

Mayor's Message *June, 2009*



As I write this we are preparing to move into the new **City Hall**. I hope we will be open for business by Monday, June 29, but please check the website before you come, in case there is some last minute glitch. I don't want anyone to have a confusing experience trying to find us. Council has decided to have the grand opening celebration when it is cooler and people are back from summer vacations. I'll let you know about that beforehand in a subsequent *Mayor's Message*.

Please join us for our usual **July 4th festivities**. At 10:45 am the parade will line up in front of Berkeley Lake Elementary and we march at 11:00 am. Lunch will be served at 11:30 am behind the Chapel. At 12:30 pm we hold a Best Dressed Contest (Lady Liberty? Uncle Sam?) to be followed by kids' games in front of the Chapel. This year for the first time we will also be collecting **canned goods** for the local cooperative food ministry on that day. This is in conjunction with all other cities in Gwinnett who have organized the "Cities Can Do" project in response to the increased need at food banks in these difficult times. Please bring as much as you can and we'll deliver it. People really need this now.

This spring as always the City has put **mosquito** larvacide into water areas that are slow moving (like retention ponds). Please remember to remove standing water around your home. Mosquitoes multiply like crazy in ¼ inch of water. If you want to get some larvacide for your own area, you can usually find the same altsid briquettes that we use at places like Home Depot and Lowe's.

While I'm thinking of water, you may not have heard that the severe **watering restrictions** have been lifted. We're still supposed to water only every other day, but those who have irrigation systems may use them instead of standing around outside watering with a hose. Details can be found at www.gwinnettcountry.com.

I'm pleased to announce that Berkeley Lake will be honored for the 10th year as a **Tree City**, and we will also receive our first Tree City Growth Award.

In considering the next millage rate the Council accepted the recommendation of our citizen Finance Committee not to collect any more **taxes** than in the previous year.

Some of us have been interested for some time in having a **farmer's market** close by. The mayor of Norcross tells me that one will be held in downtown Norcross every Tuesday 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. from June through October on the street between Thrasher Park and the railroad. You should be able to find locally grown veggies and fruits, homemade baked goods, jellies, organic beauty products and much more. If anyone would be interested in organizing a farmer's market in our city, please let me know.

The following sections of our **City Code of Ordinances** have been changed since the last *Mayor's Message*. Details are available on the website.

Section 26-223 (a) and (c) - Post-Development Stormwater Management

Sections 42-166 to 42-172 - Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection

Section 77 – Standards for Wireless Communication Facilities

Section 78 – Zoning amendments related to cell towers

There has been a great deal of citizen interest recently as council considered the last two. They were designed to get in place some standards that would regulate the placement of **cell towers** should they ever be built in our city. The question of whether or not to have cell towers in the city is a very thorny issue. Some citizens favor it to improve local reception on their cell phones. The City would realize significant revenue which would help us keep taxes down or lower them. However, many are strongly opposed to having one nearby for esthetic reasons or because they fear damage to property values or their health. The council has voted not to allow a cell tower at the city hall site. However, the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 gives cell companies some rights to build them if they are able to prove in court that they need to build a tower to serve customers in the area. I think all our citizens agree that having the regulatory ordinances which were recently passed is a good idea, but whether or not there will be any tower to regulate remains to be seen. Should that prospect be presented again, I will let you know.

I have heard from one of our residents of car break-ins in the non-city part of River Mansions and in Hermitage, both of which are nearby. Please be cautious about leaving valuables in your car.

Happy Independence Day to us all !!!

Lisa D. Alter