



# INTUCKER

SEPTEMBER 2024 | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 4



# ART IS ALL AROUND

# ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Frank Auman**  
Mayor

**Roger W. Orlando**  
District 1 - Post 1

**Cara Schroeder**  
District 2 - Post 1

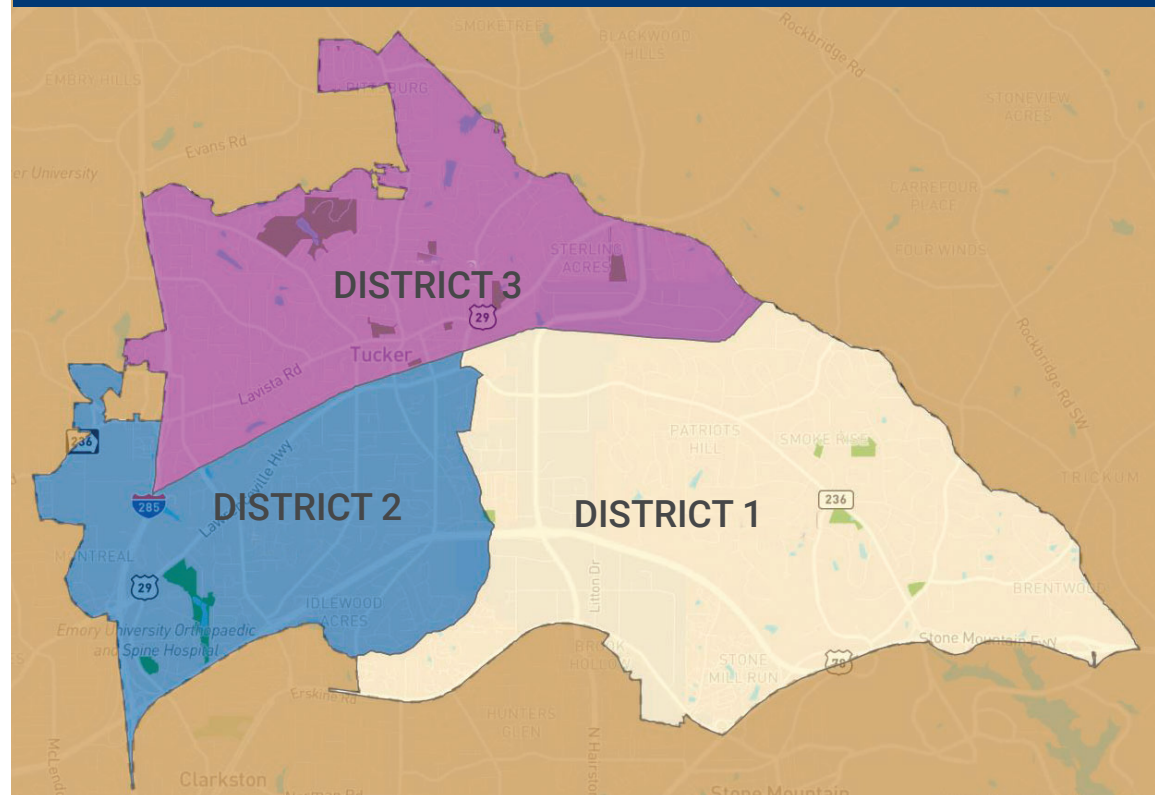
**Alexis Weaver**  
District 3 - Post 1

**Virginia Rece**  
District 1 - Post 2

**Vinh Nguyen**  
District 2 - Post 2

**Amy Trocchi**  
District 3 - Post 2

# DISTRICT MAP



# EDITOR'S NOTE

**SONJA SZUBSKI - COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

## CITY SOCIALS



**nextdoor**

## INTUCKER STAFF

Editor-in-Chief  
Sonja Szubski  
Design  
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Marcus Etienne &  
Robin Stevens



September is my favorite month, hands down. I love the hazy slowness of summer, but it can get heavy with all the humidity. While not the coolest month

of our southern autumn it is a wonderful blend of heat with the occasional fresh breath of chilly air. It is also the month of one of my favorite City events, Adult Field Day.

Adult Field Day was originally in May but has been moved to this month for a variety of reasons, including more temperate weather and the fact that May is an overscheduled month for parents, IYKYK. This year the event is free and includes a meal and two beer tickets in addition to the games and fun. Childcare is still available for a small fee and their meals are provided as well. A big draw every year is the cornhole tournament.

Registration is open now on the website for the event, childcare and the cornhole tournament, [tuckerga.gov/registration](http://tuckerga.gov/registration). Spots are filling quickly so grab your favorite neighbor and your best friends and come have some fun on at Tucker Rec Center

This issue is dedicated to the arts. Music, theatre, collaboration and integration. Tucker is booming in so many ways and a sure sign of a healthy community is its ability to create and sustain a creative environment. This year is the 10 year anniversary of our Main Street Theatre, we have a new creative outlet in the Tucker Arts Alliance and even the City is seeking input for our standards guidebook and opportunities for public art.

Now that we have a larger reach for our print edition I hope I hear from more of you on what you want to read about and who you would like us to celebrate.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Sonja

# FROM THE MAYOR

FRANK AUMAN



You've experienced it yourself – the most mundane, unglamorous things become so valuable, so useful, you never want to be without them. Our most recently completed project downtown is certain to be one of those.

People will regularly walk the equivalent of two city blocks to visit a mall, a big box retailer, or even a grocery store without giving it a thought. But if they can't park directly in front of the place they want to visit on Main Street, we hear complaints about the lack of parking downtown. It's in the nature of small downtowns that there's never enough parking, but that doesn't mean we aren't working on it every day. Our most recent project downtown is one of the most exciting and impactful we've ever done. And it's mostly asphalt.

For several years, we've been working on an agreement with Main Street Church (formerly Tucker First Baptist) for the public to be able to use their vast parking during the times that the church is not. On August 14, we held the Grand Opening!

This is a first-of-its-kind for Tucker – a cooperative venture with a major downtown property owner to create shared parking and a win-win-win situation. It results in just over 100 spaces available for use by students at Tucker High School and employees of downtown businesses, both of which will keep that many spaces open for visitors and the general public. It's of course to be used exclusively by the church on Sundays and for certain other events, but there will be plenty of signage to make clear when it's "offline". We've also resurfaced the lot and striped the shared spaces in a special green to make them stand out. We will be responsible for keeping it clean and well maintained through our public works department. And even better, the City has a new webpage to let you know when and where you can park downtown at all times, including pictures and directions! You can get more information at [Tuckerga.gov/parking](https://tuckerga.gov/parking).

We're so grateful for this collaborative effort and hope it will lead to many more. It's a great demonstration of the innovative community spirit in Tucker, and a huge practical help to the success of our downtown. See you on Main Street!



## FEATURE STORY

# COLLABORATION OF THE ARTS

There is a long debate in academia about what core characteristics must be present to signify the start of civilization. Is it when a form of government or religion is established? Perhaps it was when injuries were first tended to and allowed to heal and recover. Others will say it is the establishment of culture through the arts, that having the luxury of time and ability to create beauty is what is the defining element of civilized society.

Obviously, our present day is considered a civilized society. We live in an age of readily available education, established governance, and ever evolving and improving medical care. The arts are revered and celebrated worldwide and are part of the foundation of the education system. It is proven and accepted that learning to read music feeds and grows both sides of the human brain aiding in comprehension and computing. Painting, throwing pottery and performing can release endorphins to help stabilize our emotional and mental health. Those that are not called to create also benefit in similar ways just by observation and enjoyment.

Tucker has many avenues to create, enjoy, and celebrate the arts and artists. Years ago, as the Tucker community was rallying together to create their own local government another group established the first local community theatre. The Main Street Theatre grew and was established from a post in a local Facebook group in 2014. Starting with a single full-scale production, the group has expanded each year in their leadership and in their entertainment offerings. Their season now holds three full scale productions, a murder mystery dining experience, as well as holiday collaborations with the City. In celebration of their 10-year anniversary, Main Street Theatre is bringing back their inaugural production of Harvey this fall. The announced cast is a delightful blend of long-established Tucker actors with new-



to-Tucker talent. With a mission “to produce superior theatrical experiences that entertain and connect the community of Tucker with the arts and each other”, Main Street Theatres has proven itself successful, inclusive and most of all entertaining!

Local artists have met for years as the Tucker Arts Guild and have had opportunities to exhibit their work at the Northlake-Barbara Loar library, Tucker Recreation Center and the original City Hall on Adrian Street. In recent years, another organization has come together to include all aspects of art and creativity. A band of poets, dancers, singers, crafters and all types of creatives gathered in 2021 to support one another and from that initial meeting the Tucker Arts Alliance was formed.

Formed to be an alliance of creativity, the group has set out to explore what they can be and what they can do to be a unifying and encouraging force in the Tucker arts community. They have been participants in ARTucker, Tucker Day and Juneteenth, and their support has been noticed. Tucker-Reid Cofer Library reached out to the group and invited them to display a curated exhibit including all mediums. At the time of publishing, the Alliance will have completed the call for artists and be in the process of selecting the artists and creations to be displayed. Cleverly scheduled between early voting and the traditional gift giving holidays, the exhibition will be open to the public Saturday October 12 through Friday December 6 during the normal library hours.



# RESILIENT EARTH

09.14.2024  
04.30.2025

Starting this month, another exciting and interactive art exhibit is set to open in Northlake Mall. The Science Gallery Atlanta, affiliated with Emory University, has moved its location from Pullman Yards to Tucker. Guiding the decision was the ideal location of the mall, ample parking and variety of dining and shopping options. The Science Gallery Network is “an international collaboration of leading universities dedicated to public engagement through interdisciplinary art-science initiatives”. Their first show is an immersive exhibit showcasing sustainability and empowering people to discover their path forward toward a more resilient future. Titled ‘Resilient Earth’ the show runs from September 14, 2024 through April 30, 2025.

Music is the most accessible of the arts. We have free and constant access through FM radio waves and built-in instruments through our vocal cords. Churches have always been a source and an outlet for music through choirs and two local churches have opened their programs to the public. The Tucker Community Singers meet out of First Christian Church of Atlanta on weekly basis with a mission to showcase “hidden talents, promote inclusion and celebrate the diversity of Tucker through singing”. The singers perform throughout the year in collaboration with other ensembles around the Metro Atlanta area.

Tucker First United Methodist Church has launched a new children’s ministry called Tucker ACTS (Acting, Creative, Theatre, Song). Offering affordable and accessible education in music, theatre and visual arts, the first production will be this fall with “Godspell”. The ministry also offers weekly group and individual lessons in voice, piano, guitar and other stringed instruments.

Tucker has been a community for over a century, a city for almost a decade and through the dedication and sweat equity of local volunteers and creatives, the arts culture is expanding and becoming more accessible. Tucker’s civilization is being defined as you can play a part, as Main Street Theatre says, “Come play with us!”



# CITY HALL UPDATE

# CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

Tucker’s Mayor and Council met only once last month. It is a summer tradition to cancel the second meeting of July but this year they opted for the second meeting of August. The action was approved unanimously in the consent agenda which also covered meeting minutes, engagement for the financial audit and contracts for the Hugh Howell Road safety study and an amendment to lower the price of the FLOCK license plate reader service.

Returning to the agenda for second reads and approvals were the Special Land Use Permit to allow for a drive-thru at the proposed Fifth Third Bank on Lavista, an ordinance amendment to terminology relating to the land approval step of the occupational tax certificate process, and an update to the code on the manner of appeal in several chapters of City Code related to alcoholic beverages, land development, municipal court and signs.

Following the success of the new shared parking lot for downtown with Main Street Church, the City approved the resurfacing of the shared CSX parking lot between

Railroad Avenue and the railroad. Staff members identified, applied for and won funding through a Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) for majority of the cost. Repaving of Lilburn Stone Mountain Road is included in the contract.

Also approved in the meeting:

- A resolution to adopt the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Five-Year Update
- Phase 2 electrical improvements at the Fitzgerald Sports Complex park
- Purchase of 10 fleet vehicles
- Contract with Georgia Power for underground utility relocation at the Tucker Town Green

The contract to purchase a mobile LED scoreboard was tabled to be brought back in September.

The Tucker Mayor and City Council meet on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at Tucker City Hall, 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B, Tucker, GA

## DATES TO KNOW

**SEPTEMBER 2**  
City Buildings Closed in Observance of Labor Day

**SEPTEMBER 3**  
Downtown Development Authority

**SEPTEMBER 6**  
First Friday Concert Series  
Beatles Tribute Band -  
The Return

**SEPTEMBER 9**  
City Council Meeting

**SEPTEMBER 11**  
Traffic Court

**SEPTEMBER 12**  
City Standards Guidebook  
Public Open House

**SEPTEMBER 18**  
Traffic Court

**SEPTEMBER 19**  
Planning Commission

**SEPTEMBER 21**  
Adult Field Day

**SEPTEMBER 23**  
City Council Work Session



Students from Rehoboth Preschool and their teachers led the Pledge of Allegiance

## TUCKER CLUSTER NEWS & UPDATES

# NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW LEADERS

Under the leadership of the DeKalb County School District the Tucker Cluster is made up of seven schools: five elementary schools, a middle school and a high school all within the boundaries of the City. Each school has specialized programming that makes them stand out in the district and the state. The elementary schools are either STEM certified or International Baccalaureate schools and feed into Tucker Middle School and Tucker High School, both of which offer both curriculums.

Smoke Rise Elementary School and Tucker Middle School have welcomed new leadership this year. They, their staff and the families are excited and motivated to lean into each other and support each other to continue inclusive and kind learning environments.

### **SMOKE RISE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DR. KRYSYIE TATUM**

“My vision for Smoke Rise Elementary School is a vibrant hub where curiosity ignites young minds, teachers are empowered, and parents are our partners. Together, we will work to create a community that radiates positivity, kindness, and inclusivity. As a building leader, I focus on building strong relationships, fostering social-emotional well-being, supporting our foundation in academics, and celebrating each child’s uniqueness. Every student engages in hands-on, inquirybased learning experiences in our school environment.”

### **TUCKER MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL MS. CANDACE STEADMAN**

“Tucker Middle School’s success stems from setting high teaching and learning expectations, rigorous curriculum models/ resources, and our strong partnerships with our community affiliates and businesses. It is a privilege to be a part of a community where parents, teachers and students care for each other and strive to build positive relationships that support academic and social/emotional growth. It is my number one goal at TMS to ensure that every student receives a quality education and maximizes their full potential in a safe and nurturing environment, ultimately preparing them for success in both college and their future careers, as per our mission!”

# CELEBRATING SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



- **OCTOBER 2**  
Livsey Elementary School
- **OCTOBER 3**  
Smoke Rise Elementary School
- **OCTOBER 9**  
Midvale Elementary School
- **OCTOBER 11**  
Idlewood Elementary School

# BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

# BLACK ELEPHANT DESIGNS

She gets it from her mama and her grandma.

From a young age Brittiany Hubbard's mother and grandmother influenced her to be the woman she is today. Hubbard is a business minded woman with a strong sense for fashion that's been honed over the lives of three generations of stylish women. That sense of fashion led Hubbard to create Black Elephant Designs, a clothing company with a focus on maternity wear.

Growing up Hubbard looked up to her mother who was always well dressed and working for corporate America. "I always wanted to be a businesswoman now that I think about it because I would carry a briefcase to school and wear penny loafers," Hubbard said. "I always wanted to be just like her."

Hubbard's grandma taught her about fashion and sewing. In her adolescent years, her grandma used to take her to the pattern store and sit her down to view all the patterns and fabrics. This helped her find her passion for fashion. The young girl grew up and went to school to learn more. She earned her BFA in Fashion Design at the Art Institute of Atlanta in 2017.

For her senior project she created maternity wear. Hubbard wanted to take her designs in this direction because she had a desire to cater to women going through pregnancy.

"I like to see it when women say, 'Oh this feels good, it looks good,'" Hubbard said, "because when you are pregnant you don't always feel your best. You are gaining weight, sometimes you lose certain aspects of your beauty...Clothes may not feel comfortable. There is a whole lot that goes into it, so if I can make a woman feel beautiful at the end of the day, that is what really matters."

Hubbard founded Black Elephant Designs in 2018 and had to pivot when Covid hit two years later. During that time she began designing masks, which expanded

her portfolio. Soon another major change occurred: the entrepreneur moved her company to Tucker in 2021.

Since making the move to Tucker, Hubbard has enjoyed the change. She likes the location, she loves the small-town feel Tucker offers, her customers are friendly and she enjoys the supportive community of Tucker.

Black Elephant Designs has come a long way and overcome multiple challenges, which Hubbard attributes to her strong support system. She admits she is blessed with good people around her.

One of Hubbard's blessings is her right-hand man Byung Yoon, her Director of Manufacturing. Yoon brings a wealth of experience from working on Michelle Obama's inaugural gown, working with Proenza Schouler and Tommy Hilfiger to working at Fashion Week. Hubbard says he helps her get the look she is imagining whenever she creates her pieces.

With her talent and support Hubbard has proven to be a successful businesswoman. Visit Black Elephant Designs for stylish, comfortable maternity wear and see just what Hubbard learned from the women who came before her.





## CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

# MERLE WESTBROOK



When I think of Tucker, it's difficult to not think of Merle Westbrook, whose name is practically synonymous with the area. And the burgeoning art scene in the area cannot be discussed without bringing up Merle and her contributions.

Thanks to her heart and efforts as artistic director for Main Street Theatre, Tucker has become a key player in the greater Atlanta theatre community. Theatre goers and participants alike will know her, whether she's actually on stage starring in lead roles, or scurrying around behind the scenes as director or stagehand. She ensures every MST production is set to the high professional standards for which they are known.

While Main Street Theatre is a stalwart of Tucker now, it's key to remember that just 10 years ago, it was a small group of dedicated and determined community volunteers who just loved theatre and wanted to bring the joy of the stage to Tucker. As one of those original creators, Merle's contributions cannot be minimized.

As part of MST, Merle has brought joy and the arts to the Tucker community not only through the theatre's regular seasons, but also in directing many of their appearances at the North Pole at Tucker events. She also directed the first (and so far only) all-children's play at MST, "My Classmate's an Alien!"

Along with acting and directing, Merle is a triple threat with her beautiful voice, lending it to the choir of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. She and her husband, David, are often seen at businesses throughout Tucker, lending their support to local shops and restaurants.

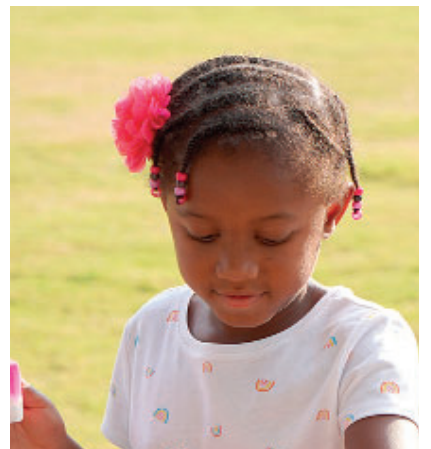
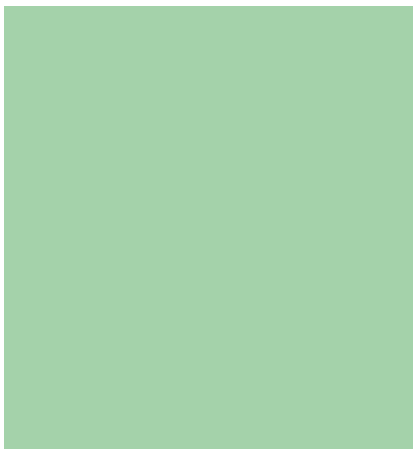
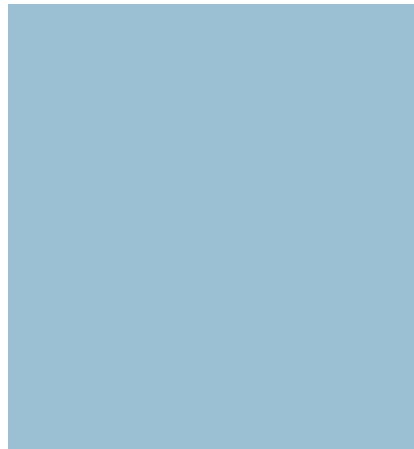
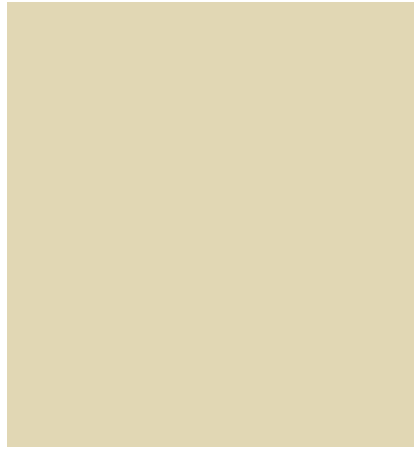
Beyond her love and dedication to community theatre and the greater Tucker community, Merle's kindness and warm-heartedness are what truly sets her above the rest to earn her a spot as a Citizen of the Month. She's always ready to help someone in need; she always has a kind word or a listening ear. When the phone rings, she will always answer the call ... and go above and beyond.

It's an honor to know Merle and have worked with her multiple times in the past; it's a true privilege to call her a friend. Merle, thank you for sharing your skills, expertise, talent, and unbridled love for theatre with Tucker. We are a brighter community thanks to you.

*Nomination by Carly Sherac*



# CHANGING OF THE SEASONS A FAREWELL TO SUMMER



AROUND TOWN

# UPCOMING CITY EVENTS

**THE RETURN**

**FIRST FRIDAY CONCERT SERIES**

SEPTEMBER 6 - CHURCH STREET GREENSPACE

SEPT. 21 5-8 P.M.



JOIN US FOR FOOD, DRINKS & BACKYARD GAMES

TUCKER RECREATION CENTER  
4898 LAVISTA RD

## CITY STANDARDS GUIDEBOOK

### FINAL CONCEPTS OPEN HOUSE

September 12, 2024  
6 p.m.

The City of Tucker is working with TSW on the creation of a City Standard Guidebook. The guidebook will identify a set of required products and design standards for city projects, including city signage (gateway, monument, wayfinding, etc), landscaping (trees, shrubs, ground cover, etc), retaining walls and fences, benches, trash cans, bollards, lighting, etc. By designing and creating a set of standards unique to Tucker, public projects across the city will have consistency that will create a unique sense of place and add character to the city as a whole.

Tucker City Hall  
1975 Lakeside Parkway, Tucker, GA 30084

TUESDAY, OCT. 1  
5-7 P.M.



POLICE • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

CHURCH STREET GREENSPACE  
4316 CHURCH STREET



# TUCKER Community Corner



## **Every Thursday through October** **– Tucker Farmers Market**

**4-7 p.m.**

**4885 Lavista Rd**

The Tucker Farmers Market is back! Come to St. Andrews Presbyterian Church for fresh veggies, local curations, food trucks and live music.

## **9/4 – Tucker Lifelong Community** **Committee Meeting**

**7 p.m.**

The TLC Committee is committed to fostering a lifelong livable community in Tucker. This meeting is virtual and the Zoom link can be found at [tuckercivic.org](http://tuckercivic.org).

## **9/14 – Tucker Cruise-In**

**10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Main Street**

Tucker Cruise-In is an old-fashioned town meet and greet car show with a wide variety of cars, ranging from antiques to street rods, motorcycles to imports. Vehicle entry is \$5.