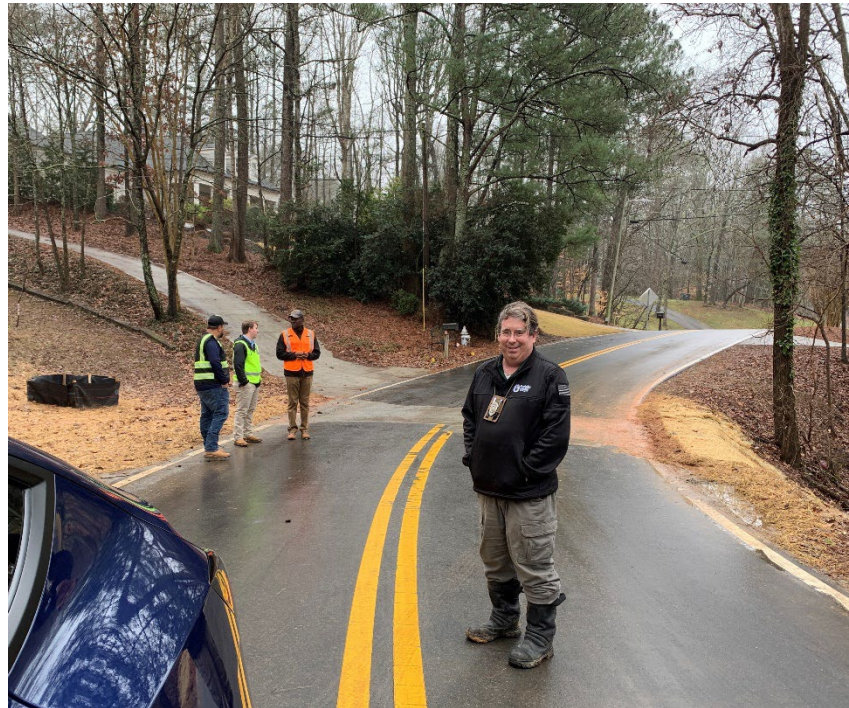




January 23, 2023

There has been a lot of conversation lately about **roadwork in our city** and I thought a little more explanation here might be helpful. All the streets in our city are the responsibility of the City of Berkeley Lake except Berkeley Lake Road, Bush Road, and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Those are county roads, and they are managed by the Gwinnett DOT. Our city engineers and staff plan for and maintain, pave, and otherwise keep up the other city streets with your tax dollars and we work hard to do that well, at the least cost to you. This includes the stormwater infrastructure associated with our streets, which is a

particular challenge because of our city's topography. There are a lot of hills, streams, ponds, etc. that create our especially beautiful natural environment, but with the increasingly severe storms and more and bigger houses creating more impermeable surfaces, the water running down those hills is increasing in both amount and velocity. In spite of that, as you know, we are one of the very few cities that have resisted the temptation to levy a stormwater infrastructure fee, so all these costs come out of our regular city budget. Some of you have



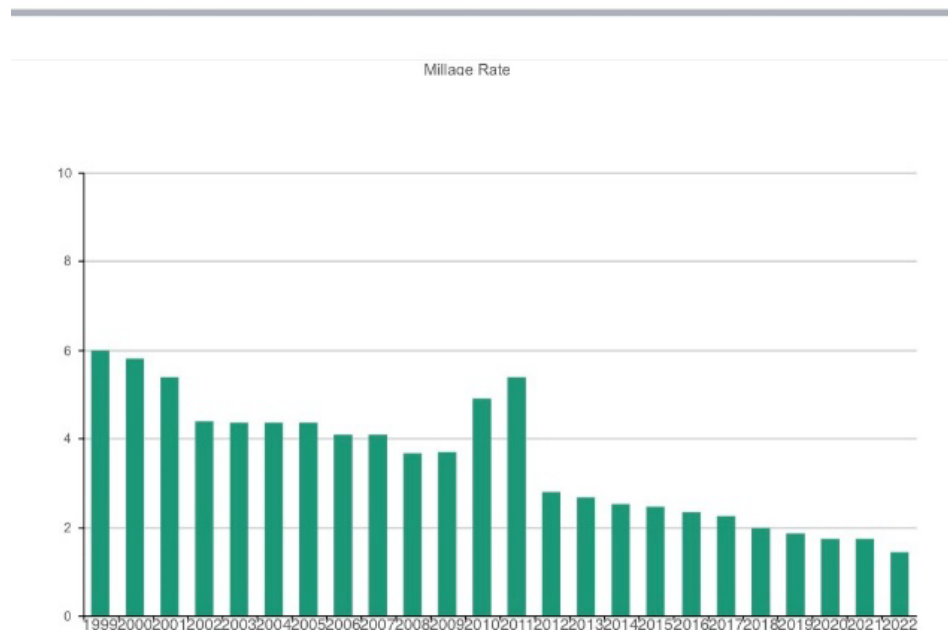
asked when all this work on stormwater infrastructure will be finished, a very understandable desire for us all. I regret my honest answer to that question must be "Never." We pay engineers to review our stormwater infrastructure throughout the city, at least yearly and to help us plan for the immediate needs. So as the challenges I've described continue (and perhaps grow), so must our monitoring, planning, and constructing. The oldest parts of our city, the old Berkeley Lake Estates, and Hermitage Plantation, will, of course, need the most work, and will bear the brunt of these construction activities. The best I can promise you is that I will try to keep you informed as best I can regarding these projects.

I mentioned the Gwinnett DOT above and want to point out to you that this coming **Saturday, January 28** you are welcome to attend a meeting with them nearby at the **Pinckneyville Park community center from noon to 4 PM**. County staff will be there for **“Construction Conversations”** and available to answer any questions that you have. They will even be feeding you lunch, but space is limited so if you’re interested, please register at [GwinnettCounty.com/DOTForum](http://GwinnettCounty.com/DOTForum).

Since I am talking more than usual here about **taxes**, I thought you might like to see our tax millage rate history. I didn’t keep up with it before I became mayor, but these are the numbers since then.

## Millage Rates by Year

<b>1999 – 6 mills</b>	<b>2011 – 5.386 mills</b>
<b>2000 – 5.8 mills</b>	<b>2012 – 2.8 mills</b>
<b>2001 – 5.4 mills</b>	<b>2013 – 2.67 mills</b>
<b>2002 – 4.4 mills</b>	<b>2014 – 2.541 mills</b>
<b>2003 – 4.35 mills</b>	<b>2015 – 2.47 mills</b>
<b>2004 – 4.35 mills</b>	<b>2016 – 2.36 mills</b>
<b>2005 – 4.35 mills</b>	<b>2017 – 2.26 mills</b>
<b>2006 – 4.1 mills</b>	<b>2018 – 2.00 mills</b>
<b>2007 – 4.1 mills</b>	<b>2019 – 1.88 mills</b>
<b>2008 – 3.663 mills</b>	<b>2020 – 1.75 mills</b>
<b>2009 – 3.687 mills</b>	<b>2021 – 1.746 mills</b>
<b>2010 – 4.9 mills</b>	<b>2022 – 1.455 mills</b>







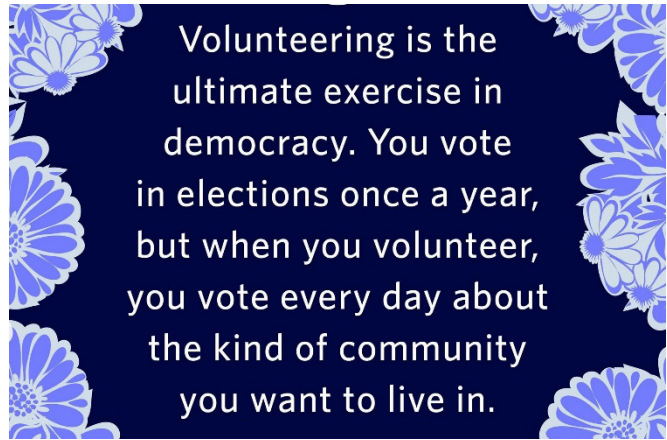
Last month 7 brave souls ventured onto the dam (with permission!) to prep the **Purple Martin houses** for the 2023 arrivals. They cleaned and disinfected all bird houses, leaving the gourds in the “down position” to be raised up in early February. The Purple Martin Team led by John Homonek consisted of Chris Kimberley, Steve Seitz, Steve Shores, Wynn Barton, Barry Sinnock and Mark Harris. These guys are serious and thorough in managing the project. John Homonek set up a retro-fit factory on his basement ping pong table early this year, and added front porches to all gourds while binge watching a complete TV series! The team collects data from the whole colony on how many gourds had nests, how many had unhatched eggs, how many had deceased young and how many had deceased adults. Chris Kimberley compiled the data and shared the results, comparing to last year. Let’s welcome the purple martins back to come and

eat all kinds of flying insects. They stay here into August each year before migrating back to South America. We love seeing them and their contribution to the community! Our colony is one of the largest in Georgia and a unique feature of Berkeley Lake. Initially started by Tom Kitchens, Nick Lore, Bill Lacy and others, our colony has been at this location on the dam for over 20 years. This has been a lot of work! Please thank all the guys when you see them.

We can also thank Ginny and John Nevins for putting on the **Christmas lights contest** again this year. The winner was the Bible household at 4225 South Berkeley Lake Rd. Thanks to them and to everyone who took the time to cast a vote producing 450 cans of food for the [Neighborhood Cooperative Ministry \(NCM\)](#). Additionally, the Nevins kicked in \$1000 so the NCM could buy what they needed most. Families that needed a helping hand this Christmas benefited from your Berkeley Lake generosity. Well done, everybody!



As I am thanking everyone, I particularly want to recognize all the volunteers that serve on our **city committees**. Every year in January I appoint people to these committees, and they work hard all year, studying our city finances, working to plant trees and manage our beautiful natural spaces, etc. You may remember that you were all invited last fall in my Mayor’s Message to participate on committees, and to let me know which ones you would be most interested in. If not enough people volunteer, I wind up begging, and many of these people have graciously consented, in spite of their very busy schedules. Please look over this list and thank them when you see them. They are your community leaders, and they make a big difference for us all.



**Mayoral Appointments for 2023**

**Planning & Zoning Commissioner**  
**Georgia Piedmont Land Trust Board Member**

Rand Kirkus  
Rebecca Spitler

**Financial Affairs** (Liaison – Bob Smith)  
John Pendleton - Chair  
Calvin Grier  
Dorris Hollingsworth  
Ron Mechling  
John Small

**Arts Committee** (Liaison – Chip McDaniel)  
Chris Kimberley - Chair  
Janine Brinton  
Scott Brown  
Mikal Kitchens  
Ginny Nevins

**Conservancy** (Liaison – Rebecca Spitler)  
Susan Hanson - Chair  
Kaye Berg  
Louise Gabron  
Jim Gawlas  
Sue Swanson

**Parks Committee** (Liaison – Leigh Threadgill)  
Amy Voss - Chair  
Casey Case  
Lisa Ribeiro  
Phyllis Tatgenhorst

**Neighborhood Liaisons**  
Berkeley Walk and Berkeley Commons  
Berkeley Field and Habersham on the River  
BLHA and River Mansions  
Miramont and Hermitage Plantation  
River District and Commercial Areas

Rodney Hammond  
Chip McDaniel  
Scott Lee  
Rebecca Spitler  
Bob Smith



I recently joined the mayors of Norcross and Peachtree Corners in hosting an evening gathering for all of our **state legislators** to meet and get to know other mayors and political leaders in Gwinnett. As you know, the Ga. legislature is now in session, and much of what they do in these next few weeks will have a significant effect on all of us. Therefore, it behooves us all to pay attention, to get to know the legislators, and to make sure they understand what our citizens think and need. One of the issues that will be most significant this year is a push from residential developers and builders to deny cities the right to uphold building standards that our citizens and local elected officials have chosen for our

communities. They attempt to justify this removal of local control by pointing out that housing costs have gone up and that some low and even middle-income people cannot afford to live where they would like. To quote Governor Kemp: "I have been a local control governor, and I understand that, but you can't have our treasures and our input and our commitment to helping create jobs in your community, but then not have places to live or be restrictive," he said, "We want people to live in a community where they're working." Most city leaders continue to believe that we should be allowed to represent the wishes of our citizens regarding what can be built in our neighborhoods. Please give this and other difficult issues that will come before the legislature this year your thorough and informed consideration.

**Save the date for our city’s Earth Day on Saturday, April 22** from 10 AM to 2 PM. We have already booked Fully Furnished Ministries for furniture repurposing and Waste Management for “big trash” as well as the metal recycling guy. The Rice Settlege Team has again committed to sponsor the big shredder truck this year. Thanks Jill and Tracey!

This month’s **Fun Fact about Berkeley Lake:** The median household income in our city is \$145,625, which is 112% more than the U.S. median income.

*Lois D. Salter*