



July 29, 2020

Berkeley Lake has made good use of the time recently when people were staying home, and traffic was way down by working on things around our streets. We replaced all the city-owned road signs within our jurisdiction because some of them had gotten kind of scrungy looking and harder to read in lesser light conditions. We made several stormwater **infrastructure improvements** and resurfaced Lakeshore Drive, Bayway Circle and the entire subdivision of Hermitage Plantation. We don't expect a need to pave anything for quite a while now. Additionally, the county has been replacing the asbestos cement water main on South Berkeley lake Road and Little Ridge Road with a new ductile iron main. That project included resurfacing of both roads and an upgrade to some of the sidewalks along South Berkeley Lake Road. I know that was a hassle for many of you for weeks; but we will now have better firefighting capabilities, more reliable water service and improved pedestrian safety for area residents.

Our City Council at its July meeting approved a **millage rate** of 1.755 mills for the year 2020. As you may have noticed, our millage rate has been going down a little every year since the dam debacle in 2009. The next year in 2010 it bumped up from 3.68 to 4.9 but since then it has decreased, often even below the rollback rate. We have steadily and carefully worked to do more for our citizens without raising taxes. As an example, for a home with a fair market value of \$400,000 in 2019, the city property tax was \$302.24. For a home of the same value in 2020, the tax will be \$280.80, which represents a 7.09% reduction in taxes year to year. The citizen Finance Committee works with our staff and council, and they unanimously supported the new rate. Thanks to all, citizens and staff, who study and work hard on our city's financial decisions.

I know that many of you will want to avoid lines to vote in **upcoming elections** so I am providing this link to the [My Voter Page](#). You can apply here for an absentee ballot and check back here to see when it is issued and then received, after you return it. You can even look at a sample ballot to see what you will be asked to decide in advance. There is a primary runoff on August 11, and then the big one - the general election on November 3. Please plan ahead to give your county, state, and country the best leaders we can send them. That is so important!

I'm so proud that **our city remains #1 in all of Georgia for census return**, but there are still a few of you out there who are putting it off. **Please get this done.** It's truly quick and easy – less than

10 minutes. You can do it online, by phone, or by mail as you choose, so go to <http://2020Census.gov> for more info.

Did you know that many home maintenance items require a permit to ensure that all goes well according to city or state code? Be sure to visit the **Popular Projects** link under Quick Links on the main page of the city website to familiarize yourself with the permitting requirements. While you're there, be sure to visit the **Frequently Enforced Ordinances** link for further information about the topic. **And always feel comfortable to call City Hall for any question you may have. Put this number in your contacts: (770) 368-9484.** You don't need to know whom to ask for – just tell whoever answers what you need or leave a message about your concern and the appropriate person will call you back very shortly to help.

CENSUS 101: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
The 2020 Census is closer than you think!
Here's a quick refresher of what it is and why it's essential that everyone is counted.

- Everyone counts.** The census counts every person living in the U.S. once, only once, and in the right place.
- It's about fair representation.** Every 10 years, the results of the census are used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets.
- It's in the constitution.** The U.S. Constitution mandates that everyone in the country be counted every 10 years. The first census was in 1790.
- It's about \$675 billion.** The distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities are based on census data. That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs.
- It's about redistricting.** After each decade's census, state officials redraw the boundaries of the congressional and state legislative districts in their states to account for population shifts.
- Taking part is your civic duty.** Completing the census is mandatory. It's a way to participate in our democracy and say "I COUNT!"

I got a call yesterday from Major Amanda Cain who has served as our **Precinct Commander** for the Gwinnett County Police Department to let me know that she is being promoted and will be



leaving us in this area. I think any of you who have had the occasion to work with her would agree that she's done an excellent job, and I will miss her. Her replacement is Major Edward Restrepo who has worked with the Gang Task Force, and the Criminal Investigations Division, supervising General Crimes and Homicide until 2013 when he was assigned to West Precinct's Community Response Team. He has a master's degree in Criminal Justice and is working on his doctorate, having also completed an elite terrorism course in Israel. I would happily

introduce him to you all at a Town Hall meeting, but that will have to wait a while. I will be meeting with him in the next few days and I look forward to building the kind of valuable relationship that I've had with our precinct commanders in the past. They do such a good job for us.

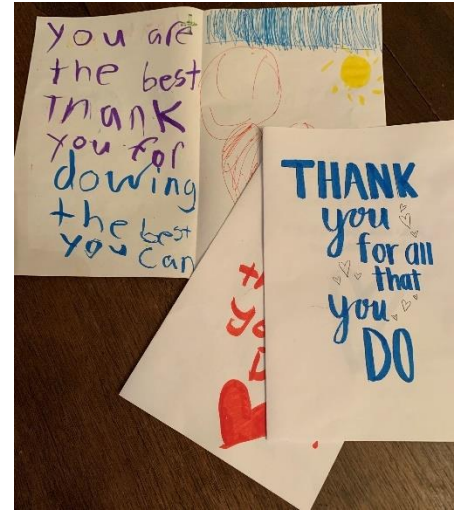
I hope everyone has gotten their new **Berkeley Lake City Directory** by now. If not, it should arrive in the next few days. If you sent your information in before the deadline and were not listed, please call City Hall at (770) 368-9484. A lot of work goes into the production of these, but nothing is published without your written permission.

For some time now I have participated in weekly conference calls with Dr. Toomey and other state officials which were arranged by the Georgia Municipal Association with the Governor's office. GMA has been told that no state officials will be available for conference calls in the immediate future. GMA will endeavor to find other "credible and neutral experts" to talk with mayors on the same weekly basis. **The information that was given this week was from the White House Coronavirus Task Force.** There's a lot of it, 9 pages, and I've [attached it here](#) for your use.

In my other **weekly call with Gwinnett mayors and Dr. Arona**, she gave the following local numbers as of July 28. Georgia has had 170,843 cases now with 3,509 deaths. Gwinnett has had 15,826 cases and 218 deaths. The Gwinnett hospital numbers are high now, but she sees some evidence that a hoped-for plateau is developing. The World Congress Center has reopened its temporary care beds that had been closed before to help with rising numbers of patients. Dr.

Arona is running about 4800 tests a week and hopes to double or triple that in the next few weeks. The demand for testing is falling somewhat and the processing labs that were so behind have largely caught up again. Fortunately, results are coming back now in 2-3 days instead of the 10-12 that they had gone back up to recently. That is very good news.

I also heard about rising hospital numbers when I talked recently to my contact at our nearest hospital in Duluth. As some of you know they called last week and asked if I could arrange some morale booster for their exhausted staff, similar to the lunch Berkeley Lakers took them a month or so ago. She said they had 30 very sick people at that moment waiting downstairs for rooms and that the staff would need quick pick-up food because they barely have time to eat.



On this coming Monday August 3 we are taking lunch and dessert for all the staff on the COVID floors and for the lab staff. Lunch will be paid for by Jill Rice, Tracey Settlege, and Anne Carpenter. Desserts are going to be provided by Kathy Strickland and Robin Sansone. Bless these ladies, BIG TIME! I have a few thank you cards made by kids, and I’m told that means more to the staff even than food. The BLOSOMS kindness group is taking dinner to our police precinct twice this week and they have been collecting similar thank you cards. If any of you parents can get your kids to do a few more for the hospital staff, that would be great. Or if any adults want to write a brief note of appreciation, I know it would mean a lot to them. We need to help keep their spirits up. **Please put any cards you can get in my mailbox by this weekend, or early Monday morning at the latest.**



July’s Yard of the Month award goes to Mike and Elaine McDowell. Their beautiful flowers and terraced landscaping are wonderful to see. Here’s a view from the lakeside.

Lois D. Salter