



July 11, 2014

Thanks to those of you who found the time to attend our Open House at City Hall on June 30<sup>th</sup> to find out more about our city's **Comprehensive Plan** update process and to give your ideas. This meeting was attended not only by our citizens but by Dan Reuter, Manager for Community Development at the Atlanta Regional Commission and his staff which is preparing the plan update for us. Council member Bob Smith and I enjoyed visiting with our citizens who came out that night and hearing what they had to say. We are collating the comments others sent via the survey that was available through my last Mayor's Message and on our website. When we complete that process I will share it with you so you can hear what your neighbors are thinking about a direction for our city.

Some of you have been beset by door to door solicitors again recently, so I want to update you on some **major changes we've made to our commercial solicitation ordinance**. It now covers not just on-site product sales but also services and intangible products like subscriptions, insurance, and orders for products. Most importantly, solicitors now must have been issued a permit from City Hall (\$75) for which they must first have obtained from law enforcement agencies a criminal background check, including fingerprinting, at their own additional expense. This permit, which includes a photo, will be issued to individuals, not companies, and must always be on their person and presented when requested. Religious and charitable organizations will be given a certificate to solicit at no cost, but they must first go to City Hall to register their intent to solicit in our city, provide info about who's in charge of their organization, etc. The city's goal in this is to make sure that people at your door are who they say they are, and are not a threat to you or your property. A lot of time and study has been given to these revisions, because we believe this is a compelling public safety issue.

Our **July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration** was a joy for young and old. There are things our city struggles to do because we are small, but I think we do July 4 wonderfully well by keeping it simple and neighborly. Our city rented the grounds surrounding the Chapel, decorated them, and had a great parade, as you can see here. Lou Mitcham and his volunteers cooked, served, and cleaned up lunch while others painted kids' faces and led them in games. Many thanks to my friends Lila and George Hunter and Amreeta Regmi for the children's activities. Amreeta is running for the state House of Representatives seat to represent our district and she's participated in multiple city and BLHA events. Lila is a preschool teacher who gave our kids a great time while George took the pictures you see here and many more.



George works for a software company, but his avocation is photography and he was kind enough to let me use these pictures. He generally prefers contributions to his favorite charity over money. If you would like to join me in donating, you can do so at <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/pethoodga> and help some animals, too. George has almost 100 shots, so if you want to see more or obtain his permission to use any, you can contact him at [george@images-by-george.com](mailto:george@images-by-george.com).

We are all very grateful to the ones of you who routinely pick up **trash on our roadsides** as you walk about our city. It not only makes things more pleasant for us all; it has a big impact on our property values as well. If you see someone break our city’s litter ordinance, please get a tag number and report it to our Ordinance Enforcement Officer or to Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful at [gwinnettcb@gwinnettcb.org](mailto:gwinnettcb@gwinnettcb.org) which will make a report to law enforcement officers. It helps if you can record the date, time, make and model of the car, license # and what type of litter. I have also asked that our security patrols be alert to this and to investigate trash for identifying information in it that we could use to cite violators.

**Signage around the city** continues to be a concern. Gene Rogers, our Ordinance Enforcement Officer, recently invited his colleagues who do that job for surrounding cities to meet with him in our City Hall and to collaborate on joint efforts. The ordinance enforcement officers from Norcross, Duluth, and Peachtree Corners took him up on that, and I’m hopeful that some cooperation among them will be beneficial to all of us in this part of the county.

I’m happy to report a slight **tax decrease**, not only in our millage rate, down from 2.67 in 2013 to 2.541 for this year, but in the total amount of taxes to be collected.

**Congratulations to Dick LoPresti**, Principal, LoPresti Capital, LLC who has recently been appointed to the Community Foundation for Northeast Georgia Board of Directors. Dick and his firm provide mentoring and business advisory services to not-for-profit organizations as well as small to medium sized for-profit companies. He has served our community well as president of Miramont’s Homeowner Association and now will be serving the whole region in this important leadership position.

As I have mentioned in previous editions, the city is planning to do some **road repaving** and has had a professional engineering evaluation of all the city’s streets to prioritize for this. We advertised for bids but because our job is smaller than most cities we only got one bid and it was quite high. We are currently exploring some other options that will make better use of your tax money, so I hope everyone can be patient with this process for a little longer.

**Save the dates: Fall Earth Day will be on Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**, 9 AM to 1 PM. As usual for Fall Earth Day we will also hold a **City-wide Garage Sale** which will be held on the previous Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup> and on that Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> between 8 AM and 2 PM, each day. Our **Berkeley Lake Fall Festival will be Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>** from 11 AM until 3 PM. The **Turkey Trot for Berkeley Lake Elementary School** will be early that same morning.

Again this year we are having a **School Supply Drive** for needy kids in our area who won’t have crayons, pencils, or much of anything to take to school in August. If you can help, please bring some to City Hall before July 28<sup>th</sup> and we’ll get them to the right place. They need book bags and pens, markers, notebooks and paper, blunt scissors - all kinds of things that you can pick up on your next visit to the store or perhaps find around your house. Please help if you can.

**Thanks to Pam Williamson** who is working to bring Google Fiber to Berkeley Lake for higher internet speeds. You can sign a petition for that at City Hall, or MacKenzie’s, Patton’s, SAI Foods, or Starbucks. She has also recruited enough of us to qualify our city as a Certified Wildlife Habitat Community. If you’d like to add your property to that list, please let Pam know.

**Remember to spend your dollars whenever possible with Berkeley Lake businesses. Unified Systems Management** has been providing a better IT approach to Atlanta businesses since 2000. Located in Berkeley Lake at 4720 Peachtree Industrial Blvd, Suite 101, USM brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise to small businesses and helps them design, navigate and leverage technology in a manner that supports and enhances their business and its bottom line. To learn more about USM, visit their [website](#).

Joanne Boldthen (at right) is a resident of Berkeley Lake who works as a **personal assistant for the elderly**. She takes care of seniors who value being cared for with dignity and love, and offers a variety of services to support their health and well-being. To discuss any of her services, please call Joanne at [404.372-4921](tel:404.372-4921) or email to [jeboldthen1@gmail.com](mailto:jeboldthen1@gmail.com).



*Lois D. Alter*