

Kiwanis 5.1.08,-speaking

JUST BECAUSE.....

Thank you

Recognize city employees

The Hilton Flag is now flying on the Marietta Conference Center. It is now an official Hilton Hotel. Major renovations are still to be made over the next year.

Victory Park: When John Moeller told me what he wanted his President's project to be....

Unbelievable, fantastic results. I have never experienced a community effort that meant so much for the city.

Other groups that helped.

Not just in one day.

Softball.....can't even keep score.

I get public input, everyday, all day, and sometimes, all night. I will be holding another Town Hall meeting next Thursday night at 6 PM. I hope I have a good audience.

Speaking of parks...

JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK STUDIES ARE USELESS.....

Our recently completed ten year Parks Comprehensive Plan Draft is a much-needed working document for our future. We now have a thoroughly researched plan supported by statistically accurate public input.

If I have learned anything in business, I have learned planning is just good business. Just like playing chess, you must plan ahead.

Just like Cobb County and Kennesaw created plans for the future of its parks, I encouraged the council to have this plan created. I want the city to try, as much as possible, to take politics out of our park improvements. At our retreat in January, the council had a lengthy discussion on the importance and future for our parks. At that time we had a consensus that the city needed to move forward with park improvements.

The council had a meeting on parks last night, now it seems we do not have council consensus on this matter. I hope the city is not going to have politics with our park future.

No one on city council, much less the mayor, is an expert on parks and what is needed in Marietta today. You don't want a group of non-experts, made up of many people who have not played in our parks for years, making these decisions without expert guidance and public input. After Victory Park, many of you know how much thought, expertise and public input is needed for proper park improvements.

In addition to Victory Park, we have used over \$800,000 of TAD funds and other city funds to totally re-do Henry Park. This effort has made this park a wonderful amenity for the entire city.

Through the generous contribution from Mrs. Marilyn Carney and matching city dollars we now have \$100,000 for a new playground at Lewis Park.

I hope these examples, set by Mrs. Carney and by the Marietta Kiwanis, will be followed by other groups, individuals, and foundations.

Soon, I hope the city will start on the first phase of Hickory Hills Park. As with Hickory Hills and all our other parks, we don't have the money to do everything I think we need.

No, we don't have the "fat" to cut out of the city budget to fund these improvements. Even though Marietta has the lowest tax millage of any town around, including Cobb County, no one is proposing a tax increase for additional park funds.

I do feel that park improvements and maybe a city-owned Community Center are needed for our citizens, young and old, for redevelopment, and for attracting more families to move to Marietta. I am sure that, today, the Kiwanis Club would vote for a Community Center so that you could hold your meetings there.

Last night, a proposal for the most-critically needed improvements for our parks was prepared for the council's consideration. This proposal is within the funding that we do have. Some members of council refused to even discuss this proposal.

For the city, I hope this approach will change. We do need to go forward with park improvements.

JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK THE CITY IS NOT
DOING ANYTHING ABOUT HISTORICAL
PRESERVATION.....

This is going to be very difficult to explain, even though it a simple idea. For those of you who are interested or if an insomniac---or bored the text of this speech and the video will be available on the city website.

I have placed an item on the city council agenda for the next council meeting on Monday, May 12th. This could be the most significant action the city council can make to protect its historical heritage. I am proposing an action to really protect our Square.

Here I am, going to run for re-election, and I going to make mortal enemies out of a few friends.

Even if I had not owned and operated a drug store on the square for over 40 years, I would still know our downtown area is our most valuable historical asset. I think everyone in Marietta and in Cobb County feels the same way. You don't have to be a downtown business or property owner to have "ownership" of this asset.

I think many of you know that the future of this asset has not been and is not being protected by the city as a whole. I know it is not protected. It is controlled by a very few people.

In 1978, the city council established the Marietta Board of Historical Review. This Board's function is to control the appearance, construction, demolition, height of the buildings and signs in the Downtown Historic District.

This board consists of the 8 members of the Downtown Marietta Development Authority plus two members selected by those 8. By

virtue of office, I have been one of those members for over 7 years. It is a creation of the city council, and it can be changed by action of the city council. The creation of the Historic Board of Review had good intentions.

However well-intentioned these members may have been, the results have been poor to say the least. Just to name a few results: a 12 story building permit, a demolition permit to tear down buildings on the square...all with no sunset requirements. The current Board has not created any meaningful written guidelines or standards. From first hand experience, and as many of you know, it is not an independent body.

Three years ago, the city council established the separate Historic Preservation Commission. It is a hard-working, well-constituted commission with 7 members appointed by each councilperson. These members have requirements of background and training in historical preservation. Only two of the 10 people on the current Board of Historical Review have any requirements of this.

With this one simple agenda item, the city council can replace the current Historical Board of Review members and its make-up, with the same members of the Board of the Historical Preservation Commission. With this one simple motion, the Marietta Council can place our downtown historical future in the hands of a responsible and qualified board whose make up and actions are answerable to the city council and to the Marietta citizens. In the current situation, our downtown future is only answerable to a few people.

Under this proposal the Historic Preservation Commission will still continue to function as it was established. Under this proposal, the Board of Historic Review will still exist as a separate body, just with a better constituted board, initially with the same standards as it has existed for over 30 years.

Of course, in the future, with this change and with the make-up of the new Board whose members are the same as the Historic Preservation Commission Board members, I think we will all want the new board to create standards and guidelines that serve Marietta's future, not just the whims and desires of a few.

The DMDA, the Downtown Marietta Development Authority, would remain unchanged with its Board members. Its function as a Tax Improvement District with bonding and taxing powers would remain unchanged.

I realize that this proposal has made at least one city councilman very angry and that he will do everything he can to prevent this change. I hope he will confine his action to this proposal only and that he will not seek revenge on the council members who support this proposal. The city does not need "pay-back" politics.

I hope you will ask questions about this. I hope you will encourage and support the council members to make this vitally needed change for preserving our historical heritage.

**JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK WE AREN'T AND
CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT TRAFFIC CONGESTION...**

Marietta is making tremendous road, streetscape, sidewalk and intersection improvements.

Soon you will see major improvements on Franklin Rd., Roswell St., Powder Springs St., Fairground St.; Tower Rd., Franklin Rd., Powder Springs at the loop, Park St.-Austin Ave., South Loop at Powers Ferry, new intersection improvements on the downtown portion of the Loop and that's not all.

The Powder Springs Road Connector is a project that was approved by the voters in the last SPLOST. It is a contract Marietta AND Cobb County made with the voters. As any traffic engineer can tell you, it would be a great relief for diverting through traffic away from Marietta. The proposed design will not increase cut-through traffic in Whitlock Heights; in fact, it could even decrease cut-through traffic. The County Macland Road Connector is needed also, but it will not solve Marietta's congestion problem on Powder Springs St and the Loop.

Saying to wait for this county connector to be completed is like an argument that many of us remember from 15 to 20 years ago: "Just wait until the East-West Connector is completed and it will solve Marietta's traffic problems." Guess what? It didn't do it, and the Macland connector won't either. It will help some, but it won't be the major improvement we can get, and need, with the Powder Springs Rd. Connector. Marietta needs both connectors.

I am very excited about a proposed tremendous improvement for the afternoon traffic mess on Whitlock Ave. and the Dallas Highway. The city already has the necessary right-of-way to add a second outbound lane going west from Kirkpatrick Dr., through the park, to John Ward Rd.

Think about what this can mean for the afternoon rush. For those of you who have had to go west in that corridor, you know that traffic sometimes backs up on Whitlock from Kirkpatrick all the way back to the Loop. This is also causing tremendous cut-through problems for Reynolds, Polk, Maple and Stewart Ave.

A second outbound lane would be like "pulling the plug" on a bad bottleneck. We do have one major problem with this traffic congestion solution---we would have to find the funding.

Before I leave this subject, let me be very clear: This addition of a second outbound lane west of Kirkpatrick Drive would NOT be a first step toward four-laning Whitlock Ave. I think my opposition to that is very clear.

JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK THE CITY IS NOT SAVING THE TAXPAYERS ANY MONEY...

Marietta has just earned a new high bond rating; this high city bond rating has been attained by only three other Georgia cities. “Big Deal” you might say, but it is a big deal. This new bond rating has enabled the city to re-finance three different bonds: the golf course, our public safety buildings, and an old school bond---all with new lower interest rates.

With the city’s actions in the past few months, with this re-financing, the city will save the Marietta taxpayers over 2.5 million dollars! This kind of money is a “Big Deal.”

We all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our city manager, Bill Bruton, for this bond rating. Without his efforts and his fiscal management, Marietta would not have been able to do this re-financing. Yep, Bill is worth every penny of his salary, and even more. By the way, Bill is sick and at home today or else he would have been here.

Fat and waste in government? Yes, no matter how hard we work, I am sure we will always have some, but I’m proud to say that Marietta has new internal and external auditing, monitoring all of our departments and money handling.

JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK REDEVELOPMENT HAS STOPPED IN MARIETTA BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN AND BECAUSE OF THE RECENT COURT DECISION ABOUT SCHOOL MILLAGE TAD FUNDING...

(picture of a dog swimming)

Just like a dog swimming, his head may look still, but, underneath the surface, he's paddling like the devil. This is like Marietta.

Yes, we have an economic downturn and it hurts, but I have reason to believe that Marietta is not as affected as the rest of Metro Atlanta, and what we are doing will continue to encourage redevelopment...and when things turn---and they will---Marietta will be in a great position to take advantage of the situation.

I have mentioned the Park improvements and traffic improvements, all necessary for redevelopment. Now I want to list other items that the city has instituted for our future.

Our Board of Lights and Water is working with an on-going utility capital improvement program. Not just replacing aging lines and pipes, but increasing service to the areas that will need it. We are also burying lines where possible. Some of this is being paid with SPLOST funds, some with TAD funds...and with reserves. For this utility capital program, the city may have to look at some debt financing for this...but this should be possible without a tax or rate increase.

Marietta will NOT be in the same position that many other cities, like Atlanta, are in.

For the future, the city is considering buying new nuclear power and selling some older, inefficient, coal generating capacity. This nuclear decision, that has to be made by June 15th, could guarantee our future base generating requirements for at least 30 years, maybe even up to 60 years.

For redevelopment, we have adopted overlay zoning and a sign ordinance that will improve the looks of our buildings and streets.

For the present and future, we have up-graded our code enforcement. For the 06/07 fiscal year, the city made an increase in home inspections of 444%! The code inspection cases increased 42%. Additionally we have gained interior access to some of our apartment complexes; I hope we get more apartment access in the future. In the next few weeks, the city will announce a major code enforcement action.

We have strengthened our building and other ordinance requirements with new items, some of which are unique to Marietta. Marietta now has ordinances such as the “Big-Box” ordinance, four-sided architecture, two car garages, adequate guest parking, minimum square footage requirements, maximum occupancy restrictions, green space, development amenities, tree ordinance, alternative tree planting ordinance, and an on-going tree planting program. We have employed landscape architectural firms and a city arborist.

Yes, unfortunately, when you build and move dirt, trees do come down. However, I am convinced that our builders have to do more effective and extensive re-planting in Marietta than in most, if not all, other metro jurisdictions. Marietta does have one of the most stringent and comprehensive set of tree ordinances.

We now have a “Certified Crime Free Housing Community” program. We already have five apartment complexes participating.

By the way, we do have other “Good News” in the Franklin Rd. area with items such as the closing of a bad night club, crime reduction and other successful stories of our Weed and Seed Program.

Very important: for several years, all new condo and townhome developments can only have a maximum of 5% rental units. This should prevent any of these developments from turning into a mass of rental units in the years to come. With this rental restriction, Marietta may be unique among the metro counties and cities in preventing a bad future for our new developments.

We have made progress with day laborers standing on our public areas, streets, and sidewalks.

All of the above and many other things are “quality of life” issues that should help Marietta in years to come.

In fact, recently, Marietta’s success has been recognized in The Atlanta Magazine, Georgia Trend, and other local media.

JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK THERE IS NO BUILDING GOING ON...

Just to name a few current residential developments: Meeting Place, Marietta Walk, Forest Manor, Rockford Commons, Washington Commons, Frazier Circle, Hunter Walk, Caswell Overlook, Forest Manor, Glen Ivy, Brownstone Square, Manget, Brown’s Park, Emerson Overlook, This is well over 296 million dollars of new and planed construction.

No, not all of these are true redevelopment projects and they are not all TAD projects. I do think that a lot of this activity is because of the changes Marietta has made in the past few years. The city has set the climate and procedures for the developers to believe in the future of our town. Additionally, the city has made many changes to facilitate their efforts. People are moving to Marietta.

Yes, there are many homes for sale, both new and re-sale, but with the indication I have had from some of our developers, the city has more activity than other parts of metro Atlanta. Marietta is helping with marketing efforts such as www.move2marietta.com

Even though you may not be aware of this, the city does have a surprising amount commercial and industrial building activity. By my count, this current construction will be over 39 million dollars at completion. I do know that we have more to come in this area.

JUST BECAUSE I HAVEN'T SPENT TIME ON TADS, DON'T THINK THAT I WON'T DO THAT IN THE FUTURE.

I will save this good news for a later presentation. The fact remains, the Marietta School System and the Marietta Taxpayers have benefited greatly from our current TAD projects.

JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK MARIETTA IS NOT DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THE ENVIORNMENT, ENERGY SAVING AND "GOING GREEN"...

In the next week, there will an announcement from the Atlanta media about a "going green" award that Marietta has earned because of its efforts in the area.

I have already mentioned our initiatives with our tree ordinance, our alternative tree planting ordinance and our city arborist.

I have also mentioned Nuclear Power that many people consider “green” since it would replace much of our coal-generated power.

We have had a residential re-cycling program for years and this has been recently extended to the downtown area.

In our buildings and public areas, the city is replacing current lighting with high efficiency lighting and ballasts. We are installing new controls, timers and photo cells and working toward fully-automating our HVAC systems. We are using LED lighting where ever possible and economical.

Our public landscaping is changing to be as water saving as possible. Marietta is starting the use of “gray water” for our landscaping.

Where we can, our city vehicles are using bio diesel and examining the use of re-cycled cooking oils. I just can’t wait for the complaints that our trucks smell like French fries.

For our citizens and businesses, the BLW will conduct energy and water conservation audits.

We do have building codes requiring energy and water saving. The city does have rebates for retro-fitting energy saving toilets. We also have free kits for energy saving shower heads.

I think the city is doing a great job with our e mail news and other information, trying to inform the public about what they can do.

The city is pursuing the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Green Community Guidelines.

Additionally, even though you may not realize it, our redevelopment is helping the environment. With the last numbers I have seen, over 80% of our new home owners had moved from out in Cobb County into the city. For each one of those new residents, it means that many fewer cars driving into and through Marietta and that much less pollution and traffic congestion on the highways coming into Marietta.

Marietta has a major anniversary next year. Our 175th Anniversary! Only Davis Walker and Bill Kinney can remember back that far.

Marietta is planning to have a series of anniversary events throughout the year; including having this anniversary as the theme for next year's Fourth of July Celebration.

Soon, the city will form a 175th Anniversary Committee that will include our interested citizens, leaders, and as many organizations, clubs, groups, etc. as possible.

Stay tuned....

JUST BECAUSE I HAVEN'T MENTIONED OUR ANNUAL MARIETTA "TREASURES FROM THE ATTIC" SALE...

As you know, this is really a city wide yard sale and this year we are combining this sale with the huge and successful Dixie Highway Sale.

This annual sale takes place along the route of the old Dixie Highway, what you might call old 41, from Marietta to the Tennessee line.

In the past six years, our Marietta sale has helped our groups and churches raise over \$100,000 for themselves.

This year, this yard sale is open, not only for non-profits, it is also open for individuals as well. I hope Kiwanis, and the groups that Kiwanians are members of, will participate on Saturday, June 7th.

If you are interested, please contact the Marietta Parks and Recreation Department or my office.

With one notable exception, everything I have said today has been published on Marietta's award-winning website and e-mail news. I encourage you to sign up for our e mail news to stay current with everything that is happening in Marietta.

www.mariettaga.gov/news

YOU MIGHT BE A MAYOR IF....

If you look at caller ID before you answer you phone, you might be a mayor.

If you always return your phone calls and sometimes you wish you didn't, you might be a mayor.

If, sometimes, you get credit for good things that you didn't do, you might be a mayor.

If you always get the blame for the bad things and if you have learned the true meaning of “ignorance is no excuse,” you might be a mayor.

If the pay is part time, but the hours are not, you might be a mayor.

If you see things that still need to be done, you might be a mayor.

If some days, the “warm fuzzies” you receive from people makes it all worthwhile, you might be a mayor.

If you get more respect out in public than you get from your wife and daughters at home, you might be a mayor.