



March 14, 2011

We have had an unusually high voter turnout on the bond referendum in early voting. I had hoped not to send out anymore information after so many people had already voted, but I believe the following needs to be said, so I'm sending out a hurried extra *Mayor's Message*.

There have been questions about the word "repair" in **the bond question**. Our City Attorney, Dick Carothers, says in this context "repair" means fix the problem or make it safe. That could conceivably be done by draining the lake permanently and doing \$2,300,000 of work as detailed previously (see website) to reconstruct the streambed, etc. As I have shown before in previous *Mayor's Messages*, either solution is quite expensive and the bond question is whether to allow that cost to be spread over time. Council's actions up to this point have been directed towards replacing the damaged parts of the current dam to make it safe to refill the lake. They have authorized engineering plans, permit fees, design work, etc. to that end, but no formal decision has been made regarding a final solution. Their actions in this regard were public and open in every way. The final opportunity to vote is tomorrow, Tuesday, March 15, 2011, at City Hall from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Votes will be counted and results posted tomorrow night on our website. They may be preliminary if there are questions remaining about individual ballots which would need to be verified, but all will be revealed in the fastest and clearest possible way on our website.

I hope you will also remember to vote at Pinckneyville Park tomorrow in the **county election**. A new county commission chairperson is being chosen to replace Charles Bannister who resigned. That will affect us all.

No deadline has been put on us by the **Georgia Safe Dams Program** to fix the problems with our dam. Our City Engineer says that's because he and I have worked so closely and consistently with them that they haven't felt the need to push us. He believes that if we suddenly stopped, they would take action to compel us to proceed towards a remedy. They clearly would not accept us just ignoring the problem or indefinitely postponing a resolution. We must continue to move forward on this, and we must pay for it.

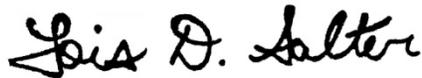
Rich Edinger (City Engineer) and I met last Thursday with **FEMA** representatives downtown at the GEMA offices for several hours. The FEMA representatives seemed reluctant to be there and opened the meeting by saying they weren't sure why they were there, but that they came at the request of GEMA leaders. At that meeting they did commit to 75% of \$64,000 which with GEMA's 10% match would provide the city with \$54,400. The Safe Dams representative was also there and he confirmed that the plan FEMA is proposing would absolutely NOT be allowed. Both engineers present agreed strongly with Safe Dams that the FEMA plan was unsafe. FEMA was unmoved by this, continued to allude to imagined preexisting conditions for which there is no evidence, and said we could appeal. I remained after FEMA representatives left and began plans for an appeal with our engineer and GEMA representatives, who have agreed to help us. I plan to present a request to council Thursday night to authorize such an appeal,

but meanwhile I am moving ahead in its preparation. I need to correct my mistake about what I thought was a previous commitment from FEMA for upwards of a million dollars. They sent a large and very detailed plan with specific dollar amounts and FEMA signatures which you may view at City Hall if you like. I was later told that their signatures would have to be on an additional document for them to be really committed. I sincerely apologize to you for this error on my part. Their signatures are now on the appropriate document for the minimal amount described above. The year and a half struggle with them has certainly been interesting.

Our **tax equity study** has been going on for a couple of weeks now. The outside experts hired by the city are meeting this week with each homeowner president, among others. They've already met at length with me and Tom Rozier and waded through lots of information. They seem to be very thorough. I'm expecting them to be finished in another 2-4 weeks. The study is costing the city a maximum of \$23,900. Their findings will, of course, be made public and considered thoroughly by us all. After that consideration and public discussion, council will decide what response the city should make in possible changes to our tax structure.

For those of you who were concerned about the **unsightly signs** in car windows at the intersection of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and North Berkeley Lake Road, I am happy to report that they have been removed. I and several concerned Berkeley Lake citizens appeared in Duluth’s court last Friday when citations for those signs were to be considered. I had previously contacted Duluth’s mayor and city administrator both verbally and by letter; and their judge had expressed to them a willingness to hear me as *amicus curiae*. That was ultimately not necessary. When those involved saw us there, they paid the fine and left.

To end on a happy note, I want to congratulate Diane Cuttino and her helpers with the **CAN-DO drive**. Yesterday she and 23 volunteers collected 126 bags of food to deliver to the food bank! Many thanks to Diane and to all of you who were so generous.



Lois D. Salter
Mayor