



April 24, 2025

Many of you attended the meeting this week at the Pinckneyville Community Center to discuss concerns being raised by some of our citizens about **deer overpopulation** in our city. Our small but very hard-working City staff and our City Council have already spent a great deal of time and resources in an effort to come up with a good solution to these concerns. My goal (which I believe is shared by all of our staff and Council) is to consider the city's role, if any, in mitigating the impact of the deer overpopulation, including by lethal means, in light of concerns of citizens who actually like the deer, concerns for citizen safety, applicable laws and legal restrictions, and as always, reasonable fiduciary responsibility for your tax dollars. To that end we had met before with Ben McCullar - the gentleman from the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) who spoke at this meeting. We had also previously met with the citizens who organized that meeting and compiled a great deal of information which we shared with them. I shared some of that information with all of you in the [March 3 edition of the Mayor's Message](#). I urge you to look back over this as a good starting point for finding a solution.

Finding a solution will not be easy or simple or quick. There's a reason that of the 537 municipalities in our state, not a single one has implemented a culling (killing) program. There's a reason why the nearby subdivision of St. Ives, after spending a great deal of time, energy and resources planning and preparing for a culling program, abandoned it after an outcry from residents who vehemently objected. Our research into other areas that have tried culling extended as far as Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania. When sharp shooters there were set up over a baited area, citizens came out to chase the deer away from the place where they were to be killed. This is a very divisive issue to say the least, and anyone's opinion is as important as anyone else's.

Another option, as presented by McCullar, is for communities to partner with DNR to implement a controlled hunt, which is, as I understand it, what Peachtree Corners is working toward. But there's a reason that Peachtree Corners says they will need significant additional time to study these issues. Even the DNR whose job and area of expertise is wildlife management, says it will be about a year before they come up with some recommendations, other than fencing, scaring the deer off and so on.

Those of us who attended the community meeting this week are now naturally thinking, "What's the next step?" For special issues or projects like this which citizens request city help with, City Council considers requests that include a specific actionable plan. As always, "the devil is in the details," so each element of a proposal must conform to difficult realities. To help our citizens begin to come to grips with those, here are some questions for all of us to be considering:

1. As Scott Lee pointed out at the meeting, bow hunting has been legal on private property in Peachtree Corners since 2016. Scott's question to DNR was: "Has that controlled the deer population?" McCullar's answer = "No." What difference could be made to lead to a better outcome here?

2. Bow hunting often does not kill a deer on the spot, so it runs off into someone's yard to die slowly and painfully, possibly with their children looking on. Who then removes the body? There are gory pictures you can look at on the internet of deer with arrows protruding from their bodies who may bleed out slowly in an inconvenient place or just suffer for quite a while before dying. The hunter is generally responsible for removal if he finds it, but if he doesn't, the property owner is stuck with the expense and/or unpleasantness. Even if the hunter does find it, as Rob Hiller pointed out in the meeting, state law requires that gut piles (deer entrails) must be left on the site. Yuk.

3. Our greenspace is subject to a legally enforceable easement, as well as a city ordinance that forbids hunting. So that leaves hunting close in among our homes. By whom? With what qualifications? Who will be held liable if someone is hurt?

4. Our staff has already explored the possibility of hiring Department of Agriculture (USDA) sharp shooters who could bait an area and using thermal imagery, night vision, and suppressors shoot down on the deer, killing them more quickly and humanely than bow hunters. We were advised that this would be costly and need to be conducted at least annually with annual assessments to gauge how many deer should be taken in a given year. I understand that the USDA removes the animals and provides the meat to the city to arrange for donation. Based on examples of other cities' agreements with USDA, significant city resources would be needed in support of the cull, in addition to the direct expense to pay USDA. How much would you be willing to increase your taxes to pay for such expensive events?

5. All are agreed that we must expect very quick replacement of deer in our city as they flow in from surrounding areas, especially, as McCullar said, down the Chattahoochee corridor which is part of our city. How often would you expect to conduct culls?

6. Our city ordinance limits the height of fences to 6 feet. That certainly seems changeable to me and perhaps to you. If so, how high should fences be? Perhaps we could allow 8 feet in backyards?

You may have other questions of your own. I invite you to share those with me and your city council members as well as your neighbors. I think you can see that there is a lot to be considered, and I hope we can work together to arrive at some mutually acceptable decisions.

Everybody please remember our city's **Earth Day is this Saturday from 10 AM until 2 PM**. Bring your proof of residency in our city and if you need to review information about what you can bring, [here's the previous Mayor's Message](#) which includes that information.



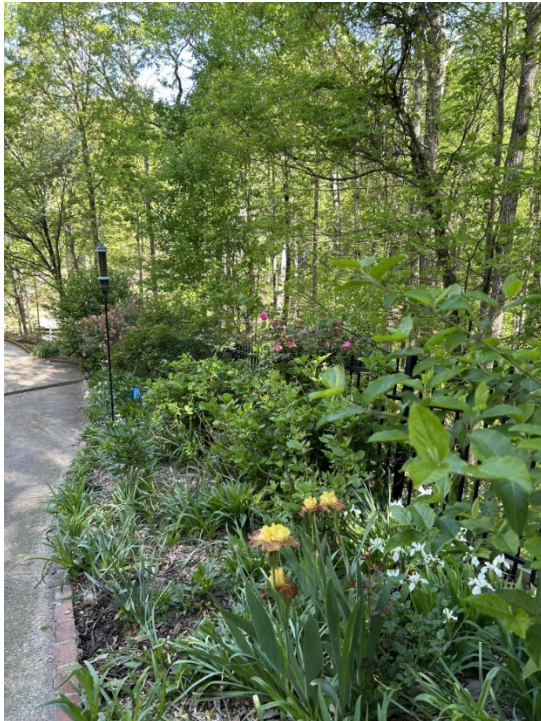


Also, in that same issue, you may want to review information about **Georgia Power's upcoming program of "enhanced maintenance"** in our city. **April is "Thank a Lineworker" month**, too, and I'm always grateful for those guys when they come to help us recover from storms. If you see some, please remember to thank them, whether it's this designated month or any other time they're working in our city.

Last two reminders: check out the information if you need to review it on the **Berkeley Lake Blood Drive set for May 10 AM in the Chapel**, and our **Memorial Day remembrance on May 26 at noon**. Details on both of these are in that same most recent Mayor's Message which is linked above.

Council recently awarded a bid for **pavement upgrades in Berkeley Commons, Berkeley Field and River Mansions**. The streets in Berkeley Commons and Berkeley Field will be resurfaced, and the streets in Rivers Mansions will be treated with a high density mineral bond.

Enjoy our beautiful spring in Berkeley Lake!



Lois D. Salter

HELP HOPE BLOOM   

this spring 

Berkeley Lake Blood Drive

Saturday, May 10th, 2025 | 9am-3pm
Lake Berkeley Chapel

4043 S Berkeley Lake Road NW Duluth, GA 30096

EAT iron rich food, **DRINK** plenty of water. **SLEEP** well before & after. Save 15 minutes and complete your **RAPID PASS!**

Schedule your appointment today! 1-800-RED CROSS | RedCrossBlood.org | Blood Donor App | Sponsor Code: **Berkeley**



Come to give blood May 1 - 18 for a \$20 e-gift card to a merchant of your choice!

