

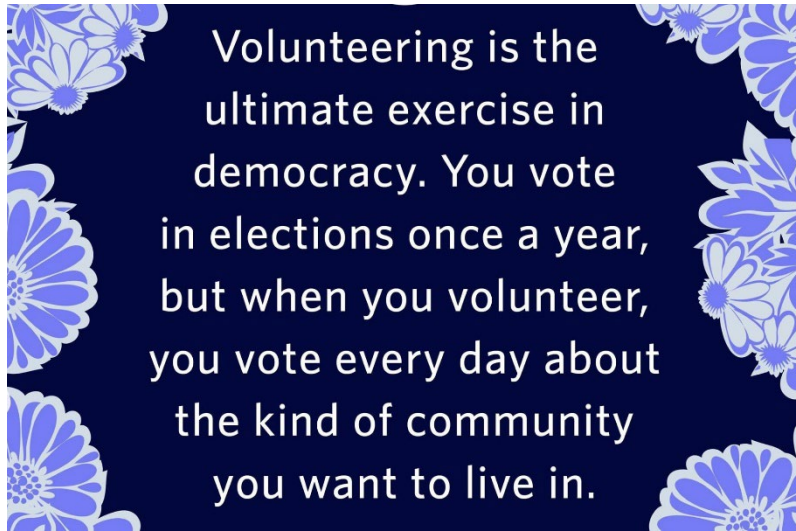


January 25, 2024

In starting a new year, I want to remind everyone that **City Council meeting agendas are posted on our website along with all the documents that relate to that agenda a full week in advance.** This gives you all the information and time you will need to consider issues conveniently, to learn more about them, and possibly to come to the meeting to share your thoughts or concerns about things. After meetings, we publish on the website not only the written minutes, but also a voice recording that you can listen to in the comfort of your own home. **Citizen participation is so important, and it's a great strength of our small city.** The last three Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, and the last City Council meeting were all before "a packed house" of citizens, so clearly a lot of you are paying attention and are passionate about issues. If you couldn't make it to these meetings, don't worry, because you can still catch up. One of the things that makes me most proud of our city is the way we make it easy for our citizens (who are a very intelligent bunch) to hear every meeting (P&Z, City Council, etc.) at their convenience when they are too busy to attend in person. It's right there on the homepage of our website. Click City Council on the left, and you will see the availability to hear the voice record, see the agenda, and study every document related to our considerations. We also (in my opinion) have an unusually good City Council currently, and by knowing what's going on in advance, you have time to discuss issues with them and share your thoughts. **Our next City Council meeting is at 8 PM on Thursday, February 8.** Our City Attorney and our City Engineer have been booked to attend to answer questions and provide any clarification that may be needed.

Two things happen every year in January. One is that all of our council members, in effect, "renew their vows" publicly to certain principles of **civility in managing the business of our City.** The City Council got together some years ago with a consultant hired from UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government and worked hard to hash out a [Code of Conduct](#) which you can read here. It's important that we refocus on it at least yearly and commit to it again as we begin a new year. Our Code requires me or whoever is conducting a meeting to manage it in such a way that people disagree, when necessary, about ideas with courtesy and mutual respect. As I watch other

governmental entities descending into personal attacks, name-calling, or worse, I continue to be grateful for the way we work together to resolve difficulties in Berkeley Lake. I think this Code is something we can all be proud of.



Also, in January of each year I appoint willing citizens to **our city's committees**. These volunteers work hard all year, studying everything about our city's handling of money, working to plant trees and manage our beautiful natural spaces, etc. I recently read in a book by Max Lucado: "A 2010 study of more than 4500 American adults revealed that of the people who

volunteered an average of more than 100 hours per year, 68% reported feeling healthier. Also 73% said that volunteerism "lowered my stress levels," and 89% stated that service "has improved my sense of well-being." You may remember that you were all invited last fall in the Mayor's Message to let me know which committees, if any, you might be most interested in. As always, I was able to help everyone who volunteered to find a spot to serve. If not enough people volunteer, I wind up recruiting (i.e. begging) for help. The following people have one way or another accepted the call to serve you in the coming year, and I tremendously appreciate their contributions all year long. Please thank them when you see them.

Conservancy

Susan Hanson – Chair
Kaye Berg
Louise Gabron
Jim Gawlas
Sue Swanson

Arts

Chris Kimberley – Chair
Britt Collins
Tom Merkel
Ginny Nevins
Jason Ouimette

Financial Affairs

John Pendleton - Chair
Calvin Grier
Dorris Hollingsworth
Ron Mechling
Steve Rea
Kathy Sanders
John Small

Park

Amy Voss - Chair
Lisa Ribeiro
Casey Case



Speaking of volunteers, Susan Hanson has for many years led our Berkeley Lake Conservancy. She has been working with our City Hall staff on arrangements for our **celebration of Arbor Day with a tree planting at City Hall on Friday, February 2 at 2 pm**, weather permitting. This year's project has been chosen at the suggestion of our City Marshal, Rob Hiller, who noticed that one of the trees in front of City Hall's Council Chambers has died. Susan suggested that a [native fringe tree](#) be selected to plant in its place. In the spring, it has creamy white flowers that look like a cloud and smell like baby powder. All who are

interested are invited to attend this celebration of Arbor Day and our continuing achievement as a **Tree City**.

I am particularly excited about something new that begins now with one of our committees – the Arts Committee. They have been working for quite a long time to organize a **photography contest for our citizens**, which will take place monthly. Photographs must be taken within our city, and they will be judged by the members of the Arts Committee. Winners will be celebrated in the Mayor's Message and on our website, displayed in City Hall, and some photographs may be shared with interested outside publications like magazines and newspapers. Moreover, Ginny Nevins, who is on the committee, has agreed to sponsor a prize for each monthly winner in the form of a \$50 donation to the charity of their choice! What a lovely thing to do! I think you're all aware that we live in the



midst of phenomenal natural beauty, and also that we are blessed with some unusually skilled photographers, but we want every ordinary amateur to be encouraged to give it a shot. It's called the **Berkeley Lake Lens** competition, and you can enter it by going to the LENS website: BerkeleyLakeLens.com. The committee chair, Chris Kimberley, and the technical advisor, Dov Jacobson, have worked very hard to create this way for you to share your photography with us easily online. You will find directions to join the contest before you enter a photo and if anyone needs help in managing this process, Chris has generously contributed his mobile number (404) 384-4386. Just text him a message first and he will call you back. Here is one of my favorite photos, taken in my yard at Berkeley Lake. I can't wait to see some of yours!



We all enjoy the **Christmas Lights Contest** so much every year! This is a gift to our community from the team at Windsor Realty which has been coordinating it for 10 years now. Lori and Doug Coons of 61 Lakeshore Drive are this year's winners, and the Runner-up is Cynthia

Currence of 204 Lakeshore. Windsor works hard every year to manage the contest, and then takes your votes in the form of canned goods to the Neighborhood Cooperative Ministry which is so effective in serving families who need a helping hand. Thanks to all, and congratulations to the winners!



We have already booked the service providers who will come on **Earth Day** to haul off things that you no longer need. This year it will be on **Saturday, April 20 from 10 AM to 2 PM**. Please save the date. Jill Rice has kindly agreed to sponsor the expense of a shredder truck again this year. Meanwhile, as I'm thinking about recycling things, I wanted to remind you that there is a **Glass Recycling place close by in Pinckneyville**



Park. Our waste remover no longer takes glass because it breaks in the transfer process and contaminates other recyclables rendering them unusable, but you

can access glass recycling info at GwinnettCounty.com/GlassRecycling. Remember that glass jars and bottles must be clean and empty before they are dropped off for recycling.



The Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held on Saturday, February 10, from 9 AM to noon at Gwinnett County Fairgrounds. [Here are some additional details](#) about the event including a handy list of all the things they will accept.



As many of you know, one of our City Marshals is a former professional firefighter. During the severe cold we had recently, he asked me to remind you **not to plug space heaters into power strips or household extension cords**. They are not designed for the amperage draw that a space heater can have and could cause a fire in your home. Thanks, Rob!

In my last Mayor's Message I talked about our **upcoming stormwater improvements project** which has been awarded to the Dickerson group. I like for you to know who the companies are that will be working in your neighborhoods and around your home so if you see a bunch of trucks and strange guys you can know who they are and why they are there. Unfortunately, the weather has delayed the beginning of these projects, but we hope to get that started next week. The locations are predominantly in Hermitage Plantation as a result of the last round of our stormwater inspections. In addition, a few other locations around Lakeshore Drive and River Mansions have been included as a result of issues identified by staff or citizens.



The American Red Cross is experiencing an **emergency blood shortage as our nation faces the lowest number of people giving blood in 20 years**. Please help if you can as soon as possible so that necessary medical procedures will not be unavoidably delayed for your

friends and family who need them. There is a site close by in Duluth that is open daily and you can get [information about that or sign up here](#).

This month's **Fun Fact about Berkeley Lake**: according to news published on December 23, the typical home value in Berkeley Lake has grown by 5% in the last year and by 54.8% in the last five years.

Looking forward to seeing all your pictures on Berkeley Lake Lens!

Lois D. Salter