



October 13, 2025

I've read a couple of concerns lately on social media about city issues, and my guess is that if one or two are confused about something, then it's likely there are others out there as well. So, I want to try to share some facts with all of you that may clarify. If I'm unsuccessful in this effort, or if anyone has additional concerns, please feel free to call me and we can talk further. I am always available for that.

I'll start with the "unnecessarily huge **fin**es that have been handed out to friends and neighbors who had no idea there was an issue." As we approach the end of this year, I looked up all the fines that we collected in 2025. There were only six \$250 fines, all to people who had been notified repeatedly months in advance. That amount would not even cover the cost of staff time or court personnel necessary in order to get compliance to rules that our citizens have told us they want. An ordinance that is "overreaching" to some often does not reach far enough in the minds of their neighbors. If someone has no idea there's an issue, they clearly have made no effort to get an idea. Our ordinances are all available online and our city staff are very welcoming and helpful when people call in advance to ask about a project they're contemplating. I urge everyone, always, to do that.

I have also read that we have not addressed concerns about the **deer** population. The fact is that our Council and staff have spent more time studying deer issues than just about anything else. I have written about it in the Mayor's Message more than anything else and I would ask that you go back and read particularly the March 3 and the April 24 MMs. We invited the deer interest group for lunch and gave each of them notebooks of information that we had studied and compiled. I have met not only with representatives of the Department of Natural Resources, but also with other mayors to apprise myself on what they are doing. Our staff has met with their colleagues in other cities about this. In the April 24 Mayor's Message I shared information with citizens and invited them, anyone, to share any specific plan for Council to consider. Nothing has been suggested at all, just vague complaints moving through the city, which is not helpful. At the same time, Council members are hearing from citizens who like the deer, and do not want to see them killed, or who worry about their neighbors potentially shooting lethal crossbows next door to their homes, children, and pets. Their opinions count, too. At their last meeting, City Council commissioned our City Attorney to do a deep dive study into all the legalities (county, state, and city) related to killing deer within our city. As you know, if you read the last Mayors Message, he will report on that at our October 16 council meeting. I also pointed out in that Mayor's Message that you will hear on the 16th from a Certified Forester who has worked for the Georgia Forestry Commission for over 30 years about his recent inspection of our greenspace.

This calls to mind vague concerns about **transparency**. Our city has for some time made quite unusual efforts to make all of our citizens aware of issues both before and after they are discussed in meetings.

Not only is the agenda of every council meeting posted on our website a week or more in advance, but importantly, all the information about the issues relating to each agenda is posted there as well. That provides a way for any citizen to get the full picture of what will be discussed in detail with very little effort on their part. If you look now, you will see the whole report that I mentioned above from our City Attorney and the one from the Certified Forester which will be presented on October 16. Each month you will also find written minutes of the previous meeting and see a very detailed report on finances so that you can know how your tax dollars are being spent. These things were posted eight days before our next meeting, giving everyone time to study them, talk to their council members in advance, ask questions, whatever will help them to be best prepared to share their ideas. This early posting happens for every council meeting. Then immediately after every meeting, you can hear the voice record of the whole meeting from the comfort of your living room.

Regarding **finances**, many years ago, I created a Citizen Finance Committee because I felt then and still do that the more eyes on our city's money, the better. I know of no other city that does this. I ask in the fall of every year for any citizen who would like to be on any of our committees to let me know. If there is room on a committee, I put the person volunteering on there without regard to any opinions they may or may not share with me. If there is no room, I try to find a place for them on another committee that does have room. Volunteers are a very great strength of our community and have been for years. Additionally, we have an outside professional auditor who reviews every detail of our finances at least yearly, and prepares a report which is shared with our Council and anyone who would like to see it. The auditor usually expresses amazement at how well our city is being run financially.

The **Mayor's Message** is emailed directly to every Berkeley Lake citizen who wishes to receive it. If you aren't getting them, please check your spam filter or contact City Hall (770-368-9484) to make sure you are on the list. Additionally, it is posted on our City website as well as four local Facebook pages and Nextdoor. I routinely email it to all the Homeowner Association Presidents so that they can forward it to their neighbors. I think that's a lot of coverage, and I hope it helps keep everyone up with what's going on in our city.

Lastly, I got a concern from one citizen about the fact that our City supports the Gwinnett County Police by funding **FLOCK cameras**, which send tag information not to anyone within our city, but only to the Police. I followed up by getting additional information from the Police for this gentleman, and by talking with other citizens in Berkeley Lake, all of whom like the fact that we have them. Multiple homeowner associations in our city feel so strongly about this that they fund their own extra FLOCK cameras, but it was one of the ones that our city funds that [caught the guys described in this news article](#).

We have so much going on in the city this month that is important, so forgive me as I remind you below of things I've already told you previously.

The **Georgia Tech Urban Design Studio** is working with the City of Berkeley Lake to create a **master plan for the Peachtree Industrial Boulevard corridor of our city**. Please remember that this meeting will be at **6 PM in City Hall this Tuesday night on October 14**. I apologize for the difficulties this has presented for the BLOSOMS meeting! We have to take this very high-level free help when we can get it, and they did adjust their schedules to come earlier than originally planned. BLOSOMS also kindly has adjusted their own meeting. I hope people can attend both, but if not, remember that you can hear ours later on our website as I described above. Also, we are tentatively scheduling a second meeting with the master planners for November 6.

Then just two days later on **Thursday, October 16 at 8 PM**, I hope you can attend the **city council meeting** that I described above. Remember to review the important reports relating to hunting, greenspace and the city budget before coming if you can. It's easy to find on our City website. Go to berkeleylake.com. Click on City Council and it will show you agendas which have all the relevant documents and information about each issue for discussion at that meeting, as well as links to minutes and audio.

Please don't forget our **voting for city council candidates**. You can find information about each of them in my last Mayor's Message and on our website. Advance in-person voting will be available in City Hall from 9 AM until 5 PM on the following dates: October 14-18, October 20-25 and October 27-31. On November 4 the polls will be open in City Hall from 7 AM until 7 PM.

On Sunday, **October 26, from 5-7 PM** there will be a **Sunday Kind of Groove concert at the Pavilion** featuring the 5-piece Jordan B. Band with homemade chili. [Info and sign up here](#).

On **Saturday, Nov. 15 from 9AM until 3PM** the Red Cross will be conducting a **blood drive at the Chapel**. Please help by donating if you can. You can [sign up or get more information here](#).

If you would like to volunteer to serve on one of our **City committees**, please contact me as soon as possible to let me know that. I think everyone on the Finance Committee has indicated a willingness to continue so there may be no spaces there, but perhaps on the Arts Committee, which manages our LENS contest for photographs, or the Berkeley Lake Conservancy, which helps us with Arbor Day planting and similar activities.

This month's **Fun Fact about Berkeley Lake**: I recently read in the Gwinnett Forum that Berkeley Lake is the 13th best place to retire in Georgia. Not sure how they arrived at that, but I am personally very glad to be here, and I hope you are as well.

Lois D. Salter