



March 19, 2020

Well, y'all, it surely is a weird time! I think you have probably all read my **notifications canceling** the Berkeley Lake Conservancy's pruning seminar. The Town Hall Meeting with our Police Precinct Commander is postponed indefinitely, and we may have to postpone our Earth Day collection of things you no longer need. It's still currently scheduled for April 18th and we'll wait a couple of weeks to see if we need to change that. You can also contact a charity supporting victims of domestic violence to come pick up things at your house when they are in our city on March 27th. If you wish to donate, please call (770) 807-3915 or visit their [website](#). Besides clothing, they also need household items (kitchenware, knick-knacks), small electronic items (computers, stereos, radios), cleaning supplies and paper products (toilet paper, paper towels).

I think most of you have also read the information I have sent out via Nextdoor and the Berkeley Lake Residents Facebook page about my conference call with the Governor and **various other information** that I hope has been helpful. The brief version of all that is that we all need to be washing hands very thoroughly, staying home whenever possible, and "social distancing." Dr. Lindsay Jernigan suggests trying to see all these upsetting restrictions as "acts of mass cooperation intended to protect the collective whole...in hopes that the biggest wave can pass without engulfing too many of the vulnerable amongst us." Since I reported on the Governor's call, I also had one with Dr. Audrey Arona, our regional director of public health and Greg Swanson, Gwinnett County's director of emergency management. Both of these people inspire a lot of confidence in me, in spite of some real difficulties that they face. They are preparing a drive thru testing site to open shortly in Lawrenceville, but the tests are still very limited in number and take 5 days for results. No one will be tested without prior authorization.

Today I had another conference call with metro mayors and Dr. Carlos del Rio, a professor of medicine at Emory University who is a recognized expert on infectious disease and COVID-19. He has been advising the White House and expects them to have more announcements for the country shortly. He said we are late in this fight in our country and we are "going to pay for it." Cases are doubling in the US about every 6 days and we are still really undertesting. Experts believe there are 10 times more cases than are being identified. This is very different from the flu because it has a mortality rate 10 times greater and we have no pharmacological interventions. The incubation period is about 5-14 days, so some asymptomatic people around you are contagious but unaware. We can reasonably expect half a million deaths in the U.S. Not only do we not have enough tests, we are backlogged on the ones we do have and can't get them processed in a timely manner. He says we should expect recommendations to change because we are figuring this out as we go along. Keep washing your hands thoroughly (he recommends every hour) and clean surfaces around you often.

Sandy Springs and Brookhaven have closed their city halls and others are considering it. Norcross has declared a city state of emergency. I discussed this with our very dedicated small staff and to their credit they want to keep coming to work. I have decided that **City Hall** will be closed to walk-in visitors at least

until March 30th, and your city council supports that decision. There is much work to be done and our staff will continue to be available during regular hours to conduct business by telephone and email. Please call (770) 368-9484 or go to berkeleylake.com if you need additional information. Business that must be conducted in-person will be by appointment only. Your understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated as we work to keep our citizens, visitors and staff healthy during this public health emergency.



Speaking of staff, we are about to lose **Pat Chapman** who has served our city wonderfully well for 8 years. After a career spanning 44 years of service not only to Berkeley Lake but also Fulton, Gwinnett and Barrow Counties and the City of Loganville, she is retiring and we will miss her expertise, not to mention her patience with us all. She will be replaced by **Leigh Threadgill** whom many of you already know, because Leigh held the position for almost 6 years before Pat. Leigh moved to LaGrange 8 years ago when her husband took a position as pastor of a Presbyterian Church there. Leigh has also worked for the Cities of Wilmington, North Carolina and LaGrange, Georgia as well as Forsyth County and we are fortunate and delighted to have her back.



One of our neighbors, Katrina Grier is PTA president at our local middle school and working with a group called **Unite Duluth** to collect food for hungry families right here in our area. Please, if you want to contribute, you can leave bags on her porch at 718 Lakeshore Drive or call Katrina at (770) 329-2893 and she will be happy to pick them up. See additional information [here](#).

As you know from a past Mayor’s Message, the **water main project** is beginning its first phase. Expect the presence of construction crews in the area on weekdays during business hours, as well as intermittent lane closures on both Little Ridge Road and South Berkeley Lake Road for the duration of the project. In addition, there will be limited work performed on Saturdays which will also result in limited lane closures. We are not anticipating any interruption in water service at this time. If at any point a non-emergency need to shut-off your water arises, the county will provide the affected homes with a 48-hour notice.



Many thanks to Julie Huntington and her volunteer crew who collected 125 bags of food from your homes on our recent time change collection as well as a \$400 donation from the David Quin Fund. Half went to the Norcross Co-op and half to the one in Duluth. Julie tells me, “While the rest of the world is hoarding, our people give more generously (our last food drive collected about 85 bags, compared to this week’s 125). I do not look through the bags - there are too many! - but I saw bottles of hand sanitizer and several packages of toilet paper and paper towels!” Thanks to all of you who contributed, even giving your toilet paper! That’s a shocker. Also, thanks to Julie’s volunteers: **Susan Hanson, Kayla English, Debbie Peters, Janine and Jim Irwin, Anna, Christopher, and Jamie**

Huntington. Some walked miles to deliver the flyers and others drove miles to pick up and deliver all the food.

Some of our most generous citizens are leaders in the broader community beyond our city, and I am often asked by them for donations from our city to various causes that they support. This is a common practice among other cities, but I made a decision years ago as mayor **not to give tax dollars taken from our citizens to run our city to charities** that I or the Council might choose. There are all kinds of great causes out there and I choose to support some of them personally, but I believe our citizens should be able to make their own decisions about charitable gifts personally as well. What I have done is to use my bully pulpit to publicize good causes that would be significant to our city and to encourage our citizens to help if they so choose, and that has been very successful. Although other cities do donate with tax dollars, I

don’t believe any city has been as generous as Berkeley Lake in all our community contributions. We are collecting for something virtually all the time at City Hall and/or in various other ways. I thought I should publicize that policy here now in the hope that people could understand it and head off future disappointment.

Each year, Lake Berkeley Chapel awards \$1,000 **scholarships to help pay for college expenses for Berkeley Lake individuals** who have a proven sense of community and academic responsibility. The Chapel’s intention is to brighten and strengthen our community through our future leaders with these scholarships. This year, there will be a total of four awarded. One will be given in memory of Ashley DesRoches, given by her mom, long-time resident Lane Shutt and Ashley’s sister, Leah Shutt Smith. Click [here](#) for further info and application.

I read somewhere that when Shakespeare was quarantined because of the plague, he wrote King Lear, and when Sir Isaac Newton had to leave university because of the plague, he invented calculus and defined the theory of gravity. I’m just hoping to clean out some closets, but I do intend to be alert to good things that can come out of this experience. Usually if I go looking for good things, I find them in unexpected ways. I have found my Berkeley Lake neighbors to be some of the most creative and generous people I’ve ever met. It will be interesting, and probably inspiring, to see what you all find and create in this **strange time**. I trust you will continue to look out for your neighbors and to help each other. Now more than ever, I’m glad I live in Berkeley Lake.

Lois D. Salter