



CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

# INTUCKER

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## FROM THE MAYOR

A couple months ago, we ran an article in *InTucker* detailing a range of studies, surveys and plans the City will be putting together over the remainder of 2018 and into 2019. There are 11 different topics being studied in-depth, impacting everything from our parks to our traffic and even the future of our downtown. The reason for that article was to lay out what was coming and show how those findings will impact you and your family for years to come.

That was an information piece. This is a call to action.

Many of these studies and plans are now underway. One of the most important jobs of the consultants who are going to be making recommendations to us is to gather input from the community. That's where you come in. No one knows Tucker better than those who live and work here. You are the ones who can help us decide where to build new pedestrian trails and what kind of amenities you want in your parks. You can tell us where you're seeing the most road congestion and where the worst safety hazards are. We need your ideas on what downtown Tucker needs in the way of restaurants, retail, parking, sidewalks and other services.

We have a committed group of citizens and business leaders who are on each of the steering committees for these studies and I'm grateful for their willingness to devote significant effort to these projects. But there's also a vital public input component to this. These will be big, open meetings where you can offer your insight and experience. Check out our website and social media channels in the coming weeks to see where and when public input meetings will be held. Better yet, sign up for our City email list and we'll put the calendar right in your inbox. Much like with our Comprehensive Plan process, you're going to find consultants at these sessions taking notes directly on what you say. Those notes will be boiled down into recommendations as to how City staff and the City Council should address these important issues going forward.

Now is the time when plans are being formed and your opinions will have the most impact. Please mark your calendars and make plans to take part. Engage in the process and help shape the plans that will make Tucker better and stronger long into the future.

## DATES TO KNOW

**September 3**  
Labor Day  
(City Hall closed)

**September 10**  
City Council

**September 12**  
Community Council

**September 18**  
Zoning Board of Appeals

**September 24**  
City Council

**September 27**  
Planning Commission

**Eager to learn more  
about Tucker?**

**Our University of  
Government Affairs  
starts on Sept. 11.**

**For details email  
info@tuckerga.gov**



## CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

Tucker's City Council met twice in the month of August, approving a 12.2 acre residential development in the southwest part of the City.

The project, which required a rezoning, variance and comprehensive plan amendment, passed on a series of 5-0 votes. The project is being overseen by local developer Minerva, LLC. It calls for 18 single-family homes and 55 townhomes to be situated on the site of the baseball fields owned by Rehoboth Baptist Church. The developer has promised a pedestrian connection from the property to neighboring Johns Homestead Park, as well as two new pocket parks within the development.

Earlier in the meeting, Council voted 5-0 to approve a contract with New South Associates to perform a Historic Resource Report for the City. Per the terms of the contract, New South Associates will engage the community in the process, incorporating local knowledge and including an oral history component. The end result will be a comprehensive listing of Tucker's historical assets.

At the meeting on August 13, Council voted unanimously to enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with DeKalb County for the Tucker Streetscape project. The estimated \$2.2 million project would require approximately \$578,175 in funding from the City. It would include sidewalk and drainage improvement, as well as amenities like benches and bike racks for First Avenue, Second Street and Fourth Street in downtown Tucker.

That meeting saw votes on several other business items. Council approved \$84,216 for the purchase of two mini-buses for use at the Tucker Recreation Center's After School and Summer Camp programs. A City meeting schedule was approved for the upcoming 2019 calendar year. Joe Singleton, a longtime Tucker resident and builder, was appointed as the newest member of Tucker's Zoning Board of Appeals. Additionally, Council approved funding for hardware to facilitate technological improvements for City staff.

Council then approved a series of resolutions. One resolution authorizes the City to collect film permit fees in a cooperative agreement with DeKalb County. Another demonstrates Tucker's commitment to sustainability.

The next scheduled City Council meeting is September 10 at 7 p.m. at the City Hall Annex (4228 First Avenue).



Annie Bell Bailey is a longtime resident of the Tucker area. For all her years in Tucker, she has been active in the community, working with DeKalb County to improve the quality of life in her neighborhood.

Because of her longtime efforts, Ms. Bailey's neighbors asked for a proclamation from Mayor Auman and the City Council. The Mayor issued the proclamation at the City Council's meeting on August 13.

At 102 years-old, Ms. Bailey is believed to be the oldest resident of Tucker's Peters Park community. The City is grateful for her service.



On August 2, City staff and councilmembers pooled together their own money, bought food and prepared 200 lunches for children in need. The Smart Lunch Smart Kid program, managed by Action Ministries, is run locally out of Tucker First United Methodist Church and serves children who are food insecure during the summer break from school. For details on how you can get involved, go to [www.actionministries.net](http://www.actionministries.net).

# ON THE BEAT WITH LT. SCHOEPPNER



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On August 16, I saw a news story which really struck me as an excellent teaching moment. It said Atlanta Police were looking for two men who had been breaking into cars at the parking deck of the Georgia Aquarium. This was unique because the suspects had brought their kids along to divert suspicion while they committed their crimes. This is a perfect illustration of the lengths that some people will go to make your stuff theirs.

So, this month we'll talk about some of the precautions you may take to keep that from happening. Since our news story was talking about entering autos, let's focus there.

The truth is that if someone has enough desire, they will almost certainly find a way to steal from you. The positive side of this is that most criminals are lazy and looking for easy marks. The gentlemen

on the news represent some extraordinary effort. Knowing this, we can then look at things we can do to reduce the chance that we are targeted.

The first precaution can be taken before you even leave your house. If you're going somewhere like the gym or a park, consider leaving things like your wallet, phone and electronic devices at home. Entering autos are prevalent at gyms because criminals know most folks will leave their valuables in their cars. Hotels are another target because travelers will sometimes not take all of their luggage with them into their rooms.

Simply put: don't leave your items in your car. If leaving your valuables at home is not an option, then take them with you. If your stuff isn't in your car it can't be stolen from there. This is especially true if you park your car in a carport or on the street in front of your home at night. If taking items with you is not an option, then make sure to keep them out of plain sight. If a criminal can see there is something they want in a car, the chances are greater that they'll try to get it.

Next, pay attention to where you park. Criminals will be more likely to target a vehicle parked in a remote location than one parked close to the building or where there are a lot of witnesses. They are also more likely to target cars parked in places where the lighting is poor to conceal their actions.

Lastly, pay attention to the people around you. Most of the time, parking lots are transitional areas. You park and then go to the store, park, gym or wherever. When you're done at your destination, you go to your car and leave. If you park and notice people hanging out in the parking lot, it could mean that they are there for something other than visiting that venue.

If you follow these simple steps, you can greatly reduce the chance of your property being stolen. Even if someone breaks into your car on the chance that something's there, you won't lose any additional property.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Caught in the Act

At just after midnight on August 5, Tucker officers responded to the Hidden Meadows Townhomes for an entering auto call. The victim told officers he had looked out the front window of his home and noticed that the front door to his Dodge Ram truck was open. When he went outside to investigate, he found a male suspect in the front seat looking through the vehicle. The victim used his body to block the door to the vehicle so that the suspect could not flee. Officers responded and took the suspect into custody.

### Resisting Arrest

On August 18, Tucker Evening Watch officers responded to a theft at Billy Bob's at 3962 Lawrenceville Highway. When the officers made contact with the suspect they discovered that he was intoxicated. They attempted to arrest him, but he resisted and bit one of the officers on the arm. The suspect was arrested for assaulting an officer, public intoxication and theft.

# SUSTAINING THE FUTURE: CITY HALL “GREEN TEAM” ON A MISSION



For one group of Tucker staffers, City Hall isn't just a place to work; it's an avenue for improving the way we live and for impacting future generations.

Meet the City Hall “Green Team”, four members of Tucker's City staff who are taking the initiative to make government buildings in the City more sustainable. The idea was the brainchild of the City's Community Development staff, who saw several easy steps they could take to make the workplace more environmentally friendly.

“If people are heading home for the day, or even if they have an hourlong meeting, we're encouraging them to turn their lights off,” City Planner Tim Lampkin explains. “Our staff members all have reusable coffee cups and water bottles to cut down on waste. These are simple

steps that our staff has been quick to adopt.”

City Planner Rosie Walk is new to the Tucker staff, but was eager to join the Green Team. She says her interest in sustainable living started in elementary school.

“I was in the fifth grade at Camp Creek Elementary School,” Walk recalls. “For some reason our school decided to start using Styrofoam trays in the cafeteria. We still had the old reusable plastic trays just sitting there in good shape, but they weren't getting used. I just thought that it was really wasteful.

“So my friend Megan and I started a petition and got the entire fifth grade to sign it. The school ended up changing back to the plastic trays.”

The Parks and Recreation Department is represented in the effort by Joe Stewart, a Tucker native. Stewart says that, as someone who works in the recreation field, preserving the outdoors is crucial.

“I love working and playing outside,” he says. “The smell of the fresh air, the beauty of our Tucker parks...I grew up playing in these parks and these are things that, as City staff, we can take steps to help keep intact.”

Stewart isn't the only one on the Green Team with deep ties to the City. Olivia Wilson graduated from Tucker High School in 2005 and has spent time volunteering at community cleanups like Rivers Alive.

“Being green matters to me as a citizen of Tucker,” says Wilson, the Community Development Administrative Assistant. “I'm excited to see what changes and what programs we can implement to make our city more environmentally friendly.”

“We just want to lead by example,” Lampkin says. “If enough people follow that example, maybe we can make a small difference in our community.”

In this case, a small difference could create a ripple effect in Tucker for generations to come.

## HOW YOU CAN MAKE A MORE SUSTAINABLE HOME

Our Green Team is implementing several simple steps around City Hall that you can do in your own home. They're easy, they're good for the environment and they might just save you some money!

- Drink out of reusable water bottles/cups
- Take a lunchbox with reusable silverware and containers each day
- Turn out lights when you leave a room
- Set your thermostat to 68 degrees in the winter and 78 degrees in the summer
- Consider composting your food scraps
- Install plants in your yard that attract pollinators



# TUCKER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## BUSINESS OF THE MONTH WARRIOR BODY SPA



Aaliya Bashir isn't shy about her love of Tucker. In fact, when she wanted to open her own brick-and-mortar business in 2013, there was no doubt about the location.

"Tucker has been my home for a really long time," Bashir explains. "These are my people, they're really tight knit and I wanted to stay in Tucker and nurture the community that has nurtured me."

As founder of Warrior Body Spa, Bashir nurtures her neighbors through a variety of high-tech spa treatments. The focus is on relaxation and detoxing the body. To that end, she says the most popular treatments right now are the ionic detox footbath and the infrared sauna therapy.

"We have a client who's a teacher," Bashir says. "She was super-stiff and she made space in her budget for her spa visit. It's increased the quality of her life. She's a better mom, better teacher. That one person you've helped is now able to help others, so it's rewarding to know we've helped thousands of people."

Warrior Body Spa is hosting a Wellness Hour and Open House on September 10 to introduce the community to their new location on Brockett Road and to celebrate September as Self-Care Awareness Month. From 4-7 p.m., their doors will be open to anyone who has questions about how these therapies can make a difference.

"We really want to introduce ourselves to the community. We want to create a forum where people are welcome to ask their questions, tour the facility and feel comfortable," Bashir says.

Warrior Body Spa is located at 2298 Brockett Road. You can find them online at [www.warriorspa.com](http://www.warriorspa.com).

## CITIZEN OF THE MONTH SMOKE SIGNAL



"The Smoke Signal, the monthly published newspaper for the Smoke Rise community, began 50 years ago in 1968 and has been published continuously since. It began on a kitchen table cut and paste style with volunteers doing the work, before being sent to the printers. Now, of course, it's done via email and computer technology and still with a volunteer staff. The number of people over the past 50 years who have poured their time and effort into the paper numbers well into the hundreds.

"The Smoke Rise community was originally known as Mountain Shadow, so-named in a Smoke Signal sponsored contest to name the area between Tucker and Stone Mountain along Hugh Howell Road. The Smoke Signal was first conceived as a yearly fundraising project for the Smoke Rise Community Club and distribution was limited to the neighborhood of that name.

"Pat McCurdy was the paper's first editor. Today, three editors share the responsibility of getting the paper out. Cheri Schneider, Aviva Hoffman and Jan Mahoney edit the paper on alternating months. A number of volunteers from the Smoke Rise neighborhoods write and submit articles and photos. The paper's finances are also handled by volunteer Harry Strack. Other volunteers handle the advertising inserts, folding and distribution. It is truly a team effort that has been going on for 50 years.

"The Smoke Signal is delivered around the first of each month to 2,300 households in the Smoke Rise area and would not be possible without these wonderful citizen volunteers."

*Nomination by Frank Luton*

# TEAM TUCKER SPOTLIGHT

Sam Durrance - Superintendent



**What were you doing before you came to Tucker?** Before Tucker I was a Jacobs employee working for the City of Johns Creek since 2007. I was the City Right-of-Way Manager and assisted with managing both capital and maintenance construction projects. Prior to Johns Creek, I was the Director of Public Works for a local municipality for seven years.

**Why did you want to join Team Tucker?** Joining Team Tucker does two things for me. First, I once again have a chance to be a small part of building an awesome city that will be something special for the residents and my fellow staff. Second, the opportunity to cut my three-to-four-hour commute time in half provides me time to spend with my family.

**As Superintendent, what will your day-to-day responsibilities look like?** I will be tracking and monitoring work issues and the time it takes for the County to respond to these issues that are reported by residents and staff. I will be assisting with the SPLOST resurfacing project and other SPLOST projects in the future.

**What is your biggest priority as you become Tucker's first Superintendent?** The priority for the near future is to communicate with the residents of the City and get to know them as they likewise get

## OFF THE WALL

**How long have you lived in the Metro Atlanta area?** I have been living in the Metro area since 1964 when my parents were reassigned to the Army Base at Fort McPherson.

**If you're not at work, where would we be most likely to find you?** Most of my time is devoted to working with youth either at church or with the Boys Scouts of America. I also enjoy gardening as a hobby.

**Tell us about your family...** The wife Michelle and our children are special people that I enjoy spending time with. We love to play board games, cards and spend quality time together. With the two grandchildren, Team Durrance has grown to 11.

**What's the last book you read?** I am a voracious reader and enjoy a wide variety of subjects from autobiography and science fiction to western lore. I have recently been working through several westerns by L'Amour and Zane Gray.

**Is there a quote or philosophy that you live by?** "Kindness and joy when shared are doubled. Sorrow and grief when shared are always halved."



to know me. I want them to know how important each and every one of them is.

**How is working in Tucker different from what you experienced in Johns Creek?** The City is relatively new and, as such, is just beginning to plot its own course and plan its future. I am excited about being here at this instrumental stage. Building something that we can all be proud of is always a fun and rewarding opportunity.



## COMMUNITY CORNER

**8/7 - Tucker Cruise-In**  
5-8 p.m., Main Street

Come check out some cool cars or show off your own at the very last Cruise-In of 2018. Awards will be presented at 8 o'clock.



**9/14-16 - Disney's Little Mermaid**  
Showtimes Vary, 5901 Hugh Howell Road

The Smoke Rise Academy of the Arts (SRAA) drama department presents a family musical, Disney's Little Mermaid Jr. at Smoke Rise Baptist Church. Attendance is free with no tickets required. One performance on Friday and Sunday, with two performances on Saturday.

# “ASK RIP” ANSWERS YOUR PARKS QUESTIONS

**Peter Berg - What are the City's plans for improving security and prevention of vandalism within the parks facilities? Overall, I feel safe in the parks, but am concerned about keeping our nice things nice and our image intact.**

Peter, one of the top priorities when we assumed responsibility for our parks earlier this year was ensuring the safety of our guests. One of the possible steps we identified was security cameras. We are in the initial stages of examining how helpful and effective these will be. Currently, we have testing going on in two parks (Peters and Kelley Cofer) and we will be looking at extending that into other parks as we go forward.

As far as vandalism, we are looking to clean that up immediately. We have parks staff and landscaping contractors in our parks every day, which helps combat any problems. To fully address it, we also rely on guests enjoying our parks to call us and let us know if they see something.

**Sharyn B. - Are there plans to perform any upgrades to the playgrounds (equipment and surfaces) at Kelley Cofer and Henderson Parks? They are sorely needed.**

I'm glad to say things are on schedule for playgrounds in both those parks to be replaced this fall. As you may have heard, the City won a grant for replacing playground equipment in three parks, as well as at Tucker Recreation Center. It was a matching grant, so the Mayor and City Council had to vote to approve funding to make this happen. They did and we are expecting to have brand new playgrounds in place by Thanksgiving.

**James Miller - Between the Tucker Soccer Park (on Henderson Road) and Lavista Road, there are no sidewalks. There are sidewalks between the park and Henderson Mill Road. People on the Lavista side would find this park to be much more accessible if they had a safe walk. Can you assist with this?**

James, while this is a subject that impacts use of our parks, it is not something that falls under the purview of Parks and Recreation. The good news here is that our City Engineering staff has been in close contact with DeKalb County and we are hopeful that you will see these sidewalks become a reality in the next year.

We understand that there are other pressing needs around the City impacting our parks. Because of that, let me take this opportunity to remind you of the Mayor's invitation (cover page) for the community to get involved in our ongoing plans and studies, specifically the Trail and Transportation Master Plans. Your input will be critical to helping us identify ways to improve the accessibility of our parks.

**Selene Alvahuante-Viggiano - Where can I find the classes and activities schedules, as well as pricing for kids at Tucker Recreation Center?**

I hope you've had a chance to check out our new-look website. Tucker.ga.gov has been redesigned in every sense, including a brand-new Parks and Recreation page. On this page, you'll find a link to our updated class and activities schedule. You can find additional details about these activities on our new Parks and Recreation Facebook page. Should you have more specific questions involving pricing, feel free to call or stop by the Rec Center and our staff will be happy to help you.

**Rip Robertson is the first Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Tucker. He takes the job with years of experience in Parks and Rec, as well as Public Works. Rip is a former Military Intelligence Analyst for the U.S. Army and is active with the Army Reserve.**



**9/15 - Atlanta Preparedness Fair**  
10 a.m.-4 p.m., 1947 Brockett Road

Learn about preparedness, safety, self-reliance and enjoy fun activities for the kids! Children's events include a petting zoo, bouncy castle and face painting, as well as getting to see a fire engine, police car and K-9 police dog. This is a free event open to anyone in the community.

**9/28 - Tucker High School Homecoming Game**  
7 p.m., Adams Stadium

Cheer on the Tucker Tigers as they take on Lovejoy in their annual homecoming game. Meet up with old friends and make some new ones. Go Tigers!



# TUCKERGA.GOV

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## #TKR1STDAYOFSCHOOL

Parents all over Tucker sent their little ones back to school on August 6. We asked you to share your Back to School photos with the hashtag #tkr1stdayofschool. Here are some of the best submissions we received!



**PLEASE DELIVER TO:**