



August 29, 2018

In my last message I pointed out some ways in which our city is different, and many of you reacted positively to the fact that for each of the last 7 years we have managed to lower the total amount of taxes collected, below the rollback rate, while providing more services (i.e. additional City Marshal) with no debt and no stormwater fees. Although I pointed out in that message that this is a **combined effort** of our council and staff, overseen by our citizen Treasurer and citizen Finance Committee, I think that bears repeating since some of you have been complimentary to me. As I said on Nextdoor in response to some of your comments, "I am not being modest when I say that the successes of our city are very much a group effort. That's just the truth, and I am genuinely grateful to be able to work with our staff, council members, and citizens. Berkeley Lake is truly a rare community and we all have a part in making and keeping it so."

This time I want to tell you about **another way in which Berkeley Lake is different** from other cities. It is common, almost universal, for cities to contribute money to various causes and community efforts. I decided long ago that, however worthy the cause, I would say no when asked, as I very often am, for the city to make these contributions to charities. I know that our citizens are very strong in both their desire and ability to help others, but I think individuals should be able to choose those contributions without the city choosing for you with your tax dollars. I have gotten some negative reactions lately ("But all the other cities...") so I ran it by Council and they support this position. I do try to let you know about worthy causes (see below) and we are constantly collecting things for the school and the local cooperative ministry. You always respond generously, but it should be, and in Berkeley Lake it will be, **your choice**.



Here's a picture of our own City Councilman **Rodney Hammond** being honored in San Francisco with a Presidential Citation from the American Psychological Association. Dr. Hammond is retired from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention where he was a senior executive and scientist, but he still consults on a part-time basis in areas of behavioral and public health and is an adjunct professor at the University of Georgia. He also volunteers to serve on many community boards, including the Mental Health Task Force of the Carter Presidential Center, and on a national board of directors for an organization combating child abuse, and another supporting foster children. Congratulations, Rodney, and many thanks for all you do closer to home in our own city. We're glad you're nationally famous, but even more glad, and deeply grateful, that you're our neighbor.

This month I have attended two meetings that might interest you. At the District 2 Mayoral Caucus, we chose a representative to participate in the decision-making process for the **combination of 10 transit agencies from 13 metro counties into “the ATL.”** That stands for “Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority” which the Governor signed into law on March 29. Gwinnett voters will make some decisions soon about funding, and you can read more about the ATL at this [website](#).

I also attended the “State of the Schools” address by Superintendent Alvin Wilbanks. More than 180,000 students are enrolled in Gwinnett’s 140 schools, and it struck me that although there are 159 counties, **1 in 10 public school students in Georgia are in Gwinnett!** With roughly 23,000 employees, the district is the largest employer in Gwinnett County and one of the largest in Georgia. GCPS is repeatedly named an “employer of choice,” and was designated by the National Council on Teacher Quality as one of only two “Outstanding Great Districts for Great Teachers.” This year they begin a “pay for performance” program for teachers after planning and working towards it for several years. This is somewhat controversial, but Wilbanks pointed out that an older teacher with advanced degrees and years of service could currently be making \$30,000 more a year than an enthusiastic new teacher in the next room who might be doing a better job. I think this will be an interesting year.

Thanks to all of you who brought school supplies to my office. Cheryl Bridges and I delivered them - half to Berkeley Lake Elementary School and half to the Foster Children’s Foundation. You are so generous and this haul made a real difference to a lot of needy children heading back to school.



I have written before in Mayor’s Messages about our city’s **ordinance forbidding the use of firearms, bows and arrows**, etc. unless someone is lawfully defending person or property, but after someone shot a deer which died in the yard of one of our families, I’m saying it again. Please be aware of the danger to us all from gunshots in a residential area and if you see or hear of someone doing this, please call 911 at once. The police have assured me that they want to know this and that they will respond and prosecute. Here is a [link](#) to our ordinance if you would like to read it.

The City of Berkeley Lake was Number 5 on the 2018 list of “Best Places to Raise a Family in Georgia.” The rankings are based on public schools, crime rates, cost of living and family-friendly amenities, according to the website. Also on the list, is Suwanee at Number 4, Peachtree Corners at Number 9, Duluth at Number 18, Sugar Hill at Number 20, Buford at Number 31 and Grayson at Number 33. For the complete list, visit the Niche [website](#).



Berkeley Lake Elementary School is collecting clean plastic bottle caps for a special project involving the whole school. Please save any kind, size or color and bring them to the school or to my office at City Hall before September 10.

On Saturday, October 20 from 6:00 to 9:00 PM, the Cash for Cats Bash takes place at Duluth High School. There will be food, fun, and both live and silent auctions led by Brooks Coleman, who as many of you know can create a good time for all! This event is a fundraiser for the Duluth Cluster Schools, which includes our own Berkeley Lake Elementary School as well as the middle and high schools that students in our city attend. Good schools make good property values, so

even if your child is not currently in one of these schools, I hope you can find a way to support them. You can make a tax-deductible donation of money or donate something for the live or silent auction. Here’s a [link](#) to further information.

We will have this year’s Hometown Heroes Celebration and Drug Take-back Day at City Hall on Saturday, October 27 from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM. I have again invited all the police officers

who serve and protect us to come by and enjoy snacks, kindly provided by our local realtors Jill Rice and Tracey Settlege. I hope you will come by to thank them, as well as the community leaders who serve us so well as homeowner association presidents, etc. They are Hometown Heroes, too, and deserve our recognition and thanks. Bring medications that you no longer need so they can be safely disposed of without freaking out the fish in the Chattahoochee. Here’s a picture of some of the officers who dropped in last year.



Please be advised that **the city will be trimming overgrown trees and low-hanging limbs** in the right-of-way along streets in **Hermitage Plantation** on September 6 and 7, weather permitting. Residents should use caution when passing the crew at work.



The Billy Jacks, who play ’60s and ’70s rock music, will perform at the next Sunday Kind of Groove **Concert on the shores of Berkeley Lake**. This concert, part of a series benefiting the Duluth Cluster Schools Foundation, will start at 6:00 PM,

September 16 behind our Chapel. Tickets are available online at www.freshtix.com/events/sundaygroove916. If you have questions or prefer to purchase tickets by check, email ak509@bellsouth.net or call [770-368-2076](tel:770-368-2076). Mark your calendar also for the next upcoming concert: October 14 – a magnificent [Carole King Tribute](#).

As you know, Tom Rozier is always trying to take care of us in various ways, and he shared [this article](#) with me to pass on to you. It’s about “**entering auto**” crimes which we sometimes have in our city where we very rarely have other crimes. Please remember that, although this is about Smyrna, the cautions about locking your car doors and garage doors are valid for us here, too.

Enjoy the last days of summer everybody! Here’s a picture of my neighbor’s yard which always has a lovely seasonal display.



Lisa D. Salter