



September 16, 2013

The city is beginning the process of updating our **Comprehensive Plan**. This Thursday on September 19 at 8:00 PM, the city council will hold a public hearing to announce the initiative, outline the project and its opportunities for participation by interested members of the community, and to receive initial comments. The project is expected to be completed in February of 2014.

Berkeley Lake has undergone several important changes since the adoption of the current *2030 Comprehensive Plan* in 2009, which call for a major update. The annexation of additional residential areas as well as the Peachtree Industrial Boulevard corridor has altered the city's land use patterns and tax base. The 2010 U.S. Census data has revealed a significant shift in the city's demographic profile. Creation of the City of Peachtree Corners in 2012 resulted in the complete surrounding of Berkeley Lake by other municipalities, cutting off any avenues for further expansion. It is these changed conditions and their implications for the future that will be the focus of the plan update process. We need a blueprint for Berkeley Lake's future as a healthy, desirable and sustainable community for its residents and businesses.

Berkeley Lake has secured the support of staff planners from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to assist with the project. We will keep you informed via the city website and the *Mayor's Message* to report project status and receive feedback on a broad level; and we will convene a stakeholder's group to generate more in-depth discussion of issues. The stakeholder's group will be selected to represent the interests of Berkeley Lake's residents, businesses and public officials. Members will be called upon to meet together 3-4 times throughout the project. I am meeting with homeowner association presidents to gain their input on who should be representative stakeholders. Residents who wish to receive project status notifications should be sure that the city has their valid e-mail address. You can read the current comprehensive plan on our website [here](#).

The **dam** is now stabilized with sod, and all repairs to the slope have been made. We have started the toe ditch repairs on the east end and are working westward. We will

continue the toe ditch repairs for the next couple of weeks depending on weather. We will be installing temporary slope matting and silt fence around the repaired areas of the toe ditch to prevent contamination until the contiguous sod is established. Once this work is complete the contractors will restore the parking lot area and demobilize. Then we'll call in Safe Dams, FEMA and GEMA for their final inspections.

Registered voters in Berkeley Lake will go to the polls on Tuesday, November 5, 2013 to select three members for City Council. The following have filed notices of candidacy:

Rodney Hammond
Pekka Ignatius
Scott Lee (I)
Chip McDaniel
Jeff Morgan

Many thanks to each of them for their willingness to serve. The last day to register to vote in this election is October 7, 2013. Advance voting during regular business hours at City Hall or by absentee ballot will begin Monday, October 14, 2013 and end Thursday, October 31, 2013. On election day, the polling place will open at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM. A run-off election, if necessary, will take place on Tuesday, December 3, 2013. Please remember to have photo identification when voting in person.

As always at election time in Berkeley Lake **we need capable volunteers to assist our citizens in the voting process as poll officers.** On Tuesday, November 5, 2013 the city will need a team of dedicated individuals who are patient, enjoy working with people, are good communicators and detail-oriented to make the election run as smoothly as possible. You may serve as a poll officer if you are a resident of Berkeley Lake, at least 16 years old, read, write and speak the English language, and are not related to a candidate. Assignments are available for morning and evening shifts between 6:15 AM and 7:00 PM for voting; and we need a counting team from the close of polls until the counting process is complete. Volunteers must also attend a training session in the week before the election. Contact Pat Chapman, Deputy City Administrator at City Hall, 770.368.9484 or deputy.admin@berkeley-lake.com to volunteer.

On the same day that you go to City Hall to vote for city council candidates, I urge you also to go to your county voting place at Pinckneyville Park to vote as you see fit on the possible SPLOST extension. SPLOST stands for Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax and it provides a choice for voters that is clear, specific, and time limited. This is different from property taxes in several significant ways. Property taxes are levied by the governing body for general funds rather than chosen by citizens who make an informed decision to invest in specific projects over a limited period of time. The current one cent SPLOST will soon sunset after providing most of our city's

road paving and city hall construction as well as various projects around the county. If citizens choose to continue to pay the same level of sales tax we do now, the vast majority of the funds raised would go to transportation infrastructure projects in our city and county. The county also wants some other public safety items like replacing police cars and equipment.

You'll be reading more specifically in the local news about this choice to make, so study the list and decide if it's a worthy investment for you. Bear in mind that sales taxes are supported in Gwinnett by large numbers of people beyond our county who come down to Mall of Georgia, Sugarloaf Mills and other shopping areas from across northeast Georgia. According to Elliott Brack, publisher of the *Gwinnett Forum*, an estimated 40% of sales tax in Gwinnett is paid for by outsiders (see [August 2 edition of Gwinnett Forum](#)). Without that help from out-of-county people, necessary projects in Gwinnett would have to be paid by your local property taxes. I regret that voting twice that day must be in two different polling places because I know how busy you all are, but I hope you find time to make your wishes known on both the SPLOST extension and your choices for Berkeley Lake City Council.

I invited our state **Senator David Shafer** to meet last month with our City Council members to update them on state issues and to collaborate on the goals our city has. He made time to visit with us despite his very busy schedule as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and we appreciate his attention to Berkeley Lake's concerns.



Big congratulations to our own **Lori Van Buskirk** who lives in Berkeley Commons and is this year's Teacher of the Year for Berkeley Lake Elementary. That is a very high honor, which was held last year by another neighbor, Candy Steventon. We have some amazing teachers around here.

Mark your calendar for the annual **Berkeley Lake Turkey Trot on Saturday, November 16th at 8:30 AM**. This 4 mile and 1.5 mile fun run is a community wide fundraiser for the Berkeley Lake Elementary School which is supported every year by both the Chapel and our city. Sponsorship information can be accessed [here](#). Runners and walkers can register on-line by clicking [here](#) or download the [registration form](#).

There will be a free Firearm Safety Seminar on September 19 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Personnel from the Gwinnett Police Academy will cover several topics of concern including Georgia carry and deadly force laws, how to obtain a carry permit, personal defense, types of weapons, and their use. It's at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center auditorium located at 75 Langley Drive in Lawrenceville. Pre-registration is not required, however seating is limited, so please arrive early. Please do not bring firearms to this event; attendees will pass through a security checkpoint and will not be permitted to bring firearms in the building. For more information about the seminar, please contact Cpl. J. Gollhofer at 678.226.7767.

You may also want to attend a **free Public Safety Fall Festival** on September 28 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The Gwinnett County Police Department and the Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services will host the fourth annual Public Safety Fall Festival at Coolray Field, home of the Gwinnett Braves, 2500 Buford Drive in Lawrenceville. This event will feature fire truck, police motorcycle and helicopter displays, safety training demonstrations, kids' activities, pet adoptions, and a softball face-off between Gwinnett County police officers and firefighters. Everyone is invited to attend this free event, so bring the whole family. For more information, please contact the Gwinnett Police Crime Prevention Unit at 770.513.5119 or Gwinnett Fire Community Risk Reduction-Education Section at 678.518.4845.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED BUSINESSES:

Marilyn Suriani Photography is a local business, run by a truly world class artist. For the past 30 years Marilyn has photographed hundreds of business leaders, celebrities and politicians and her work is widely noted beyond our city. To quote the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*: "Suriani's images ...blur the boundaries between painting and photography." Go to her [website](#) to see her portraits of the Rolling Stones, business and political leaders, and the natural beauty in your own backyards. You may want to commission a portrait, engage a one-on-one private training session for amateur or professional photographers, explore her art consulting services, or just buy some Berkeley Lake notecards, but seeing her work is something I guarantee you'll enjoy. This is one of her images of Berkeley Lake that hangs in City Hall.



Mayor's Message – September 16, 2013

Scott Hollingsworth of Berkeley Walk has a local business called **Berkeley Stump Grinders** providing environmentally friendly stump removal which you can check out at his [website](#). He will provide a 20% discount to Berkeley Lake residents so please contact him if you need this kind of service.



Lois D. Alter