



July 26, 2021

Your City Council has set a **new tax rate** of 1.746 mills for the year 2021 which is the “rollback rate.” As an example, for a home with a fair market value of \$575,000 in 2020, the city property tax was \$403.65. For a home of the same value in 2021, the tax will be \$401.58, which represents a 0.51% reduction in taxes year to year. The citizen Finance Committee unanimously supported this rate, and as you probably read in the newspaper, many other cities raised their rates significantly this time.



I hope we will all support our Berkeley Lake businesses whenever possible. To that end I want you to know about **Smile Corners Dental’s Grand Opening** in Berkeley Lake on this **Thursday, July 29 at 4870 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard**. Dr. Jonathon Wu is a lifelong Atlanta native who graduated from Ga. Tech in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, then earned his DMD degree from Dental College of Georgia in Augusta. Previously he has practiced in Buckhead but is now opening a beautiful new office in our city. Join me there on Thursday to welcome him at their **open house from 4-6 PM**.

July 4th was a wonderful celebration in our city this year! I am so



grateful to all who worked to make it so. Thanks to the firefighters who came with their trucks, to Debbie Peters and her GASP (Georgia After School Program) staff who entertained our kids, to the elected officials who came to join us (seen here left to



right): Matt Yarbrough -Outreach Director for U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Bordeaux, Beth Moore – our State House Representative, Nicole Love Hendrickson – County Commission Chair, and Ben Ku – our area Commissioner. Thanks to the BLHA volunteers who fed us lunch, to Anne Carpenter who provided dessert, to Scott Lee for music and Chip McDaniel for popcorn, and to our city staff who decorated and provided

general labor. Dr. Duc Huynh and Kim Nguyen of Berkeley Lake Dental at 4720 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard donated the drinks. They are our River District neighbors. There were so many more who helped that I apologize to those I am leaving out, because you made it a really great day!

I am very pleased to share with you that I’m expecting our city to get **approximately \$800,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding** from the feds. I think we will probably spend most of that on stormwater infrastructure, but I will keep you informed as we explore possibilities. I hope we can use some of that to purchase a small piece of property on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard that is contiguous to our greenspace. Ginny Nevins signed a contract on that property and then transferred the contract to our city. With support from our Council, I expect to close on the property Friday. Ginny has assisted me and Bob Smith in these negotiations at no cost to the city. Thanks to both Ginny and Bob.

We have had some **staff changes** that I want you to know about. **Tom Rozier** is retiring, and **Leigh Threadgill** will be our City Administrator beginning July 31. We are all very grateful that Tom is willing to continue to serve our city for a while on an hourly contract basis, because his knowledge and skills are a huge asset to us that we don’t want to lose during this transition. Tom remains very committed to our city’s well-being and continues to make a real positive difference for us. Assisting Leigh will be **Lila Hunter** whom many of you have already met.

Lila prepared a lunch last week for the folks you see here so that we could talk with them about our **city’s needs**. Left to right are our Mayor ProTem Rebecca Spitler, Lila Hunter, Georgia House Representative Beth Moore, County Commissioner Ben Ku, Leigh Threadgill, Matt Yarbrough who is Outreach Director for U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Bourdeaux, and



Judge Carla Brown who created and manages Gwinnett’s Veterans’ Court, assisting vets in many ways while holding them accountable for crimes they have committed. Carla also created and manages Canine Pet Rescue and has come to us several times personally to search through our wooded areas at night for orphaned fawns, etc. when our

citizens asked for help. I will be seeking her guidance in the future to organize a Berkeley Lake event supporting veterans, which you may remember I was exploring when COVID hit and derailed us. All of these elected officials have been unusually helpful to us and I hope you will feel free to call upon them. I was lobbying Ben Ku, as an example, for pickleball courts at Pinckneyville Park which was suggested to me by Kathy Zusmanis. She is strongly interested in that and in more senior activities there as well. If you are, too, please contact Kathy and she will help you make your support for these activities known. As another example, one of our citizens recently struggled with an intractable problem with the federal government. When I asked Matt Yarbrough for help, he resolved her problem within an hour through Congresswoman Bourdeaux’s office. Whatever our individual political affiliations, we need to stay in touch with people like these who are willing and able to help us when needed.

I have gotten some concerns from our neighbors about people riding **bicycles** through our city at dangerous speeds. In looking into this I found that speed bumps and speed tables are not practicable for most of our streets because the engineers all say that you can’t have one of those without sufficient distance for them to be seen by an approaching vehicle. Lakeshore, for example, is too hilly and curvy to meet those accepted standards. Secondly, I have been told that legally any public street must be shared with the bicycle riding public, so I am left with two options. One is to ask the precinct commander to do some “special ops” enforcing at stop signs, and also to make sure they’re staying within their lane, which they sometimes don’t do. The second option is to approach the bicycle clubs and bicycle shops and just explain our concerns. I have done this in past years with some success. It lasts a while at least, before other folks who haven’t been involved in those discussions move in. At my request Lila Hunter has been contacting all the bicycle clubs and shops she can find with significant success because of her positive approach. Amos at Atlanta Cycling even offered to help by sending an email to a large riding community of about 2000 using Lila’s suggestions. He gave her the names of three cycling Facebook groups, and she will contact them also. Lastly, she has persuaded some leaders of the biker groups to come to **City Hall this Friday, July 30 at 3 PM** to talk with me, her, and those of you who would like to participate. If you want to join us in this discussion, please call Lila at City Hall and let her know. We need to know how many to expect. Many thanks to Lila for her diligence in pursuing this.

Our local Berkeley Lake Elementary has been named a Title I **Distinguished School** again this year, along with only four other GCPS elementary schools. That means they are among the top 5% Title I schools in the state that have the highest absolute performance for the all-students group based on the current statewide assessment. Congratulations to students, faculty and especially to our own Lesley Pendleton who is their outstanding principal!

Congresswoman Carolyn Bourdeaux is planning an upcoming **job fair to assist in finding potential new employees for our local businesses**. It will be held on Friday, August 13 in the Gas South District Hall A, formerly the Infinite Energy Arena, from 1-4 PM at 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy, Duluth, GA 30097. Since COVID, hiring new employees has become a major issue for businesses that need personnel to regain full capacity. Please share this [Business RSVP link](#) with anyone who may need it.

I thought you might like to know about the **Norcross Community Market** on Wednesdays from 4-7 PM at 20 Skin Alley. You can enjoy live music, local farmers, artists, prepared foods for dinner and children's activities. In



addition to the in-person market, NCM will continue to offer online ordering/contactless pickup and preordering. Shop the online store at NCMonlinestore.com.

It’s 2021 and that means there will be a **city election** for three seats on our City Council currently held by Rodney Hammond, Scott Lee and Chip McDaniel. I understand that all three of these guys are willing to serve again in a new term. If others would like to join them in running for office, they should sign up with our Election Superintendent Leigh Threadgill. Here’s some important information regarding this year’s election.

- **Election Day:** Tuesday, November 2, 7 AM – 7 PM
- **Qualifying:** August 16-19, 9 AM – 4 PM
- **Qualifying fee:** \$27
- **Early voting:** October 12-16, October 18-23, and October 25-29, 9 AM – 5 PM
- **Volunteers** are needed to serve as poll officials helping people through the voting process and counting votes after polls close.

Contact Leigh Threadgill at city hall, 770-368-9484 or leigh.threadgill@berkeleylake.com, for more information about running for office or volunteering.

Lois D. Satter