



June 27, 2024

I am excited to let you know that our city has begun a big and very significant project that I think you will want to know about. We are going to do an overhaul of our zoning ordinance and other development-related ordinances! The city has been around since 1956 and many people have worked hard over all those years to resolve problems with ordinances. However, at this point we would really benefit from a complete review and update of all our zoning and development regulations with input from our citizens. To help us in this process we have hired an outside consultant team of experts. This project is intended to create updated, user-friendly regulations that will guide development to reflect the character of Berkeley Lake. Public participation is a key component, and a pop-up event is scheduled to take place at the Chapel after the parade on July 4th. During the festivities make sure to stop by and meet representatives from the consultant team and share your ideas to help shape Berkeley Lake's future. If you aren't able to attend the event on the 4th, you can provide feedback through the survey at our [project website](#). Check it out, and one way or another, let us know what you think. This is your chance. Don't get left out of the process.



Many of us look forward every year to our wonderful, small-town **celebration of Independence Day**. I hope you will decorate your cars, kids and pets as well as yourselves to participate in our July 4 parade. We will, as usual, **begin to gather at Berkeley Lake Elementary school at 11:30 AM**, and when it appears that we are semi-organized, we will follow Councilman Scott Lee and his wonderful music down the hill from school to

Chapel. There we will be serving hotdogs, cold drinks, popcorn, and cookies at noon. Debbie Peters and

her GASP group are kindly donating hotdogs and drinks, as well as leading the various games and fun for kids. Help the little ones try their hands at water balloon tossing, limbo, hula-hooping, face painting, and whatever else Debbie comes up with. If it appears that it might rain that day, please check Nextdoor and Facebook pages for information. Remember to keep your doggie's feet on the grass or in the shade because they can get burned on hot pavement without your even noticing.



We have some significant guests who are planning to join us on that day. If there isn't an active emergency nearby, the firefighters at station 19 will bring their big fire engine for the kids to marvel at. As described in the paragraph above, our nifty consultants will be here to answer your questions and record your thoughts and ideas about our ordinance overhaul. Our district's county commissioner, Kirkland Carden called to ask if he could join us at the festivities and I, of course, told him he was welcome to come and talk with you about whatever thoughts you have related to Gwinnett County Government. Lastly, I want you to know that I have invited our police Precinct Commander to come and bring any of his officers who can spare a moment from their duties to eat hotdogs with us. I hope you will make a point to thank any officers who can join us on that day for all they do for us. In response to my invitation Major Jordan Griffin replied, "You and the Berkeley Lake community do a great job of showing appreciation on a regular basis. Thank you!" This is another chance for us to show that appreciation.

Speaking of our Police officers, many of us have been concerned recently in our usually crime-free city about some **automobile break-ins**. I am happy to report that the **Police have arrested seven people** who are accused of breaking into 492 vehicles over a 16-month period. A few of those vehicles recently were ours. Those arrested are described as a band of thieves from East Point and are currently in the Gwinnett County Jail. Our officers used Flock cameras, surveillance footage and cell phone data as well as fingerprints and DNA recovered from the scenes of crime. These 7 guys could serve 20 years in prison if convicted.

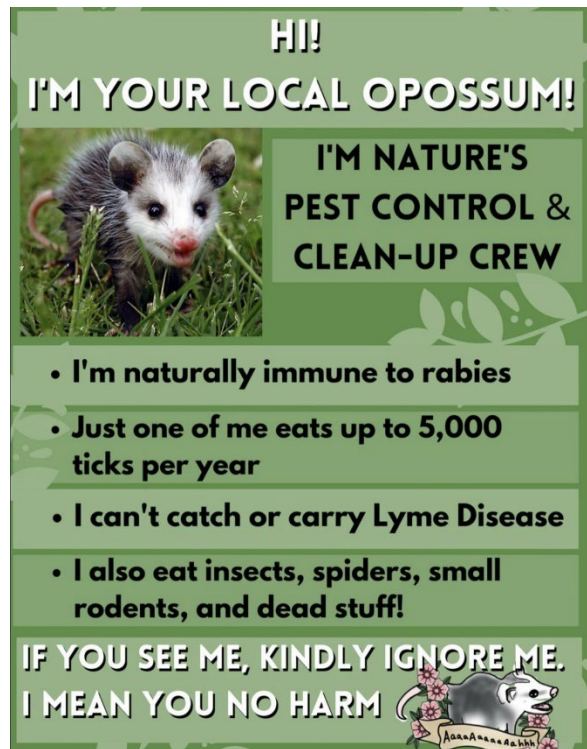
Due to the July 4 Holiday, Waste Management services will be delayed one day. Trash, recycling, and yard waste will be collected on Saturday, July 6.

If you have **household hazardous waste**, you may find that it's difficult to dispose of, but here's your chance. On **Saturday, July 20 from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM at the Gwinnett County Fairgrounds**, [you can take aerosol/spray insecticides and pesticides, batteries, fire extinguishers, fluorescent bulbs and ballasts, latex and oil-based paints, and more](#). Items not accepted include ammunition, radioactive waste, pharmaceuticals, and biomedical/biohazard waste.

Our City Council will set Berkeley Lake's next millage rate to 1.254 mils (the rollback rate) at a special called meeting on July 11 at 8:00 PM. We have [published information in advance on our website](#) about the current year's tax digest and levy, along with a history of the tax digest and levy for the past 5 years,

so you may want to check that out. Under the rollback rate which we are recommending, for a home with a fair market value of \$725,000 in 2023, the city property tax was \$390.92. For a \$725,000 home in 2024, the tax will be \$363.66, which represents a 6.46% reduction in taxes year to year if the home is valued at the same amount in both years.

I invited all the **presidents of the various Berkeley Lake homeowner associations** to City Hall for lunch recently with me, our City Administrator Leigh Threadgill, our City Marshal Rob Hiller, and our police Precinct Commander Major Jordan Griffin. The Major pointed out that in his reports of crime locations **“Berkeley Lake is a black hole”** because we continue to have so little crime, but you can see it on maps encroaching into areas around us. It’s important therefore not to be complacent or to do things that make us “volunteer victims” like leaving our cars or homes unlocked. I urged the presidents to encourage their neighbors to get to know each other and to watch out for each other. I believe that neighborliness has historically been a great strength for our city in many ways, not the least of which is crime prevention. Rob reminded everyone that **overnight parking on City right-of-way is not allowed and urged everyone to remove their waste bins from the street promptly** after trash collection. We talked about animals and this beautiful place, which has been designated an **Urban Wildlife Sanctuary** – deer, snakes, possums. I reminded them of what the Atlanta Journal Constitution’s snake expert named Clark says: “If it’s nonvenomous, you want it in your yard. Especially if it’s a family that has kids or pets and they’re worried about them getting bitten by snakes, as crazy as it sounds, that family wants to make sure they have non-venomous snakes there,” Clark said. “Don’t kill your harmless snakes.” Some harmless snakes, such as the king snake, kill and eat venomous snakes. Others that don’t prey on venomous snakes compete with them for food and shelter, so the more of them you have, the fewer venomous ones you have.



I recently attended a meeting with elected officials from other Gwinnett cities to learn about **Gwinnett’s new Transit Plan** and the planned referendum on it, which will be on the November 5 General Election ballot. If approved by voters, the transit referendum would impose a one percent sales tax for 30 years to fund up to 75 transit projects in Gwinnett. You can read about these projects in [Gwinnett’s Transit Plan](#) but here’s what stood out to me: there is no rail in this proposal and no MARTA. They are focusing on the expansion of microtransit to provide door-to-door service in 100% countywide coverage, and enhanced county coverage by local buses including frequent airport rides direct to Hartsfield-Jackson. It was pointed out that as a sales tax this would lessen the burden on local property owners, because 30 to

35% of sales tax in our county is paid by people who live beyond Gwinnett. To learn more, visit GwinnettCounty.com/YourRide.

Here are links to videos if you want to explore further:

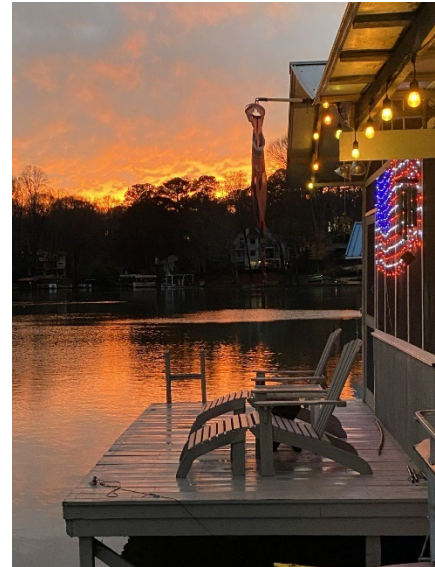
[Ryan the Transit Guy: Introducing Gwinnett's Transit Plan on Vimeo](#)

[Ryan the Transit Guy: Airport Ride on Vimeo](#)

I am **collecting backpacks and school supplies to help our police officers who are trying to help some kids who need them.** If you can pick up some of these to contribute, please drop them by my office between now and July 15.



The winner of the May Berkeley Lake Lens contest is Karen Quin of 476 Lakeshore Drive. Here she is with her beautiful picture titled: "The Golden Hour" and with Judy Jacobson, who prints and frames these winning photos to hang in City Hall. Many thanks to both of these ladies. Karen is donating her prize money to the Berkeley Lake Chapel.



Please remember our **Electronic Recycling and Drug Takeback on October 26, 10 AM to noon.** More about that later, but please save the date.

This month's **Fun Fact about Berkeley Lake:** 27.1% of Berkeley Lake residents work from home.

See you on our Fabulous Fourth!

Lois D. Salter