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**For Immediate Release**

## **City of Peachtree Corners Makes Strategic Move Toward Land Acquisition**

***Mayor and City Council Propose Formation of a Downtown Development Authority to Purchase and Determine Future Development of a Large Land Tract in Heart of the City***

**February 18, 2013, Peachtree Corners** – Citing their responsibility to protect the quality of life in Peachtree Corners, Mayor Mike Mason and the City Council have voted unanimously to move forward and purchase a tract of land that has been a point of discussion for many years. The Council had received numerous calls of concern from citizens over a proposed apartment development planned for that site.

The property was recently acquired by Lennar Corporation, a national homebuilder and planned to break ground on a 250+ apartment development on the site in the Spring. Since Peachtree Corners is currently at the 50/50 tipping point of single family vs. multi-family housing, the Council felt it was their duty to keep the City's housing balanced in order to protect property values.

The City is actively negotiating with the seller and hopes to have an agreement within the week. Lennar made their purchase based on the current apartment zoning of RM-13. If the City acquires the property, the zoning will be changed to a C-2 commercial zoning consistent with surrounding properties.

“Since the current zoning was the result of a lawsuit in 2001, there was no legal process to stop apartment development on this property through regulations,” explains Mayor Mike Mason. “We exhausted all other options to prevent apartments before resorting to purchase of the property. Our citizens should have input into the land use on that location, not be subject to a judicial ruling that happened in 2001. Our purchase of the land is not a unique action taken by this City. Other cities have acquired properties to support their city vision including Decatur, Dunwoody, Milton, Smyrna, Suwanee, and Woodstock. This land acquisition will not affect our millage rate and will be financed with a 10 year bond.”

Suwanee's former Mayor Nick Masino shares some insight into Suwanee's history; “Big ideas are sometimes hard to fully envision. When we first started on our efforts in Suwanee, it was difficult to appreciate or envision what Suwanee Town Center could eventually become. But now that Town Center is in place, it is now hard to imagine Suwanee without it.”

Mayor Mason further explains, “Apartments certainly have a place within our community and currently we are above the ideal balance of single family to multi-family homes. There is also an overwhelming sentiment from our citizens that this unique tract would be much better suited for a development consistent with existing properties along this important transportation corridor.”

“Our only regret is that there was not enough time to hold a referendum. The idea of the City buying the property only occurred to us in mid-January (2013) after we had exhausted all other options—persuasion, joint ventures, another buyer-- to stop the apartments. Since the County still conducts our elections, we were told that the first feasible date for a referendum would be November 2013. Lennar planned to break ground for the apartments in the Spring and you would have seen apartments out there in November. If we had delayed for much longer, either the cost of the property would have gone up beyond reason or they would have been too far along with their construction process to stop. It became a timing issue that had to be addressed immediately. We couldn’t even discuss it in public for legal reasons once we began to talk to Lennar about a purchase. Holding a special called meeting on Monday, a holiday, was simply because we wanted everyone present and there were scheduling difficulties with all the Councilmen attending our regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday.”

In order to acquire the property, the city must form a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Downtown Development Authorities – currently in use by many cities, including Duluth, Lawrenceville, Norcross and Suwanee – serve as an invaluable tool to develop or revitalize central municipal business districts. Peachtree Corners’ Downtown Development Authority will consist of citizen representatives to coordinate the acquisition and ultimate disposition of the property.

There is also a great opportunity for citizen input into what to do with this property through the Comprehensive Land Use Planning process, which is currently underway. The first public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan is Thursday, February 21, 2013 at City Hall. Please attend and give us your input into the future of the City.

For more information, visit [www.peachtreecornersga.org](http://www.peachtreecornersga.org)

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