



April 29, 2011

We have received the results of the **tax equity study** commissioned by city council to look into any possible unfair aspects of our tax rate as a result of where people live in the city. The company which got the bid to perform the study was Governmental Enterprises down near Savannah, and they have spent quite some time working on it. They interviewed county tax assessors, all our homeowner association representatives individually, and many others as you'll see in their report. I wanted all our citizens to have a chance to review and study the report before attending a **Town Hall Meeting** where they could ask the experts whatever questions they had. That meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, May 14th at 10:00AM in City Hall**. These gentlemen are coming up from Savannah to clarify anything that remains as a concern for you, so please be there if you have any. If you are unable to attend but have questions, please email them to me and I'll try to get you an answer. You can read the [complete study results](#) on our website. If you have no computer availability, please come by City Hall for a copy. This study cost the city \$23,900 so let's get the most out of it by clarifying all issues.

Many of our citizens have been concerned about the effect on our local schools and property values of the planned **public school redistricting**. I shared information about this with a copy of the school system's input form on our website some time ago and via email to council members and HOA presidents. Evidently many of you responded and got your input forms in to the school board before that vote. I had dinner with the principal of BLES and school leaders and spoke afterward at a meeting with school board members, as did some of you. I think our concerns were heard and made a difference. This kind of issue does affect our property values, so even if you don't have kids in the local schools currently, it pays to pay attention and make your wishes known.

Congratulations to **Leigh Threadgill**, our part-time Deputy City Administrator who recently had a baby girl. For the next few months we will be doing without Leigh as she gets baby Adeline off to

a good start in life. We all wish them well.

I continue to struggle with **FEMA** and will have a formal appeal completed and submitted to them by May 9th. GEMA is assisting me in this and I continue to be most grateful for their support. FEMA will have 60 days to respond after that. We recently received an additional \$14,000 from FEMA, but that is a drop in the bucket relative to what I think we should be reimbursed under the law. I know it's been a year and a half, but we cannot give up on this process, no matter how long or difficult. Thanks for your patience.

Speaking of long and difficult processes, it is quite a task to get our city rated for bond sales. Tom Rozier has become the "**basement creature**" at **City Hall** as he digs through years and years of old records to collect all the necessary data. He has not complained about this additional work on top of picking up Leigh's work during her maternity leave, and I thank him for his cheerful extra efforts.

City Hall's **Blue Heron Art Gallery** is featuring the First and Second Place winners of the Berkeley Lake Elementary School's 2010-2011 Reflections Fine Art Competition. Reflections is a national competition sponsored annually by PTA. Students had to complete the statement: TOGETHER WE CAN ... as a theme for their creation. Come by City Hall and see nineteen works of art from our future artists. This show will be on display until May 24th.

The city has received some very positive media attention about the outstanding results of our **CAN-DO drive** to collect food for our local food bank. Under the creative and enthusiastic leadership of Diane Cuttino, our city volunteers distributed about 620 recycled brown bags with fliers to all of the homes throughout the city. The flier message requested that the bags be filled with canned goods, dry goods and personal items and left by each mailbox. That next Sunday, volunteers picked up a total of 126 bags. They packed every inch of Charles Carroll's truck and Tom Kolb's car. These two gentlemen delivered all our bags to the Norcross Cooperative Ministry the next morning. Plus, 5 additional bags were dropped at City Hall on the following few days. Over 21% of our citizens participated in this Can Drive, to help their less fortunate neighbors. Thanks to you all! The drive will be on-going at City Hall. So Diane says, Please drop by with a can or two whenever you CAN. And, don't forget to attend the BLHA 'CAN FILM FESTIVALS' at the beach this summer! The French folks in Cannes have nothing on us!

There continues to be a real flap about the **traffic safety** improvements implemented by the county on Berkeley Lake Road. I'm told by StreetSmarts that neither the medians nor the traffic

circle were done as they would have recommended, but that they are safe nevertheless. Recently in deference to complaints from Hermitage folks about the loss of the stop signs at their intersection, the county opted to replace the stop signs at Hermitage and North Berkeley Lake Rd; even though the traffic circle is there. Now Berkeley Lake citizens are calling to complain about that. I have tried to assist everyone with their concerns, but the county will make the final decision since it's their road, and they say they aren't sure this is resolved yet.

Lois D. Salter
Mayor

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