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Symposium urges neighborhoods: Organize and interact



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RAJ JAGAD speaks with Roger Kammerer during the annual neighborhoods symposium at City Hall on Saturday afternoon.

■ The third annual event aimed to educate, inspire and showcase the city's diverse communities.

BY MICHAEL ABRAMOWITZ
The Daily Reflector

If Greenville's future is anything like its past, growth and change will require residents' input and involvement, city leaders said at Saturday's neighborhood symposium.

The daylong event took place at City Hall.

Sponsored by the Neighborhood Advisory Board, the third annual symposium aimed to educate, inspire and showcase the city's diverse communities, Mayor Allen Thomas said in a proclamation declaring Saturday as Neighborhood Symposium Day.

Neighborhood associations are a vital avenue for citizen involvement in the development of a city's future, said Ann Maxwell,

Neighborhood Advisory Board chairwoman.

"It is so critical to empower citizens to be involved in local government and have information about their neighborhoods," Maxwell said.

The morning symposium session featured information from local historian Roger Kammerer on the development of the Town Common.

Afternoon sessions in-

See NEIGHBOR, A7

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NEIGHBOR

Continued from A1

cluded a discussion about creating more effective communication and cooperation between homeowners and renters and a presentation about building neighborhood dialogue and increasing interactions with the rapidly growing immigrant population.

City staff also shared information on issues and events related to development of Greenville and its individual neighborhoods.

Assistant City Manager Chris Padgett gave an update on the proposed downtown transportation and activity center. He said the project is the next step in the city's transportation evolution, with a goal of giving residents more choices in their means of travel to, from and within Greenville.

Police Chief Hassan Aden talked about innovations he plans to bring to the city's policing. As an example, he proposed affixing bicycle racks to the rear of officers' patrol cars so they can park in a neighborhood and bike through the streets. This will give officers more opportunities to build relationships with



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GREENVILLE POLICE CHIEF HASSAN ADEN discusses city crime during a neighborhood symposium at City Hall on Saturday. "It will take all of us to impact crime here," Aden said.

neighborhood residents, Aden said.

The event's primary objective was to continue liveable, secure and sustainable neighborhoods and infrastructure through increased citizen participation, private community programs and local government actions, Thomas said.

"We now have about 60 recognized neighborhood associations, with the advisory

board bringing all the pieces together," Thomas said. "Now let's make it 70 associations because Greenville is a big diverse city, and we need your help. We have so many little neighborhoods that need to get involved and join the positive communication."

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