



CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

INTUCKER

Published by the City of Tucker, GA

SEPTEMBER 2017



FROM THE MAYOR

When we began the movement for cityhood back in 2013, we envisioned for Tucker a government that would handle a few core functions that met two important criteria: they needed to be the ones where more local control could have the greatest possible impact and they needed to be the ones most highly prioritized by the citizens of Tucker. That's how we arrived at Code Enforcement, Zoning and Planning and Parks and Recreation. We delivered on the first two pretty quickly.

Parks and Recreation is a different kind of challenge. Tucker's parks are one of the aspects that sets it apart from much of the rest of the county. Our parks boast great hiking trails, playgrounds, nature and even a little bit of history. Tucker Recreation Center is the most used rec center in DeKalb County. Assuming responsibility for these was going to take time, especially if we wanted it done right. They are much more capital- and labor-intensive than the other two services and require much more planning and preparation.

We've now laid the groundwork and we're ready to move forward. Tucker's very first Parks and Recreation Director will start later this month. Parks and Rec veteran Rip Robertson will spend the remainder of the year working with City staff and coordinating with the County to come up with the best strategy for Tucker to assume responsibility for its Parks and Recreation on January 1 without disrupting the services and programs that are already in place.

I want you to know it's a priority for the City Council and me to ensure this transition is as seamless as possible. We have worked with the various Friends of the parks groups, as well as with the Tucker Recreation Center staff to figure out ways to make this happen. So many young people play their soccer games at Henderson Park. Hundreds of parents rely on Tucker Rec for their after-school care. We want to make sure folks continue to enjoy these amenities, but with an even higher level of service.

It's my sincere hope and belief that, over time, Tucker's Parks and Recreation facilities will flourish under this more local approach. As we study the best practices of cities and counties near and far, we look forward to making Tucker a leader in this very important field.

DATES TO KNOW

September 4
Labor Day
(City Hall closed)

September 11
City Council

September 25
City Council

Hi! Henderson! Family Fun Festival



SEPTEMBER 10
10AM - 2PM

**FOR DETAILS VISIT
FRIENDSOF
HENDERSONPARK.ORG**



CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

August saw the City Council prepare to address two significant development projects. The first, a 19-unit residential project on Saren Court, was granted a deferral at the developer's request. That pushes the first read on the project to October 23, with a second read and vote scheduled for November 13.

The other big project was the proposed development of the old Sears site at the intersection of Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard. Council held a first read and public hearing on the 88-acre mixed-use project dubbed "The Rise" on August 14. They also held a work session to hear from developer Stephen Macauley about the project on August 24. On August 30, following hours of public hearings and questions of staff and the applicant, Council voted to deny the requested land use and zoning changes. All parties agreed that if Macauley chooses to proceed with the contract to purchase the property, most of the uses he proposed for "The Rise" are still available, including the school, restaurants, office, arts-tech, small retail and approximately 100 others. The significant uses not allowed under the existing zoning are residential and grocery.

The next City Council meeting will be on September 11 at the City Hall Annex (4228 First Avenue).



TYSA KICKS OFF A NEW SEASON AT HENDERSON PARK

You know it's September in Tucker when the soccer fields at Henderson Park overflow with Tiny Tykes and Club Teams.

It's time for another season of TYSA, the largest youth sports association in DeKalb County, which happens to be located right here in Tucker. The club started out in 1978 as a small recreational team and has grown through the years to be a powerhouse in the state of Georgia. TYSA features over 1,000 athletes on more than 100 teams, ranging in age from 3-18 and skill levels from beginner to the highly-competitive Academy and Select teams. The club draws from all over northeast DeKalb and Gwinnett County and the TYSA tournaments bring teams from all over the state to stay, eat and play in Tucker.



TYSA has long had a unique and symbiotic relationship with the County Parks and Rec system. The club gets first rights for field usage in exchange for full maintenance including bathrooms, facilities and fields. It is thanks to the parents and volunteers of TYSA that Henderson Park has such an amazing set of fields and facilities. In fact, the whole club is run mostly by volunteers.

Mimi and Mike Sanders have been among those volunteers for 18 years, when their eldest daughter played on the U6 recreational team. Shortly thereafter, they signed up as volunteer coaches and have moved through various board positions. They now head up the concessions, even though their three daughters are grown and no longer playing with the club.

(continued on page 4)

ON THE BEAT WITH LT. SMITH

On August 10, our officers had just finished an eventful shift and were back at the precinct getting their paperwork checked and unwinding a little before heading home. We all shared some of the stories from the day's events and had a few laughs. One by one we started to leave the precinct to head home, not realizing that it would be the last time for one of us. Just a few short hours later, most of us were startled awake with a phone call delivering the terrible news: Officer Miguel Anchundia had passed away in the middle of the night at his home. Not knowing if we were still dreaming or not, we began calling each other, hoping above all else that the information was wrong. Tragically it was not, and we all slowly began to process the fact that another one of our coworkers and friends was no longer with us.

Officer Anchundia started with the DeKalb County Police Department on May 5, 2008. After completing the academy, he was assigned to Tucker Precinct where he breezed through field training and left a very positive impression on his training officers. He quickly established himself as a level-headed officer who was knowledgeable in his job performance and could be trusted by his supervisors to complete whatever task was assigned to him without supervision. His co-workers also took notice and he soon became the go-to officer for daily questions from his peers about routine and mundane tasks that the officers did not want to bother their sergeant with. Being bilingual also proved to be an indispensable trait that resulted in many officers relying on him routinely as a translator within the community.



His proactivity and ability to handle any situation with poise and ease soon caught the attention of the precinct command staff and he was assigned to the precinct's Field Investigative Team. He immediately clicked with the unit and, together, they thrived off each other. Though he consistently led the unit with his production, they all worked together as a cohesive team. It was this camaraderie that kept him with the unit for several years until his untimely passing.

Officer Anchundia was a dedicated officer, a loyal friend and an amazing father. He worked tirelessly to bridge the gaps between the police and the Hispanic community. He took special time to always interact positively with children – understanding the need to reach the next generation and reinforce the fact the police are here to help. The loss of Officer Anchundia will send a ripple through us all for years to come. On August 10, the county lost a dedicated public servant, the department lost an outstanding police officer, Tucker Precinct lost a well-liked and respected coworker and many officers lost a beloved friend. Rest now, brother, though you will be greatly missed. Your loss has left us shaken, but be in peace and know we will hold the line from here.

POLICE BLOTTER

PROACTIVE AND OBSERVANT POLICING – On August 7, Officer Ingram and his rookie Officer Prince were patrolling in the area of Mountain Industrial Boulevard and Highway 78 when he witnessed a white Nissan Maxima traveling northbound. The vehicle did not have a valid tag and matched a “look-out” for a vehicle that had been used in multiple armed robberies across DeKalb County. He initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle at Hugh Howell Road and pulled into the BP gas station. Upon approaching the vehicle, he witnessed two juveniles not properly secured in their seats in the back. Once an additional unit arrived, they pulled the male passenger out of the vehicle for safety and conducted their investigation. During the investigation, they discovered a firearm in the vehicle, illegal narcotics and that the male was a convicted felon. CID conducted their follow-up investigation and determined that the male was the same suspect from the armed robberies. Through their investigation, they arrested another suspect tied to this and cleared 15 armed robberies in DeKalb County. It appears these two suspects committed additional armed robberies in other jurisdictions in the area.

OFFICERS ARE NEVER OFF-DUTY – On August 12, Tucker Precinct received a report of a stolen van off Granite Drive. A description of the vehicle was broadcast over the radio so officers could be on the look-out. Later that same day, Officer McGill had just finished his shift and was on his way home when he noticed a similar vehicle with a couple of motorcycles in the back unsecured. When he ran the tag on his computer, he discovered that the tag did not belong on the vehicle. As the vehicle got onto I-285, he attempted a traffic stop on the vehicle, however, the vehicle refused to stop. Officer McGill then maneuvered his vehicle in front of the van and forced the van to stop. Once stopped, the driver jumped out of the vehicle and started to flee on foot. Officer McGill also jumped out of his vehicle and ordered the driver back into the van. According to the officer, “He looked at me with glaring eyes, as if to size me up, and then sat back inside of the vehicle.” The suspect was then taken into custody without incident. Upon checking the two motorcycles, it was ascertained that both had been reported stolen, as had the van.

SONNEN BRINGS ENERGY TO TUCKER

Tucker has long been a leader in industrial and manufacturing innovation, with companies creating goods and services right here in the City to be sold and distributed around the world. A new player is on that stage now, and they're not shy about their goal: to change the way Americans power their lives.

German innovator sonnen opened up earlier this year in an industrial section of Weems Road. The Tucker facility is responsible for manufacturing all the company's solar energy batteries being sold in the U.S. market.

"sonnen is a big believer in the U.S. market," the company's CEO Christoph Ostermann said. "Energy storage has a big future here. We see a huge market potential and see Georgia – and in particular the region around Atlanta – is for sure one of the most interesting economic areas with a lot of highly-skilled workers and engineers. This is why we decided to go to Tucker."

Ostermann, who runs the company from its headquarters in Bavaria, flew in specifically for the ribbon cutting of sonnen's Tucker facility on August 3. He pointed out some encouraging trends when it comes to alternative power in the United States.

"Ten percent of energy in the U.S. is renewable already," Ostermann explained. "This goes together with the trend of decentralization and digitalization. I think that sonnen plays a very important role here because sonnen is literally the electronic centerpiece in the house managing energy."

The facility, which will also house sonnen's Research and Development team, has been welcomed with open arms by many in the business community.



"It's exciting to have an innovative global leader like sonnen recognize the value in locating their North American Research and Development and manufacturing facility in Tucker," said Matthew Lee, Executive Director of the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District (CID). "It's indicative of what I'm hearing from other businesses: the decision to operate in Tucker is intentional. It's not only because we are a regional sweet spot, but because we have the resources in talent and in relationships that enable businesses to thrive."

Mayor Frank Auman, who has seen nearly 200 new businesses apply for licenses in the City of Tucker since the start of 2017 agrees.

"This is a big success for us," he told the crowd at sonnen's ribbon cutting.

Created in 2010, sonnen is still a relatively young company, but the innovative steps they've taken – and continue to take here in Tucker – promise to make a global impact for years to come.

TYSA KICKS OFF *(continued from page 2)*

"Through the years, TYSA has afforded our girls amazing opportunities for growth," Mimi says, "not only athletically, but through community building and service as referees."

Mimi and Mike serve drinks, treats and food to the recreational players and make an effort to speak with each athlete asking questions like: "What did you do well in today's game?" "Did you learn a new skill?" "Did you encourage a teammate?" They work with the coaches and ask that each team nominate someone from the opposing team as Player of the Game to highlight the player with the most heart. Each winner receives a free slushie as their award.

It is obvious that TYSA brings much more to a family than just an outlet to let your toddler run and chase a ball. It is a foundation for many of life's lessons, a springboard for athletic challenge and a mainstay on Tucker's recreation scene.

For more information on how to sign up your child or to volunteer with TYSA, visit www.tysa.com.



TEAM TUCKER SPOTLIGHT

Olivia Wilson - Business License Technician



How long have you lived in Tucker?

I've always been a DeKalb County resident. My family moved to Tucker when I was five and we've been here ever since. I was fortunate enough to spend all of my formative years in Tucker and I'm super proud to still call Tucker home after all these years.

What did you do before joining Team Tucker?

I went to work for Staples a month after I graduated from Tucker High School and worked there for the better part of 11 years. In that time, I worked as Customer Service Lead, supervising operations of the front end. For the vast majority of my tenure at Staples, I was the Copy and Print Center Supervisor and managed all finances and operations of the department.

What are your responsibilities at City Hall?

My daily responsibilities include intake and processing of business license and alcohol applications and processing all excise tax payments. I have also had the pleasure of assisting with City Clerk duties, including preparing City Council meeting agendas and packets and completing the minutes for City Council meetings.

What's the best thing about working for the City of Tucker?

It is a huge honor to get to serve the community that I grew up in and still live in. It's awesome to watch my hometown grow and to get to be a part of it. There are also very few days that go by that someone I know doesn't come into City Hall for one reason or another, so that's always fun to get to say hello and catch up with them. Also, the camaraderie between the Tucker team is phenomenal. I genuinely look forward to going to work with this great group of people every day!

OFF THE WALL

What are your hobbies? I love, LOVE waterparks and roller coasters! I spend most weekends at either White Water or Six Flags. I am also an avid Pokemon Go player, so you may see me out from time-to-time fighting gyms and catching Pokemon!

What is your favorite movie/

TV show? Favorite TV show is way too difficult to determine (Last Man Standing, This Is Us, The Middle), but my favorite movie is definitely Forrest Gump.

Are you a dog person or a cat

person? As an animal lover, I would have to say both.



What's the place you most want to visit in the world?

First and foremost, I want to visit all 50 states. Outside of the U.S., the U.K. and Greece are at the top of my bucket list.



SOLAR ECLIPSE

City Staff had an 'out-of-this-world' experience on August 21 as they donned special glasses for the solar eclipse. City Hall is currently collecting used eclipse glasses to donate to Astronomers Without Borders.

TUCKER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

POINTE OF GRACE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH



For several years, Amy Gilbert has followed her passion as a dance instructor. But over those years, something has always been missing: a home.

"We have been located in nine different schools for the past seven years," Gilbert explained at the August 5 grand opening of her Pointe of Grace dance studio. "We are opening a new home studio for our older girls to have actual dance floors and mirrors and bars that they can use and lots of rehearsal space."

Gilbert chose the location at 4450 Hugh Howell Road because of her family's close ties to the City of Tucker.

"My husband went to Tucker High School and then coached at Tucker High School," she said. "[Tucker] is just a very close-knit family. We've got lots of family and friends that live around here and the community is great."

Now that Gilbert's settled on a permanent location, she can focus on drawing different facets of the community into her studio.

"We're open to the community for 'Mommy and Me' classes all the way through adult classes," she said.

Pointe of Grace will offer ballet, tap, jazz and tumbling classes for children. They will have a pointe class for older girls, as well as ballet, zumba and core classes for adults.

"It's open to anyone in the community who wants to dance," Gilbert said, offering an invitation to all those who may be interested in trying out a new hobby.

ALBERT & MARY STILL CITIZENS OF THE MONTH

"I would like to nominate Albert and Mary Still for Tucker Citizens of the Month. They are long-time members of Tucker Optimist Club and have served on the Board of Directors for a number of years. They have been instrumental in organizing many of the Optimists' activities, including the very popular Optimist Club Bar-B-Q that raises funds for local youth-oriented projects, as well as the Optimist Club Oratorical Contest at Tucker High School.

Mary and Albert also both serve on the Board of Directors of Tucker Civic Association. They help organize the very successful TCA Rivers Alive event every year, where hundreds of Tucker residents come and help pick up trash from in and around the South Fork of Peachtree Creek. Mary does a great job managing all of the event paperwork and Albert does a great job getting dirty in the creek! They also help out on the annual TCA Veterans Job Fair, which helps vets find employment with companies from Tucker and the metro area.



Albert and Mary also volunteer with the Friends of Tucker Nature Preserve and have attended almost every workday since the group was formed. They have played a big role in the metamorphosis of the park from an overgrown lot into a family-friendly gathering place. They also maintain one of the flowerbeds there on an ongoing basis.

Mary and Albert are wonderful assets for our community and are very deserving to be named the Tucker Citizens of the Month!"

Nominated by Beth Ganga

“MY TUCKER INTERNSHIP” BY KATHERINE FRANCESCONI



I am an engineer. Having graduated from the University of Georgia last spring with a degree in Biological Engineering, I was laser-focused on a career of numbers, equations, computer programs. Nowhere in the engineering handbook did it call for me to be a public speaker.

So, imagine my horror when I stood before dozens of people on July 18 at the Tucker Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, stepping out of my comfort zone to deliver a staff report on a variance case. I wanted to throw up.

Fortunately, I got through the presentation with my faculties intact and was told that I did a pretty good job.

That's really been the story of my summer internship at Tucker's City Hall: a little bit of engineering, but more broadening my horizons as a young professional.

Over the course of the past three months I've been tasked with several projects that have opened my eyes to the inner-workings of city government.

I led a team of volunteers from Tucker High School on a project to inventory all of the City's parks and recreation assets. I drafted documents to help the City's efforts to redesign its website. I compiled a list of potential road resurfacing projects that could be funded with SPLOST money. I got my feet wet in the Finance Department.

There's more, but I've got a word count limit on this article.

One of the projects I worked on that really got my engineering juices flowing was Phase II of the Downtown Streetscape. I used computer software to do measurements and project where sidewalks should go and how utility poles should be relocated along First Avenue. Having seen the Streetscape of Main Street, I'm excited that my work will help continue the beautification of Tucker's thriving downtown.

There is one other major takeaway from my work this summer: the people I met at City Hall. As a young woman embarking upon a career in a male-dominated field, I was so fortunate to work under – and learn from – some amazing women including City Manager Tami Hanlin, Assistant City Manager Cindy Jenkins and Deputy Community Development Director Courtney Lankford.

As I leave Tucker, I will remember it as the place where I truly became a professional. I learned not to be nervous. I learned what it's like to work full-time in a fast-paced setting. It's an experience that I will take with me wherever my career path may go.



“I teamed with GIS Analyst Chris Rice this summer to inventory Tucker's park assets. It was a task that enabled me to gain valuable project management experience.”



“I've said the Pledge of Allegiance every day since I was a kid, but never in front of an entire City Council meeting. I checked that box off the list on June 28.”

DELIVER TO:

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

The City of Tucker held its first-ever National Night Out celebration on August 1 at Idlewood Elementary School. The event, sponsored by CH2M and InterDev and catered by the popular Pallookaville Food Truck, drew hundreds of Tucker residents for a celebration of community.



HENDERSON PARK WORKDAY

Volunteers with Friends of Henderson Park teamed with a contingent from Georgia State for a work day on August 12 to begin the redesign of the park's White Trail.



GET IN TOUCH WITH US!

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