest is located on East Ponce de Leon which is the main thoroughfare and busiest street in Clarkston, very few people know that it exists. Construction of a trailhead and parking facilities along with developing the greenspace, will provide visibility and accessibility to what we think will be an important community asset,” states Councilman Awet Eyasu. “As Chairman of the Marketing Committee, I support the City’s efforts to make Clarkston an attractive destination for visitors who will patronize our restaurants and businesses.”

The redevelopment project is scheduled to begin in late February or March and should be completed in 2017.

**Keith Barker, City Manager**



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## Special Election Call and Qualifying Period

The City of Clarkston will be holding a Special Election on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, to fill the unexpired term of Robert Hogan's Council Seat. The term of office expires December 31, 2017. The Elected Council member will be sworn in at the April 4, 2017 Council Meeting.

Persons wishing to qualify for this election may file a Notice of Candidacy with the Municipal Election Superintendent at Clarkston City Hall Annex, 1055 Rowland Street, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. beginning on Monday, January 9, 2017 to Friday, January 13, 2017. The Qualifying fee for council is \$105.

### Requirements for Candidate to Qualify

- *Candidate must be 18 years old*
- *Candidate must be a citizen of the United States*
- *Must be a bona fide resident of the*

*City of Clarkston for a continuous period of at least 12 months immediately prior to the date of the election*

- *Must have no debts outstanding against them in favor of the city, county or state.*
- *Candidate must continue to reside in the City of Clarkston during their period of service*
- *Candidate must be registered and qualified to vote in the municipal elections for the City of Clarkston and continue this qualification throughout their term of office.*
- *No person who has been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude may register to vote, remain registered, or vote except upon completion of the sentence and no person who has been judicially determined to be mentally incompetent may reg-*

*ister, remain registered, or vote unless the disability has been removed.*

Voting for the Special election will take place March 21, 2017 at the Clarkston First Baptist Church, 3895 Church Street, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Any person who is a resident of the City of Clarkston and who is registered at least thirty (30) days prior to this election with the DeKalb County Board of Registrations and Elections as an elector within the City of Clarkston shall be eligible to vote in this election. Deadline for voter registration is February 21, 2017.

Application for absentee ballots may be made by mail or in person to the Absentee Ballot Clerk, DeKalb County Elections Division, 4380 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA 30032, 404-298-4020.

For questions or for more information please contact Tracy Ashby, City Clerk, at 404-296-6489 or email [tashby@cityof-clarkston.com](mailto:tashby@cityof-clarkston.com)

## City Expands Sidewalk Construction on East Ponce de Leon

Construction on Phase III of the 3 year sidewalk improvement project along the east side of East Ponce de Leon, is slated to begin January, 2017. The phased sidewalk construction project originally approved by the City Council in August 6, 2013, will provide new six feet wide sidewalks, brick pavers, landscaping and street furniture along the well-traveled East Ponce de Leon corridor from Market Street to the Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary.

The estimated cost to complete Phase III of the Sidewalk Improvement Plan

is \$279,500. LMIG grant funds totaling \$75,921 from the Georgia Department of Transportation as well as HOST Revenue funding estimated at \$50,000 will offset the cost of this project. \$153,579 has been appropriated by the City Council in the FY 2017 General Fund Capital Projects budget to complete this project.

The sidewalk construction will serve as a compliment to the Streetscape and Pedestrian Enhancement project construction which will begin summer 2017. When both projects are completed, the entire East

Ponce de Leon corridor, from Interstate 285 on the west to Friendship Forest to the east, will provide a much enhanced pedestrian experience wherein both walkability, safety and aesthetics are greatly improved. The enhanced pedestrian corridor will provide much needed connectivity to the commercial businesses along East Ponce de Leon, the Town Center and Market Street and to the Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary which is also slated for redevelopment in 2017.

**Keith Barker, City Manager**

## Shop with a Cop

On December 10, 2016 the DeKalb Fraternal Order of Police held its 25th Annual Santa "Shop with a Cop" program. Sixty-five children, selected by the DeKalb County School System, were paired with police officers from multiple agencies to shop for Christmas presents for themselves or their families. This year Clarkston Police officers Jim Konger, Matthew Jay and Detective Jason Elliott were able to take smiling children shopping, each of which had a budget of \$200 to spend on Christmas gifts. The Program is

supported through contributions of DeKalb County citizens and businesses during fund raising events sponsored by the FOP. After the shopping excursion the children are escorted to the DeKalb Fraternal Order of Police Lodge in a motorcade, complete with lights and sirens "to the delight of all the kids," said Detective Elliott, where they were treated to a lunch and additional presents and they were able to visit with Santa Claus. While it was an exciting event for the children, all of the officers expressed how much they had enjoyed the day. "I appreciated the opportunity to interact with the children and to present a positive image of law enforcement officers," Detective Elliott said.



## Clarkston City Council Appoints New Municipal Court Judge

**A**fter more than 30 years, there will be a new face on the bench of the Clarkston Municipal Court. Judge David Will was appointed to fill the position of Municipal Court Judge during the December meeting of the City Council.



Judge Will was selected to fill the position after the conclusion of a formal solicitation and interview process headed up by the Public Safety Committee. The Public Safety Committee members, Councilmen Mario Williams and Dean Moore, along with City Manager Keith Barker, interviewed five (5) candidates who were “short listed” for consideration. A contract for Judge Will’s service was approved by the Clarkston City Council based upon the recommendation from the Public Safety Committee.

“This is the first time in over 30 years that the City Council has taken such an active role in identifying a judge to preside over our Municipal Court system, states Public Safety Committee Chair Mario Williams. The Public Safety Committee advertised a request for proposal and received responses from some very qualified attorneys many of which were former or current Judges. We are very pleased to have selected a judge with David Will’s experience and background.”

Judge Will obtained his undergraduate degree from Florida State University in 1976. He completed his legal education at Mercer University where he was a teaching assistant and served as Georgia Survey Editor of the Mercer Law Review. After graduating from law school, Judge Will served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Georgia for 8 ½ years and has been in private practice since that time.

In his 37 years of practicing law, Judge Will has earned a reputation as a problem solver. Judge Will is an accomplished trial lawyer and regularly appears in State and Federal courts throughout the State of Georgia, and in other states. In addition to his trial work, Judge Will has handled over 100 appellate cases.

Judge Will is a regular speaker and presenter to continuing education programs for lawyers, judges and other professionals. He is admitted to practice in all Georgia courts, the Northern, Southern and Middle District Courts of Georgia, the Eleventh and D.C. Circuits of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Will joins new Solicitor, Christopher Diwan to form what will be a completely new slate of Municipal Court Officers.

## Clarkston Hires New Code Compliance Officer

**S**andra Hines joined the City of Clarkston as their new Code official in October, 2016. Sandra is a native of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and has over twenty years of experience in Planning and Sustainability. She has served on the Board of Director’s for the Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Association, Neighborhood Deputy Program, Northside Association Community Development, as well as many Advisory Boards. Sandra currently holds numerous certifications in the field of planning and sustainability, a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice Administration and a Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) in Management. In her spare time Sandra volunteers as a lead mentor with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) program and is constantly seeking creative ways to revitalize, ensure safe and healthy conditions in our communities.



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## Amani Women Center (AWC) Initiates Grassroots Efforts and Partnerships that work!

**A**mani Women Center (AWC) Initiates Grassroots Efforts and Partnerships that work!

Community stakeholders collaborating in the sewing room project came together for the official Grand Opening on December 10th. Pastor George Tatro of Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, who provided the space for the project, Doris Mukangu of Amani-Rafiki-Shalom Coalition, Joan Kimenyi of Professional Women's Group – (Dress For Success), Susan Lightcap of Clarkston Sewing Club, Sandy Teepen of SandiesLabel and Barbara Gibson - Women

Resource Center to End Domestic Violence.

The sewing room project is an expansion of a social enterprise program of Amani Women Center (AWC) of Clarkston, Ga. Refugee women participating in this program are in need of a safe space where they can continue making the products that they are already making as well as have an opportunity to acquire sewing skills. Our products are unique in that they are made from recycled cloth, beads and seeds.

The mission of Amani Women Center is to educate and empower refugee and immi-

grant women with culturally sensitive tools that contribute to their overall well-being. Workshops and programs are hosted at the Amani center.

If you want to help support the refugee community and this initiative please contact:

**Doris Mukangu,**  
678-793-0466,  
doris.amaniwomencenter@gmail.com

Amani Women Center  
3550 Clarkston Ind. Blvd. Suite F  
Clarkston Ga 30021  
<http://www.amaniwomencenter.org/>



## Indian Creek Elementary School Parents Select Grant Funded Projects

If you had \$20,000 to spend to benefit Indian Creek Elementary School students and families, how would you spend it? After several weeks of coming together in small and large meetings, Indian Creek Elementary School families used a forced ranking process to select two projects to be funded from the Community Trust.

On December 3, The Georgia Piedmont Technical College Conference Center was the scene of much discussion, laughter, and decision-making as more than 45 parents participating in Burmese, Karen, Arabic, Farsi, Somali, Swahili, and Nepali speaking groups were led through a process to prioritize projects for their children's school. Each small group was assisted by an interpreter, facilitator, and recorder. The families also enjoyed getting to know each other, and in an adjacent room, children participated in literacy and storytelling activities, led by storyteller Gwen Napier.



During the event, families talked about their hopes and dreams for their children and how they could work together to support their children's academic success.

When the results of the individual balloting were tallied, the Education Garden Committee emerged as the clear choice for funding and engagement. An Indian Creek Elementary School Welcoming Committee was a second choice and will also receive funding. Volunteers from each language

group will convene in the following weeks and, with the school leadership and CDF Action and partners, create next steps for the projects' design and implementation.

The Indian Creek Elementary School Trust is funded in part by a W. K. Kellogg grant awarded to CDF Action. Watch for future updates as the projects unfold.

**Roberta Malavenda,**  
Executive Director, CDAAction

## Clarkston Tree Lighting 2017

December 3rd marked another successful Clarkston Annual Tree Lighting Event. Councilwoman Beverly Burks spearheaded the planning of the event along with the support of Mayor Terry and the City Council. A crowd of 200 adults and children showed up at the Clarkston Woman’s Club to enjoy musical entertainment provided by the Raquel Jones and a special dance presentation was performed by members of the Clarkston First Baptist Church Praise Team.

Santa Claus arrived at the festivities by DeKalb County Fire Truck and with the help of the kids, the Clarkston Tree was illuminated. Kids with their parents waited patiently in line for their chance to sit with Santa, take pictures and receive a special goody bag.



## Sidewalk Repairs on Norman Road

The Clarkston Public Works team removed and repaired one hundred and twenty feet of sidewalk on Norman Road. Although this area will be part of the future Streetscapes project, it was in such poor condition it was necessary to go ahead make the repairs of this area. This is the first sidewalk project completed by staff from our Public Works Department.





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