

Local Help On An International Scale



Water Missions, Fed Ex shipping water treatment systems to Haiti

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Filling In The White Spaces



Local artist, Laura Martindale to show Alchemy Coffee

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The Hot New Chick



Brand new Chick-fil-A changes the fast food landscape on Savannah Hwy.

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West Ashley's Community Newspaper

{WEST OF}

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The old Wal-Mart building on Glen McConnell Parkway has been abandoned for years. But the West Ashley Senior Center could soon occupy the big empty space.

Old Wal-Mart Coming Out Of Retirement?

GROUP EYES FORMER RETAIL SITE FOR NEW WEST ASHLEY SENIOR CENTER

By Warren Cobb
Community Editor

The West Ashley Senior Service Coordinating Committee (WASSCC) began last summer with a few people sitting around a table at Sojourn Coffee. Though the group was small, the ideas were huge. And the impact on West Ashley could get even bigger if its latest brainstorm becomes a reality.

At the group's Jan. 20 meeting, the idea was floated to begin negotiations on the feasibility of locating a West Ashley Senior Center at the old Wal-Mart space in the Ashley Landing Shopping Center at Glen McConnell Parkway and Magwood Road. The space has sat idle since the retailer moved further down the road in March 2006.

The building is still owned by Wal-Mart, which has sat on the site to make sure no competition would be coming to their side of town. The property

manager's website lists the total space available at 137,083 square-feet, with the potential to divide it into seven spaces of various sizes. The site lists the building a being made for retail, but lists Community Center as a possible sub-type.

West Ashley resident Terry Brown has become the WASSCC's unofficial spokesman. He says the group has been steadily gaining momentum over the past six months, and is fully focused on its mission to create more opportunities for West Ashley's growing senior population. "I have, over my checkered, sordid career, been in these kinds of exploratory groups a lot," he says. "Every now and then, you find one that really clicks. And this group really clicks."

Several local movers and shakers were in attendance at the Jan. 20 meeting. Those included City Councilman Aubry Alexander; Roper St. Francis Director of Senior Services Elizabeth Bernat; Stephanie Blunt, executive director of the Trident Area Agency on Aging; Brown; County Councilwoman

Colleen Condon; County Councilman Victor Rawl; Ronneca Watkins, Special Events Coordinator for the Jewish Community Center; and City of Charleston Recreation Department Director Laurie Yarbrough; just to name a few.

Brown said the group is preparing to fight for nothing less than a senior center as close to the middle of West Ashley as possible. "There was 100 percent commitment to the need of a senior gathering place in the West Ashley area," he says. "Then we said where would we do it? Build a new building? Why build something new if there were other facilities already available?"

Brown says the Wal-Mart space is ideal for several reasons. First of all, it's big, and could accommodate a variety of community uses beyond just a senior center. It's also centrally located, has lots of available parking, is near St. Francis Hospital and several

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WEST OF TURNS 5 — HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!



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