

Mayor's Message

April, 2009



Berkeley Lake's Spring **Earth Day** is April 18, and there is a flyer included about that and other city activities in April. Since we have no parking in the usual space for trucks on Earth Day, I asked the principal at BL Elementary to let us use their parking lot. She was very kind about accommodating us in this way. Do remember the change in location to avoid confusion, and remember to bring your proof of residency. A driver's license showing a BL address is fine.

City Hall is on schedule to be completed by June 8. We are ordering furniture now, and the new playground equipment and landscaping will be coming in before too long. We will have a grand opening celebration when all is ready to welcome you to your new building and playground.

Some of you may remember when the City had a professional **traffic safety study** done a couple of years ago. We got some good recommendations, but the study showed that the greatest problems were not on city streets, but on the two that are county roads – BL Road and Bush Road. I made a presentation recently to the county DOT representatives and the Gwinnett Citizen Review Committee for transportation projects to ask for recommended improvements. You can go on our website to see the StreetSmarts study for yourself, if you like. It recommends roundabouts and median islands on BL Rd. and a roundabout on Bush at the River Mansions entrance. If you have any thoughts about these, please feel free to call me.

If any of you have interest in becoming more involved in your city, please consider working on a committee, or possibly the Planning and Zoning Commission. There is information about them on our website and you can let me know what most appeals to you as **an area of service for your community**. Sometimes new committees are created, or people have to leave their positions for various reasons, so even if there's no opening at the moment it helps to know people who would be willing to serve when needs arise. It is a good way to get to know your neighbors and to make your city a better place to live.

In February I delivered my **State of the City** address which you can read on our website.

The county is about to replace the **water main** from 130 Lakeshore Drive to the intersection of Lakeshore at North BL Rd. They will be replacing a dual main system which includes a 4" asbestos cement pipe and a 6" cast iron pipe with a single 8" ductal iron pipe. The replacement will address issues of breakage of the asbestos cement pipe and inadequate water availability for fire fighting. Currently they are staking and surveying for the design, but the actual work won't be performed until after the end of the year or later.

I recently met with the Director of Gwinnett County's Department of Water Resources about the continuing **water shortage** problems and resultant effects on our citizens. She said people have

responded to the drought conditions with a sharp drop in water consumption, for which citizens should be thanked. The rules are now changing to allow drip irrigation and soaker hoses. However Lake Lanier is still low and a new tiered pricing structure is being implemented. It used to be that the more water we used the less it cost. Now high usage can move you into a water surcharge fee. Details are being mailed in your water bills.

In speaking with the police recently, one officer referred to what he called “**volunteer victims.**” He asked me to urge our citizens not to make it easy for criminals. For example, he said when he looked into a recent group of “entering auto” crimes in Gwinnett (things stolen from people’s cars) he found that 50 out of 60 cars had been left unlocked. He emphasized that “community policing is not just us,” (the police). As citizens, we have to look out for ourselves, and each other. In spite of their best efforts, police can’t always protect us without our cooperation.

Parents and high school students may want to know about the **Natural Resources Conservation Workshop** for rising 10th 11th, and 12th graders. It will take place June 7-11 on a college campus in Tifton. You can download the application from www.abac.edu/psbo/nrcw.

The following sections of our **City Code of Ordinances** have been changed in the last few months. Details are available on the website.

Chapter 78, Sections 89, 196, 197, 198, 317 Adopted December 18, 2008

Chapter 14, Section 181 Adopted December 18, 2008

Chapter 2, Section 39 Adopted December 10, 2008

Chapter 78, Section 201 Adopted November 20, 2008

Chapter 14, Section 215 Adopted November 20, 2008

Chapter 78, Section 65 Adopted October 16, 2008

Chapter 70, Sections 1 and 3 Adopted October 16, 2008

The **Georgia Piedmont Land Trust**, formerly the Gwinnett Open Land Trust, recently announced that our City Council member Rebecca Spitler was elected president and will lead the land trust's mission of growth in land conservation throughout the Piedmont region. Rebecca has served on their board for some time as Berkeley Lake’s representative. We are fortunate to have her in this position of leadership with the organization that holds the easement on our greenspace. If you would like further information about the organization, visit their website at www.gplt.org.

You may have read in the news about a **current dispute** between Gwinnett County and its cities. Here is a very brief clarification and more is available on our website. Georgia law requires that county and city governments reach agreement on how they deliver all services to property owners and how taxes are charged to avoid double-taxation. At present, all Gwinnett taxpayers are taxed at the same rate, inside city limits or not, even though Gwinnett County does not provide some services inside cities. This arrangement results in over-taxation of city property owners. Unfortunately for all taxpayers, Gwinnett County has filed a lawsuit against each city. The next step is court-ordered mediation. When this is over, some city taxpayers could see a rollback of their county taxes, because they will no longer pay for services they don’t receive.

Lisa D. Alter