



**COUNCIL MEETING
4040 SOUTH BERKELEY LAKE ROAD
BERKELEY LAKE, GEORGIA 30096
FULL MINUTES
JUNE 19, 2025**

ATTENDANCE

Mayor: Lois Salter

Council Members: Barbara Geier, Rodney Hammond, Scott Lee, and Chip McDaniel

City Officials: Leigh Threadgill - City Administrator, Dick Carothers – City Attorney

Members of the Public: 9

Members of the Press: 0

CALL TO ORDER

Salter called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM. A quorum of council members was in attendance.

AGENDA

Salter solicited a motion regarding the agenda.

Geier made a motion to accept the agenda as submitted. Lee seconded the motion. All council members were in favor and the motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING

Salter noted that there were no public hearings.

CONSENT AGENDA

Salter noted the following as items on the consent agenda and solicited a motion:

- a) Minutes of May 15 ,2025, Council Meeting
- b) Minutes of May 15, 2025, Council Work Session
- c) Financial Statements of April 2025 – Unaudited

Lee made a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda. McDaniel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

a) Council Chambers Audio Visual Upgrades

Threadgill: Last month this item was continued to get further clarification regarding the aesthetic impacts of the proposed audio-visual upgrades on council chambers. It is my understanding that aesthetic concerns have been addressed, at least to the extent discussed in work session. There may still be modifications needed at some point, but it seems everyone is ready to move forward. The proposed upgrades will provide better presentation opportunities to applicants, consultants and staff. This should reduce reliance on paper agenda packets, which benefits the environment and reduces staff time in packet assembly. Additionally, it would provide for a uniform display of information to be seen by all in council meeting attendance for a better experience. The project is anticipated to be funded by SPLOST. We discussed in work session adding a 5% contingency for an amount not to exceed \$32,025.

McDaniel made a motion to accept the proposal from Interactive Automation for Council Room Presentation at a cost not to exceed \$32,025 subject to approval by the city attorney. Geier seconded the motion. All council members were in favor and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

a) 2025 Stormwater Project: Engineer's Recommendation of Contract Award

Threadgill: The 2025 Stormwater Project consists primarily of repairs to stormwater infrastructure in Miramont, pursuant to last year's MS4 inspections, as well as other locations identified by staff based on observation or citizen complaint. The project was put out to bid in accordance with state law. Bids were opened on May 13, 2025. The City Engineer recommends awarding the bid to Cajenn Construction & Rehab Services, Inc. in the amount of \$299,816.00. He further recommends approval of a contingency in the amount of 10% of the project cost for a total of \$329,780.00. The project is anticipated to be funded by SPLOST. Staff requests that the council authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract with Cajenn Construction & Rehab Services, Inc. subject to the City Attorney's approval as to form.

Geier made a motion to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract for the 2025 Stormwater Project with Cajenn Construction & Rehab Services, Inc. in the amount of \$299,816.00 subject to approval as to form by the City Attorney and to further authorize a contingency in the amount of \$29,982.00. Lee seconded the motion. All council members were in favor and the motion passed.

b) O-25-258 – Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Sec. 78-111 – Walls and Fences

Threadgill: Following a citizen request for the fencing standards to be revised to mitigate adverse impacts of deer, staff prepared this amendment which increases the maximum fence height in side and rear yards to eight feet and removes time limits on temporary fencing for gardens. The Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval on June 10th, and it is on

for first read consideration tonight. Staff requests that you place the measure on first read and call for a public hearing to be held at 8 PM on July 17, 2025.

Lee made a motion to place O-25-258, an ordinance to amend Section 78-111, Walls and Fences, to repeal conflicting ordinances, to provide for an effective date and for other purposes on first read and to call for a public hearing to be held on the amendment at 8 PM on July 17, 2025. McDaniel seconded the motion. All council members were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Appointment of Council Member to Serve Unexpired Term of Rodney Hammond

Salter: This last item is a sad one for me and all on council. Rodney Hammond has recently let me know that he feels the need to retire from his seat on the city council. Rodney has always taken his responsibilities very seriously and in consultation with his beloved Andrita, he will now lessen his workload on city matters to find more time for his family. This is not good news for any of us on the Council or the City staff who have worked with Rodney for we hate to lose him. His commitments and contributions to our city stretch back for years and are truly unique and unparalleled. Rodney served for years as the outstanding leader of our Planning and Zoning Commission, after having served on the Berkeley Lake Homeowners' Association Board for many years also. The Planning & Zoning Commission was a very challenging responsibility, and after that Rodney moved on to many years as a City Council member. However, what is really remarkable about his contribution is that he actually changed the geographical boundaries of our city. Years ago, when I wanted to diversify our tax base by adding more business and commercial properties and giving us more control over nearby areas that could affect our homes, our lake, and our green space, I knew that this would be a hugely difficult task. I asked three men whom I respected and trusted, to reach out one by one to nearby business and property owners to make the case for their annexation into our city. Those men were Tom Kitchens, Dick Lackey, and Rodney Hammond. We owe them all a huge debt and they will forever be remembered in our city's history as changing its actual boundaries and character. Rodney with all his different avenues of service to Berkeley Lake is simply irreplaceable, and I will be forever grateful.

According to our city charter, a vacancy must be filled by council appointment until such time that an election is held for the vacated seat. Rodney's term was set to expire at the end of this year, so his at-large seat will be filled at the November 4th General Election. Until that time, the council has agreed to appoint Resa Mechling to serve out the remainder of Rodney's term. Please join me in warmly welcoming Resa. Do I hear a motion regarding the appointment as discussed.

Geier made a motion to appoint Resa Mechling to serve the unexpired term of Rodney Hammond. Lee seconded the motion. All council members were in favor and the motion passed.

Salter presented a token of appreciation to Rodney that states "In recognition and sincere appreciation of Rodney Hammond for all your years of outstanding service to the City of Berkeley Lake and its citizens." Having served on the City Council from 2014-2025 and the Planning and Zoning Commission from 2004-2013 and in various other ways whenever he was asked.

Carothers swore in Resa Mechling to serve as the appointed Council Member to replace Rodney Hammond, upon his resignation from council, until his term expires at the end of 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Susan Hanson, 3755 North Berkeley Lake Road, commended the council for considering raising the fencing height in side and back yards, but stated it won't help with the overpopulation of deer. She urged council to work with Peachtree Corners, which has a committee working on it. It would be important for us to work with them and hopefully we can get other cities to work on the same thing.

Lee asked if Hanson has a specific proposal for the city. Hanson responded that she does not but that they are working on it. The real problem is that we have an overpopulation of deer.

Lee asked if there is something specific that Hanson is asking the city to do or authorize. Hanson responded a way to reduce the population of deer in the city. She declined to give a specific proposal citing that it would be inappropriate for her to say. Lee further asked Hanson what action she was looking for the city to take. She said she wanted the city to think positively about the importance of reducing the deer population.

Lee asked if Hanson understood that wildlife management is not a function of the city. Hanson responded if not a function of the city council, who is responsible for wildlife in the city. Lee responded that it is a state function, wildlife division, department of natural resources. Hanson stated they do have recommendations for reducing the deer population.

Lee responded there was an extensive meeting over at Pinckneyville and they went through all the ways to reduce the number of deer including habitat mitigation, fencing, repellants, etc. All the information is provided out there.

Salter noted that Hanson is part of a group that has worked hard to come up with a survey and as she knows no one has seen the results of that. Hanson stated that they have not had a meeting to discuss that, but the problem is, and the DNR did say at the meeting, that the greenspace is moving towards a biological disaster because there's no food there for the deer.

Lee asked for clarification on which problem we're trying to solve, growth in the greenspace or the deer. Hanson responded the deer who are eating the growth in the greenspace. Lee stated he is in the greenspace regularly and there are no deer in the greenspace now. Hanson agreed that they don't go there because they have already eaten everything that was there for them to eat. The overpopulation of deer in our city has caused there to be no food in the greenspace so now they are eating in our yards. Putting fencing in the backyard will protect backyards, but we don't want fencing in everyone's front yard, so that's not a solution.

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Salter noted that she was hoping Hanson would have a chance to review that information and perhaps be able to answer the kinds of questions that Lee is asking. Hanson stated that something has to be done and that Peachtree Corners has said that no action is not a good solution.

Lee stated not every problem in the city is a problem for the city to solve. There is an abundance of mosquitoes in Berkeley Lake, so much so that his grandson required treatment at urgent care because of all the mosquito bites he sustained. He himself can't walk without covering himself in mosquito repellent and would prefer to not have to do that. Some municipalities recognize mosquitoes as a problem and what do they do, they spray insecticide. Hanson stated that if you spray at night, you don't harm pollinators that are out during the daytime. She stated that you should look for standing water in your and your neighbor's yard. Lee said that some individuals hire pest control companies to spray, but they're told that it won't work if your neighbors don't also spray. Should the city pay to have the city sprayed to kill all the mosquitoes? Would that be a city function? Hanson stated that it could be as long as it's done at night. All the companies that do it individually that she knows about do it during the daytime. Lee asked if it is a taxpayer function to have his yard sprayed for mosquitoes. Hanson stated not just his yard, but the whole city, but she isn't equipped to make that decision for the city. She is equipped to make the decision that the overpopulation of deer is very important and needs to be addressed. It can't be done individually but done as a group.

Lee stated he was using mosquitoes as an analogy and that it has been suggested that the city should use taxpayer money to have deer killed on private property. Killing a certain number of deer would be a temporary resolution. Hanson agreed we need to have a proposal for multiple years, it's not a one year thing. Lee noted the killing of deer would just be a partial reduction. What percentage reduction would be right? Hanson responded that is something for the DNR to say. In her yard, five years ago there were no deer in her front yard in the daytime. Last year she had five deer in her yard during the day. This year there are ten to fifteen deer in her yard in the daytime. Lee asked what the right number would be. Seven? Five? Hanson said it's bad for deer to be out during the daytime, they are nocturnal creatures. They have become so used to humans that they aren't afraid anymore. She asked the city council to think about a program to reduce the number of deer in our city forever. Ten years ago, Hanson never saw deer during the daytime.

Lee asked if this should be taxpayer funded. Hanson said she didn't know it could just be allowing the culling of deer in the city. Lee asked who would be doing it, who would pay for it, who would kill the deer? Hanson responded that it needs to be discussed and decided.

Lee asked if the deer management committee has done any research. Hanson said they had not. They are trying to get people to realize it is a huge problem and needs to be addressed.

Lee acknowledged that it's a huge problem. Hanson asked if Lee agreed that something needs to be done. Lee responded that it is a nationwide problem caused by habitat destruction.

Hanson said that the only thing we can control is our city. We can't control the state of Georgia. Lee stated that we can't control habitat reduction. Lee noted that he had sent Hanson an article that said the way to keep deer from coming is to stop planting things that the deer like to eat. Hanson said the other thing is the deer are eating plants that they didn't use to eat. Native plants need to be planted to help the environment. Some plants that deer won't eat are non-native invasive species and should not be planted because they are bad for the city because they don't promote the rest of the wildlife for the city.

Lee stated the city could get behind a program of encouraging people to plant native plants and to protect native plants. We could fence off a section of the greenspace for a native plant garden. If we move in the direction of restoring habitat and native plants, that's a direction we can all move towards. Hanson noted that it's very difficult to say that you will fence it in and restore the native plants that we have had.

Hanson discussed monarch butterflies and how milkweed was planted in the pollinator garden at city hall and the deer ate it. Lee said if you don't plant it, the deer won't come. Hanson said if you can't get it to grow, we can't promote monarch butterflies. Lee reiterated that if the question is about restoring native plants in the greenspace, everyone is agreeable to that.

Salter thanked Hanson for her comments. Hanson noted she is very strong on the environment. Salter stated that she believes we all feel that way about the environment.

Sue Swanson, 845 Lakeshore Drive, stated that they have done some research and are planning a bigger review because some of the questions are evidence based. She noted that she was thinking about the fencing and has a pro/con list and some additional questions. Fences might keep deer out of back and side yards. Fences may help to create islands where understory can rejuvenate over time. Swanson is all about the animals, except for the deer, that can no longer live here and in her yard. After a while, fences may protect understory growth that will allow some of the other animals to return. It is only little islands, but a positive thing, and it would help gardeners. Deer can jump ten feet and she wants to put it out there that eight feet may not be high enough. We will see fairly quickly. But what about front yards, that may be the majority of someone's yard, like mine. Twenty deer at a time are in her yard, but she uses a 3-step behavior modification that works quite well. Front yards are huge on the hill. Most of her land and all of the sun is in the front yard. What about that area? There is no understory there. She wanted to clarify that temporary fencing for gardens wouldn't be allowed around the entire front yard. Threadgill noted that part of this is aesthetics and that the proposed amendment is based on what is standard in other cities. Threadgill stated that she doesn't believe that there will be a way to protect every yard from the deer. Temporary fencing for a garden in the front yard would be allowed, but the intent is not to allow temporary fencing around the entire front yard.

McDaniel noted that it isn't just the height of the fence, but also the size of the fenced area. Deer don't like to jump into small, fenced areas. It is combination of things, more than just height.

Swanson thinks the 8-foot height will work, but it may not be if deer can jump to heights of 10 feet.

Salter noted that the public comment is limited to 2 minutes and asked for Swanson to send any additional comments in writing.

Swanson made one last point that if everyone does the 8-foot fence there is the chance that more deer end up in the greenspace and there could be more devastation there, which is an undesirable outcome.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, McDaniel moved to adjourn. Geier seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Salter adjourned the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Submitted by:



Leigh Threadgill, City Clerk

