



February 26, 2014

I want to thank you for the responses we've received regarding the **pedestrian safety possibilities**. It's always reaffirming when our citizens take the time to let us know their thoughts and wishes on specific issues. The majority of you who responded were opposed to the changes suggested in the study, for the reasons I shared with you in the last *Mayor's Message*. That being the case, City Council will direct SPLOST funds to necessary street paving for the immediate future and continue to explore options for possible changes to make in limited areas that could support pedestrian safety.

We were all significantly affected by the two recent snowfalls. On the rare occasions when we have **snow** I always hear from a few people who want to know, "Can't the city do something?" The desire is certainly understandable. The answer to this is the same for every wish for city intervention. Yes, the city can do most anything that its citizens (that's you) are willing to pay for. To get an update on what that might be, I convened a meeting of our homeowner association presidents and we discussed it. Here are some factors to consider. Historically, previous councils have studied this issue and decided against treating the whole 10 miles of city streets for two reasons. One was the obvious cost concern, especially when our snow is usually of short duration and there is adequate warning from forecasters allowing people to prepare. I contacted county emergency personnel and was assured that they will get to us in an emergency. The second is that nobody wanted tons of loose dirt and salt or chemicals to wind up in our lakes and streams. In light of those concerns, previous councils created a policy that we would sand two specific areas where city streets meet larger busy roads in a downhill place that could slide cars into oncoming traffic - River Mansions Parkway at Bush Road and Ridge Road at North Berkeley Lake Road. We did treat those two potentially dangerous locations. The homeowner association presidents unanimously supported the continuation of that policy and opposed spending more of our tax dollars on more extensive treatment. I reported their discussion to our current City Council along with some detailed cost estimates that Tom Rozier had prepared. Our current Council is similarly not inclined to large scale changes and cost increases, but they agreed to keep an open mind about this and continue to review as necessary.

One other problem that occurs with snow beyond the difficult travel on streets is our kids' natural desire to enjoy the snow by **sledding** down the dam. They've done that in past years, but it cannot continue on the new dam. If you stand on the sidewalk at the bottom of the dam

and look up at it, you can see why. There are many small metal and concrete things protruding just above the ground which you can normally see but which would be largely covered by snow. These are part of a complex, extensive, and very expensive system of geotechnical monitoring devices which have been built into the new dam. I fear to think of a child flying down that slope and hitting a partially submerged piece of metal or concrete. For that reason, as well as the cost of repairing these geotechnical devices and the expensive sod (\$68,000) which is damaged by sledding ruts, we have placed multiple signs on the dam warning people against trespassing on it. Even on a nice sunny day, someone could trip over one of those devices and fall down the slope of the dam – not a good scenario. So please talk with your kids and help us to keep everybody off the new dam.

I went over to photograph some of these devices for this *Mayor's Message* but they're so small they don't show up well in a picture. While there I met with Karl Myers of Piedmont Geotechnical and his assistant, Jonathan Sharpe, doing their ongoing inspections of the dam. They were concerned about a spot where the sod had been disturbed and we will be repairing that. These detailed inspections will be continuing for some time; and we all want to take very good care of this new dam. They rejoiced with me over our now normal water levels and checked on outflow structures. **Isn't it wonderful to have our full lake back?!!!**



Another issue that our homeowner presidents discussed is their leadership within their neighborhoods in **emergency situations**. Since the county emergency management group is so much more effective than it was when the Berkeley Lake Emergency Management Agency (BLEMA) was created years ago, that volunteer group has disbanded. Tom Rozier and I will continue to disseminate emergency information from the county as we have recently during bad weather and Chet McQuaide from Berkeley Walk (who was BLEMA's last chair) has agreed to coordinate local emergency response info with HOA presidents. All agreed that the specific neighborhoods are where the best responses and knowledge of individuals needing help would be; and HOA presidents are the natural and recognized leaders within their neighborhoods. Chet, whom I've appointed our city's Community Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, has done some study and presented some helpful information to presidents. They agreed to explore within their neighborhoods to compile two lists, both self-reporting: emergency resources (nurses, physicians, chainsaws, anyone with special knowledge) and vulnerable persons (elderly, handicapped, chronically ill, oxygen dependent, etc.) They and at least one other leader within their neighborhood will have access to those lists. The city will get emergency info out to the two newest neighborhoods and make it available to HOA presidents for new people moving into their neighborhoods. If the presidents find a need for some citywide training, the city could coordinate and/or pay for that.

Our **Spring Earth Day** is coming up on Saturday, April 19th from 9:00 AM until 1:00 PM at City Hall. We expect the usual vendors to be present, and we're working to gain those commitments. More information will be provided as we get closer to this event, but it will again be only for the benefit of city residents.

One of our younger city residents has the Earth Day spirit already. **Andrew Lore** is picking up trash along Lakeshore Drive beginning at the intersection with South Berkeley Lake Road. He has taken this on as a personal project, and we could all only wish for more neighbors with such commitment to our community. Thanks to Andrew and his parents, Nick and Mandy Lore.

Thanks also to our Berkeley Lake Conservancy volunteers who not only beautify our community



but support our yearly recognition as a Tree City. Last Sunday we celebrated **Arbor Day in Berkeley Lake** by planting a Sweet Bay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) beside the guard rail on North Berkeley Lake Road at the Henderson Nature Sanctuary. Master Gardener Susan Hanson who leads our Conservancy tells me that this tree is an evergreen, native to the Piedmont and should grow well there. Here are Susan and Jim Gawlas planting the tree, but Rebecca Spitler, Donna Gawlas, and I also helped.

Our old **city directory** is outdated without the inclusion of our neighbors in Habersham on the River and Hermitage Plantation. Tom Rozier has found a way to streamline the process of creating a new one while reducing costs, and the city has contracted with Tlehs Publishing to publish the 2014 edition. That company is already selling sponsorships and city staff will be creating other content for the directory. I hope you will all respond to the email the city has sent to you to enter your data on the Tlehs Publishing website. Remember that this will be a 'from the ground up' directory, so you must respond to the email if you want to be in the directory. We'll address those who don't have email addresses later. By now I hope you've received the email containing your user name and password. Please check your spam folder if you haven't. We need everyone to participate even if you don't want to be in the directory because city staff will be able to view the data you input online and use it to work with citizens on an ongoing basis. **You can choose to omit your entire entry from the printed directory, but even if you don't want to be included, please update your information to help the city serve you better.**

Tom has given a lot of thought to creating choices for all of us. You have the option of providing email addresses for your family and each member of your family. You can opt to suppress publishing the address for your family and resident 1 and 2, but not relative (such as a child) email addresses, so if you don't want relative email addresses in the book, don't put them on the site. There is a field for entering birthdays for relatives such as children, but we do not

recommend entering anything in that field. If your last name is different from that of your spouse, we can add a second entry in the directory for you so that you will show up properly in the sorted directory. Just let us know. For those we knew of with different last names, we're sending separate emails. Questions can be directed to the directory@berkeleylake.com email address. We hope this new directory will benefit all of us.

At the suggestion of community leaders at my homeowner association presidents meeting recently, I contacted the head of Gwinnett Department of Transportation about two concerns. We requested a **sidewalk extension** along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard from Berkeley Commons south to connect with the existing sidewalk there. Secondly, they've agreed to fix the **flashing light** near Bayway Circle which is to alert traffic to cars entering the roadway. Currently, it never stops flashing. The county has put it on their list for repair and is studying the sidewalk extension.

It gets harder every year to find folks who have time to volunteer for our community and with that in mind I want to feature from time to time the ones who do. Since I've been writing in this issue about the Berkeley Lake Conservancy, I thought I'd feature their newest member – **Nicole DeLeone** who lives on Frederica Road in Hermitage Plantation. She and her husband Tom (a Technology Consulting Sales Manager for Oracle) purchased their home almost six years ago but for many years she would drive through Berkeley Lake and “admire the gorgeous community.” She says she “always wanted to live here. By moving here, I am literally living my dream!” I think that's true of many of us in Berkeley Lake. The DeLeones have three children: Olivia is 14, Tommy 4 ½, and Jack 3, plus a French Bulldog named Herbie. For 15 years Nicole was the CEO and owner of a commercial real estate brokerage and retail real estate development firm. She sold that business and currently owns a beauty products company which allows her to work from home, although her factory is in West Palm Beach, Florida. Nicole says, “I am really honored and excited to be a member of the Conservancy. It's my goal to help in preserving this area (a little slice of Heaven as I like to call Berkeley Lake!) for my generation and many more generations to come.” If you want to join her and the others on our Berkeley Lake Conservancy, please let me or Susan Hanson know.



Sis D. Alter