

# Yolanda Adrean

City Council ▪ District 8

September 2010

## In This Issue

[Water Bills](#)

[Customer Service](#)

[Tax Digest](#)

[Investments in District 8](#)

[Girl Scout CEO honored](#)

Join Our List

Join Our Mailing List!

Quick Links

Find me on  
Facebook 

Visit Yolanda's  
Website

Dear Neighbors,

We are in the midst of challenging times, both nationally and at City Hall. Finances are tight all over. We all have to make do with less. However, as residents, citizens and taxpayers, we have every right to raise our expectations. Even in challenging times, you are your city's Number One Customer. And I'm on the job, making sure your high expectations are known and - when bureaucrats fall short - the inevitable shortcomings addressed promptly.

What's in the news at City Hall? There are the "perennial favorites," water bills, customer service, and taxes, of course. Let's take a look.

## Water Bills

Water and sewer rates went up about 12% in July for the third year in a row, making water rates in Atlanta among the highest in the country. These exorbitant rate increases are being used to fund the two federal consent decrees which mandate that the city make improvements to its water and sewer infrastructure-a project costing the City of Atlanta \$4 billion. Unfortunately, this is yet another "tax" on Atlantans.

Some of you have received outrageous bills that go beyond rate increases and usage. You have the right to dispute your bill, and, while it is under dispute, you are only required to pay for your "normal" use for that month (as compared to prior months). A customer service representative should make every effort to investigate your questions, and vague responses such as "you must have a leaky toilet" won't suffice. After your meter has been looked at along with other analysis, if you are still unsatisfied, you have the right to arbitrate your bill with the Water and Sewer Appeals Board.

Should you have a problem with your bill, it is very important that you notify the water department in writing as soon as possible. Here are the recommended steps:

- File a formal dispute for your bill. This form can be found on the Department of Watershed Management's website ([www.atlantawatershed.org](http://www.atlantawatershed.org)) and can be filed by email, fax, or in a letter.
- Call 404 658-6500 for customer service. Please write down the name of the representative who answers the call, the day and time and ask for a tracking number. All phone calls are recorded, so if you get poor service, report it to my office

immediately (404 330-6051). Specifics help to get results!

- Ask for permission to pay for "normal" use while your bill is being investigated and follow up with a confirmation email to the Water Department. Be sure to CC my office. Your water should not be turned off during this process!
- Investigation of your water meter, history of use, leaks and other matters should be pursued to determine the reason for your spike.
- If in the end you are still dissatisfied, ask for arbitration with the Water and Sewers Appeal Board.

The administration is very concerned with our unusually high water bills and has made a commitment to increase service levels. During a recent press release, COO Peter Aman, stated that all complaints are to be taken seriously.

### **Customer Service**

With strained resources and budgets at City Hall, there is no excuse for poor customer service. Our office has received plenty of complaints including missed recycling and trash pick-up. Again, you should expect someone to take your complaint seriously and address your concerns. As with the water issues, it is most helpful to get the name of the representative you are dealing with and ask for a tracking number. We need your feedback! If you are not getting good service, we can help!

### **Tax Digest**

Property tax bills are in the mail. For the second year in a row, the tax digest has not been certified due to the number of homeowner and commercial property owner disputes in valuations. For those property owners, 85% of their bill is due until the dispute is resolved.

The valuation of the tax digest impacts every one of us. As the digest collapses along with the slump in real estate, our tax base decreases, revenues decrease and government spending must adjust. The 2011 budget was a difficult one. My goal was to preserve core services while deferring, cutting, and delaying other expenses. Until we address pension costs, which represent one out of every five dollars in tax resources, it will be difficult to invest in infrastructure at a normal level.

### **Investments in District 8**

Despite the tough economic times, during 2010 some significant investments have been made throughout District 8. These include the Tanyard Creek Trail, sidewalks in the Margaret Mitchell neighborhood that connect the neighborhood to the Morris Brandon Primary School, intersection improvements for Peachtree Battle, construction of the new tennis center and courts at Chastain Park, and construction of a sidewalk along Powers Ferry Road. Next up for District 8 is the repaving of Mt. Paran Road between the Country Store and the I-75

interchange. These projects have been funded with remaining Quality of Life and Park Opportunity bond proceeds, and the Beltline TAD funds, all of which had restricted uses.

Funding for the large backlog of infrastructure projects across the city continues to be an enormous challenge. The development of such funding is critical and a top priority for the council and administration. The list of these projects, which includes roads, bridges, fire stations, traffic signals and sidewalks, totals more than \$750 million. An inventory of these projects is prioritized based on age, use, and deterioration. For example, arterials and connectors have a higher priority than other roads. Mt. Paran is at the top of the list in District 8, followed very closely by Northside Drive. All of us are looking forward to an improved economy in which we will see even more investments in District 8, and throughout the City.

### **Girl Scout CEO honored with Proclamation**

On Monday August 16th, City Council recognized Marilyn Midyette for her exemplary service as the CEO of the Greater Girl Scouts of Atlanta. She was joined at the podium by her leadership team, her husband Payne, and colleagues from Camp CEO. Marilyn Midyette brings vision, commitment and results to the Greater Girl Scouts of Atlanta.

Feel free to phone me if you have any questions or if you want to talk about the challenges we face. My home number is 404-261-4593. My email is [Yolanda@YolandaAdrean.com](mailto:Yolanda@YolandaAdrean.com).

**Best Regards,**

Yolanda