



April 27, 2012

Your City Council voted last night for a **radical drop in our millage rate**. A 2.8 rate was recommended by our city administrator, treasurer, and myself and placed on first read by the council. As with all millage rate changes, there is a lengthy process of multiple considerations at different meetings and public hearings, but I am confident that this rate is not only safe for us, but a conservative move. As you know the current rate was put in to enable the city to pay for the entire dam project by ourselves if it came to that. Fortunately that will not be necessary and the annexations that we have accomplished are broadening our tax base. These factors will enable us to make this sharp 48% drop in millage rate, even though we continue to include stormwater costs, streetlights, and security patrols not provided elsewhere, as well as saving our businesses large amounts of money in very low business license and occupational tax costs. I expect we will be able to lower taxes further in future years, but as I said, this is a conservative move at this time.

The **fish removal** has gone well. By 11:30 AM on Tuesday over 8000 lbs. of fish had been removed including a 60 lb. carp, a 12 lb. catfish, an 8 lb. bass, and many 5 lb. bass. Our contractors were continuing into the afternoon so I'm sure the final amount of fish



removed was quite high. This was accomplished by electrofishing, shocking the fish so that they jump out of the water and then scooping them up while they're stunned. The contractor delivered many of them alive in special trucks to other lakes that had requested them. A good time was had by all of the approximately 50 residents who watched. Some of those

folks filleted about 200 fish on the spot for their own freezers until a fish fry could be organized. I had been concerned about the turtles but had been told they would move on to other areas. That turned out to be correct, and no turtles were found. They had evidently

already made their own travel arrangements to move out of the water which had been pumped down to a depth of about 5 feet. Thanks to **Steve Seitz** and other citizens who worked with our contractors in a cooperative way to facilitate the fish removal.

In other **dam repair** news, we have started the grading and are finally removing earth from the dam now. We'll be excavating down about 10 feet in some areas and at least 2-3 feet across the entire dam to get to the internal drain system which was damaged in the storm of September 2009. When that is repaired we'll be putting a 15-20 foot layer of an appropriate type of earth back on it, and the final dam will be a higher elevation than it was before. We are also putting in the new water line along Berkeley Lake Road which is about half way complete now. There

have been some concerns from River District residents about the necessary road cut that has been made across Berkeley Lake Road which has been filled but not repaved. This makes for a dusty traverse of their cars daily to get in and out of their subdivision. I've asked our engineer to get a price for temporary paving on



that area since it won't be permanently repaved for many months. I have recommended to council that we make that change to the contract. I met last Friday on site with the contractors and engineers, as well as Tom Rozier and Bob Smith. This group will be meeting together every other Friday throughout the project and I think we are working well together.

Our own Jennifer Falk from Miramont is running for the Gwinnett County School Board seat. As I told her, I appreciate anyone who makes the time in their own life to offer themselves as a public servant, and I hope more of our citizens will do this. I introduced Jennifer to the large number of citizens who attended our City Council meeting last night and publicly thanked our state **Senator David Shafer** who is a model of integrity and commitment. I wanted to recognize the untold hours of work that he put in trying to resolve the difficulties between our city and Peachtree Corners in a way that was fair to both. As you may know, David is a very [important leader in our state legislature](#) and in the Republican party, so with all his other responsibilities I was truly amazed that he made so much time for our problems. He is a rare public servant who commits his time to discuss issues thoroughly with everyone involved or interested and who wants to do the right thing even when it may be politically difficult for him personally. I know you understand how unusual that is, and appreciate it as I do. I have invited him and his wife to join me at

the BLHA's upcoming low boil dinner on May 19. If you are able to attend, please take that opportunity to thank him personally for his efforts in our behalf, or you may email him at david@votedavid.com.

Thanks to Mayor ProTem Rebecca Spitler and Berkeley Lake Conservancy Chair Susan Hanson for achieving our city's recognition again this year as a Tree City. Living within a beautiful forest of trees is something we should never take for granted around here.

As you know, I caution you every year about this time about **mosquitoes**, but I am more worried than usual this year because we had almost no winter to kill them off. As always, our city is buying mosquito larvacide and putting it out in areas of standing water around the city which are accessible to us. If you have similar private areas I urge you to do the same. You can buy the larvacide briquettes cheaply at hardware stores or come by City Hall and we'll give you some. Most important is your attention to shallow water containers around your house. Remember that flowerpots, toys, or anything that holds a quarter inch of water for a couple of days can breed mosquitoes. Also be aware that **ticks** can carry Lyme's disease and other problems. While enjoying the woods around us we must all be cautious to check ourselves when we come in to see if we brought any of these unwelcome hitchhikers with us. Lyme's disease is something I would not wish on anybody, and we need to guard ourselves against it.

Please be aware that our city has an [ordinance](#) **prohibiting bicycles in the greenspace** because they tear up the trails and cause erosion. Your kids may not know this so here's a heads-up that I've asked our security guys to watch for this on their foot patrols in the greenspace. We don't want your young person to get a citation or be fined, so please share this with them.

Some of you have noticed the small red **foxes** that are becoming more and more comfortable around us. Years ago the conventional wisdom was that a fox which appeared unafraid might be rabid because healthy foxes stayed away from people in urban areas. Nowadays there's no place for the foxes to go to get away from us and they have learned that their Berkeley Lake neighbors won't hurt them. [If you see them](#) as I often do, I don't think you need to be afraid, but please don't feed them. They help us by controlling the rodent population, and it is never in the best interest of wildlife to become dependent on your handouts.

Welcome home to Brigadier General Rex Spitler of Miramont who currently leads the NATO forces in Kosovo, quite a challenging responsibility. He has a brief and rare 4-day pass to come home this weekend. Thank you Rex for your service to our country and our

world, and thanks to Rebecca and their kids who also serve by doing without him for such long periods.

Lois D. Alter