



July 20, 2022

You will recall perhaps from last month's Mayors Message that I alerted you to two issues that I would be discussing with the City Council and asked for your input. The first was the discussion of setting a new **millage rate by which we collect taxes from our citizens**. To follow up, I did recommend a drop in that rate from 1.746 to 1.455. Our property values are increasing so that for this year I believe we can drop the rate and still be able to collect enough taxes if we continue with our very careful fiscal management. There has been some concern on the part of some on the Citizen Finance Committee about doing this, since most other cities raised theirs last year and costs are really going up a lot now, as you know from managing your own budgets. But after much consideration by the citizens' committee and the council, we all think we'll be ok for this year. To give an example of the new rate unanimously approved by Council: for a home with a fair market value of \$661,113 in 2021, the city property tax was \$461.72. For a home of the same value in 2022, the tax will be \$384.77, which represents a **16.67% reduction in taxes year to year**.

Secondly, our very thorough staff and Council have done a lot of studying of our contract with **Waste Management** and comparison with other haulers and other city rates. That exploration of other companies has made our situation look good by comparison. The managers of both Waste Management and Latham Sanitation (our recycler) met with Council members to answer any questions and also came to the meeting for citizens so they could respond directly to any questions or concerns. You can listen to the voice record of that entire discussion on our website if you would like, but the brief version is what you have seen everywhere. Costs are going up and will rise here also. The discussion is about how much. From those of you who responded to my request for input to me or council members, the only ongoing complaint has been the changeable fuel surcharge we have previously allowed Waste Management for their rising gas costs. In response the Waste Management guy has agreed to set a firm rate at \$22 a month, which would total \$66 a year more, but no fuel surcharge. The company would continue to provide the special service we get on Earth Day. Council did not make any firm decision at our July meeting, and I have asked our staff to do more exploration and see what else we can find. This leaves more time for citizens to share their input.

Every year our city engages an **outside auditor** who is accustomed to digging through the finances of various municipalities to come in and study ours. It's a very thorough and time-consuming examination of everything about the way we spend money. I wish you all could have heard his report because it was glowing! He was very impressed and had no corrective actions or changes to suggest.



Thanks to all who came out to share our city’s **celebration of July 4th**. Here’s our new **County Commissioner Kirkland Carden** being welcomed by our **Mayor ProTem Rebecca Spitler**. A good time was had by all.

As you know I have been talking with our Precinct Commander about crime concerns. Since we have been so unaccustomed to any sort of crime in our city (other than speeding), anxiety levels are high, and our officers are working very hard. Their regular crime reports to me show Berkeley Lake continues to be safer than other cities at this point, but we certainly can never be immune, and we mustn’t be complacent about protecting ourselves and our neighbors. [Berkeley Lake has the third most expensive homes in the metro Atlanta area after Milton and Druid Hills](#). This obviously makes us a desirable target, which is somewhat mitigated by our City Marshals’ patrolling and watching over us, and by neighbors watching out for each other. On one occasion one of our Marshals observed a car leaving one of our homes that he knew did not belong there. He called the homeowner with his copy of the City Directory and when he got no answer he went to the door and knocked. The homeowner had been in the shower and the car leaving had been a cleaning lady, but that kind of attention and knowledge of our neighborhood is very valuable and appreciated. Our Marshals have a good relationship with the police and report what they see to them, as you should if you see a possible crime in progress. The Major tells me that for our own safety we should not confront someone unless they break into our home. We should get the best description possible of the person and/or car that we’re seeing and call 911 immediately. Criminals are looking for easily accessible valuables and weapons, so please lock cars and homes routinely. We don’t want to become “volunteer victims.” Call the police with any concerns that you have. It makes a difference when we look after ourselves and each other.

Speaking of our police, they are very encouraged by Berkeley Lake’s support of their **school supplies project** for local kids. You are always so generous when I ask for things like this, and my office is filling up with all kinds of notebooks, pencils, backpacks, crayons and so on. It’s more than I will be able to deliver myself on Monday afternoon, so the Precinct Commander is happily sending some cars to collect it. If you haven’t brought your stuff yet, please get it to City Hall before noon on Monday, July 25. This is a rare opportunity to help kids who need it and to let our police officers know how much we appreciate them!

I want to let you know about **Paint Gwinnett Pink, a 5K run and walk** that is a celebration of cancer survivors, a memorial to those lost to cancer, and hope for the future of Gwinnett residents. It is the signature fundraising event for our local Gwinnett hospitals, and every dollar raised stays in Gwinnett. These funds support things like tomosynthesis 3D mammography - the cutting-edge image technology that



## City of Berkeley Lake – Mayor’s Message

allows healthcare professionals greater visibility of breast structures and possible cancers with 15% fewer false alarms. This happy event will be at Coolray Field, and I hope everyone will come out to support the fight against breast cancer. This race is a qualifier for next year’s Peachtree Road Race, and all registration fees will help cancer patients locally.

As you have perhaps observed, I get information from Gwinnett’s Office of Emergency Management and try to share it with you when there seems to be something like a storm coming, etc. That office is now seeking input from us about the impact that hazards and disasters have on our lives, property, and the environment. The info will be used to update the County’s **Hazard Mitigation Plan**, and you can complete the survey by visiting [GCGA.us/HazardMitigationSurvey](http://GCGA.us/HazardMitigationSurvey). These folks do, I think, a good job for us, and I hope some of us will respond to their request for info that will help them to do an even better one. Please take a moment for this if you can.

The **farmers market** in Norcross continues **every Wednesday through August from 4-7 PM, but it’s now moving to Thrasher Park** for more shade in these hot days. Since I know many of our citizens are interested in recycling and also in helping the Neighborhood Cooperative Ministries, I wanted you to know that you can bring the following items to the market Info Booth:

- Natural wine corks (no plastic)
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids, cell phones with personal info removed
- Shoes in any condition
- Empty personal care item containers (mascara tubes, lotion containers)
- Clean towels and blankets
- Clean grocery bags
- Individually wrapped eating utensils and unopened condiment packets.



Many of you already know and appreciate the **Southwest Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce** which supports businesses in Norcross, Peachtree Corners, and Berkeley Lake. They have relevant speakers to inform and inspire, networking opportunities to build business referrals and growth, and volunteer opportunities that make our local area a better place for us all. There are also weekly (free) coffees that offer casual and friendly networking opportunities. John Nevins (who is on their board of directors) or I would be happy to

answer questions about this group if you have any. The mayors of Peachtree Corners, Norcross, and I spoke at their most recent breakfast meeting; and I always learn something when I go to these meetings. Please visit the [SWGCG website for more information](#) on upcoming events.

## City of Berkeley Lake – Mayor’s Message

Recently one of our City Marshals Rob Hiller and I met with a regional manager of Colonial Pipeline and emphasized the importance of **protecting our lake and the Chattahoochee from any possible spills** that could occur. Alpharetta-based Colonial Pipeline delivers about 45% of fuel consumed on the East Coast. Rob is quite knowledgeable about hazmat issues and for that reason (and others) is a real asset to our city.

I have two **featured Berkeley Lake businesses** today.



**CrossFit PPG** is led by TJ Fox who believes that staff and members are a family that support each other and lift each other up on a daily basis. It is more than just “working out.” Members gain valued information on nutrition, mobility, and being able to support an active lifestyle, regardless of fitness level or age. Crossfit PPG is located at 4505 Peachtree Industrial Blvd., Ste. A, and the phone number is 762-234-6809.

**Kleen Tile Xpress LLC** was started by Berkeley Lake resident John Harrington in 2008 and has been servicing the Atlanta area since then. They utilize a unique piece of equipment which cleans, sanitizes, and vacuums all in one pass, unlike pressure washing which merely moves dirt, algae etc. around and can damage tile and grout. The vacuum sucks the dirt, mold, algae out of the surface and grout while killing all bacteria and fungus. To support our community John has offered to clean the pavers at City Hall at his cost. References available on request. For a free estimate, call 770-855-8610.

 **Kleen Tile Xpress** Make your driveway & walkway look new again!



**WE CLEAN MOLD, ALGAE, MILDEW & GRIME**  
DRIVEWAYS • WALKWAYS • STAIRS • FIREPITS

**(770) 855-8610**

John Harrington • kleentile.john@gmail.com  
Berkeley Lake Resident

This month’s **Fun Fact about Berkeley Lake**: According to BestPlaces, the largest percentage of Berkeley Lake residents work in health care, while the second highest percentage works in professional, scientific, or technical services.

*Lois D. Salter*