



CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

# INTUCKER

Published by the City of Tucker, GA

NOVEMBER 2017



## FROM THE MAYOR

Since the earliest days of advocating for cityhood, we've been trying to emphasize that it was not an effort to "divorce" ourselves from DeKalb County. In fact, we have recognized that there are certain things we can do better as part of the county and certain things that are better accomplished by a more local government. For Tucker, those included planning and zoning, code enforcement and parks and recreation. So far, that's proven true.

For everything else, we rely on our relationship with DeKalb. And that relationship has never been stronger.

DeKalb County handles everything from public safety to wastewater management to public works here in the City of Tucker. That happens through intergovernmental agreements – or IGAs – that we sit down and negotiate with leadership from the County. A consensus on those IGAs takes a lot of work, but DeKalb CEO – and Tucker resident – Mike Thurmond and his team have been proactive and positive as we've gone through this process. In the past couple weeks, we've made significant progress on the three big remaining agreements: Parks, Police and Public Works. Those three are issues the City and County have studied on many levels for several months. These things don't come easily or quickly, but we believe we'll soon announce some innovative partnerships that will be models for other cities.

Another example of this relationship is our coordination with the County in times of crisis. Last month, we sat down with Chief Sue Loeffler, who, as head of the DeKalb Emergency Management Agency, oversees the DeKalb Emergency Operations Center. This is the nerve center – which happens to be located here in Tucker – where critical decisions are made during severe weather or public safety emergencies for the entire county. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss lessons learned and areas we can improve our communication following the response to Tropical Storm Irma. It was a productive session that leaves us better prepared as we head into the winter weather season.

Tucker is making great strides as an incorporated city. You should know that our partnership with CEO Thurmond and DeKalb County are an important part of that. As we finalize these agreements and reach the end of our start-up phase, one of the things you can look forward to is greater clarity from the City and the County about exactly who does what and where to go for help or questions about your services. In the meantime, please call on me, your Council members or our outstanding City Hall professionals for anything you need.

## DATES TO KNOW

**November 7**  
Election Day

**November 8**  
Community Council

**November 10**  
Veterans Day - observed  
(City Hall closed)

**November 13**  
City Council

**November 21**  
Zoning Board of Appeals

**November 23 - 24**  
Thanksgiving - observed  
(City Hall closed)

**November 27**  
City Council

**November 30**  
Planning Commission

**Want more InTucker?**  
Catch videos and  
web exclusives on  
our website! Go to  
[tuckerga.gov](http://tuckerga.gov) and click  
on the "Newsletter"  
tab.



# CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

Tucker's City Council kept busy during the month of October, holding four public meetings to discuss a range of issues.

At their October 9 meeting, Council voted 5-0 to approve a series of variances and a special land use permit (SLUP) for a 94,800-square-foot climate controlled multi-warehouse facility on Northlake Center Drive. That permission was granted contingent on several conditions that ensure the building is of the highest standards. They also voted 5-0 to approve a group of amendments to Tucker's zoning ordinance. Those changes include new limitations on massage establishments and linear lighting in the City, as well as refining the definition of 'family' to better balance protection of our single-family neighborhoods with a changing population.

The next night, Council invited the community to a Town Hall meeting to answer questions and hear concerns from residents and other stakeholders. The gathering, which was hosted at Tucker Middle School, focused heavily on details of the EHOST/SPLOST referendum.

On October 23, Council held its second regular bimonthly meeting at the City Hall Annex. They voted unanimously to approve amendments to the City's Land Development Ordinance including changes to street, sidewalk, easement and driveway standards. The effort to update and further refine this important land development tool comes amid increasing residential development and demand in Tucker. Council then held a first read and public hearing on a proposed 18-unit single-family development on Saren Court. The project, which had been deferred from the summertime, is scheduled to come up again for a public hearing and final vote at the Council meeting on November 13.

Once the regular City Council meeting was adjourned, Council held a work session to hear a presentation on multi-family housing inventory within the City.



Mayor Auman presents a proclamation in honor of World Mental Health Day to Tucker resident Holly Duncan and a delegation from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the DeKalb Community Service Board (CSB).

# TUCKER FOOTBALL STAR EARNS NATIONAL HONOR

Over the years, several gifted student-athletes have come through the Tucker High School football program. Some, like Jacksonville Jaguar defensive back A.J. Bouye, have established themselves. Others, like University of Georgia standout Dominick Sanders, are rising stars. The latest in the lineage of Tucker football greatness, however, could be the best of the bunch.

Josh Vann is a senior wide receiver and leader of a Tigers team that has designs on a return to the state championship stage. Following a stellar junior campaign, Vann has racked up almost 700 yards from scrimmage and 11 touchdowns through Tucker's first seven games of the 2017 season.

On October 18, Vann was in the spotlight as representatives from the U.S. Army and American Family Insurance came to Tucker High to present him with his jersey for the 2018 U.S. Army All-American Game.



"It's like a dream come true," Vann says. "I never dreamed of becoming an Army All-American."

While fans and recruiters know Vann as a star wide receiver, his coach remembers just three years ago, a kid trying to earn playing time at punter.

"Our kids can see that if you work hard and you do your best, then there's an opportunity for you to be one of the best in the country," says Tucker Coach Bryan Lamar. "We're very proud of Josh and all that he's accomplished and the sky's the limit for him."

Vann was a heavily recruited four-star wide receiver, gaining interest from top programs in the SEC, Big Ten and Big 12. Ultimately, he chose to commit to the University of South Carolina, a spot that Coach Lamar says he could make a real impact.

(continued on page 4)

# ON THE BEAT WITH LT. SMITH

As Halloween comes to a close and our children prepare for the teeth cleaning from the dentist for the ridiculous amount of candy consumed, we brace ourselves for the approaching shopping season. With that, we see an increase in entering autos, especially around shopping centers. It's a trend that's true each year nationwide and right here at home. Because of that, I would like to take this time to remind everyone of the following:

**Entering Autos**  
**DON'T BECOME A VICTIM!**  
**Ten Ways to Reduce Car Break-Ins**

- Close all windows and your sunroof
- Lock any valuables in your trunk
- Lock all of your doors
- Do not leave bags/purses/wallets visible in your vehicle
- Secure any loose change
- Park in well-lit areas whenever possible
- Do not leave spare car/house keys in your car
- Do not leave chargers plugged in
- Do not leave electronics visible in your car
- Remove GPS units and the suction cup

[www.dekalbpolice.com](http://www.dekalbpolice.com)

DeKalb County Police and Tucker Precinct logos are also present.



Lt. R.S. Smith has served as Tucker's Police Liaison to DeKalb County since 2016. He recently accepted a transfer to DeKalb's East Precinct.

We thank Lt. Smith for his dedicated service to proactive and positive policing in the City of Tucker.

Get to know our new Police Liaison, Lt. David Schoepfner, in next month's issue of *InTucker*.

## POLICE BLOTTER

**THE RING VIDEO DOORBELL** - On October 9, a homeowner off of Henderson Mill Road arrived home to find that her delivered packages were not on her porch. Fortunately, she had a Ring doorbell installed and was able to pull up the video footage of the delivery. Afterwards, the camera recorded two male subjects removing the packages. The video was very clear and showed the suspects picking up the packages and shaking them before fleeing the location with them. Officers obtained all of the information from the victim and notified CID. Once the detectives were able to get a copy of the video, they immediately recognized one of the suspects as someone they had previously arrested in the same area for residential burglaries. The juvenile suspect was known to them and is a person of interest in several other burglaries and entering autos in the area. Because of the video, the detectives were able to immediately obtain an arrest warrant for the suspect from a magistrate court judge. They then coordinated with the suspect's school to have him pulled to the office and placed under arrest for the theft. The investigation is still continuing into other possible crimes.

**"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL"** - In the early morning hours of October 10, officers responded to an alarm call at the Little Miller Grove Baptist Church on Peters Road. When they arrived, they could hear loud noises coming from the rear of the location. Upon checking the back of the church, they witnessed the suspect climbing out of a rear window of the building and attempting to flee on foot. They were able to quickly apprehend him without incident. During their subsequent investigation, they located several stolen items in his possession from the church. They also noticed that the suspect appeared to have helped himself to some food in the kitchen and then left a note on the table stating, "Sorry, I was hungry." The suspect was later interviewed by detectives, who were able to connect at least four additional business burglaries in the area to the suspect. He was arrested and transported to the DeKalb County Jail where he was lodged for burglary.

# TUCKER Q&A: EHOST/SPLOST

On November 7, DeKalb County voters will decide on a tax referendum. Read up on the facts before you cast your ballot!

## Q: What is a SPLOST?

A: The special-purpose local-option sales tax (SPLOST) was enacted in 1985. The SPLOST was conceived and enacted as a county tax for funding capital projects. It is not a City tax, nor is it a joint county-municipal tax like the local-option sales tax (LOST). As a county tax, a SPLOST can only be initiated by the Board of Commissioners.

## Q: What is the process for deciding how the funds will be spent?

A: The legislation, Senate Bill 156, determines how the SPLOST proceeds must be spent. DeKalb County and all municipalities must comply with the rules included in the legislation.

## Q: When was the SPLOST/EHOST bill passed?

A: The SPLOST/EHOST bill was passed by the Georgia General Assembly on March 30 and signed by Governor Deal on May 8.

## Q: How does the City of Tucker get money if voters approve the SPLOST/EHOST?

A: Mayor Frank Auman and City Manager Tami Hanlin have met with DeKalb County leaders to ensure Tucker gets the proper funds should the ballot measure pass. The Tax Commissioner would collect the funds, then distribute to each incorporated city within DeKalb County a share of the SPLOST proportionate to their population.

## Q: How much money would Tucker get and how would it be spent?

A: The SPLOST would bring around \$33 million to Tucker over the next six years. At least 65 percent of that money would go toward



road and drainage improvements and at least 20 percent would go toward multi-modal transportation projects, as well as improvements to fire facilities and citywide safety equipment. The remaining funds – up to 15 percent – would be designated for improvements in parks and recreation and other public facilities.

## Q: Who established the revenue estimates for SPLOST?

A: DeKalb County is responsible for estimating the SPLOST revenues expected to be collected over the life of the SPLOST, as well as the costs of all projects to be financed.

## Q: How much detail is required in the SPLOST referendum?

A: The SPLOST law requires that the purpose or purposes for which SPLOST revenues will be used be written on the ballot. The degree of specificity is left to the county or municipality imposing the SPLOST. In the City of Tucker, the City Council voted on a list of general project areas where the money will be allocated by percentage (see above). For complete details on the SPLOST discussion in DeKalb County, the County has set up a website at [www.dekalbsplost.com](http://www.dekalbsplost.com).

## TUCKER FOOTBALL STAR EARNS NATIONAL HONOR



(continued from page 2)

“Josh is a tremendous talent,” Lamar explains. “Probably got the best hands I’ve ever seen on a kid. Tremendous strength in his hands, big hands, great speed and he just has the ability to make big plays.”

While there’s a lot of buzz over Vann’s college future and his All-American honor, this is a young man who’s focused on what’s right in front of him and his Tucker teammates.

“Our team goal is to make it to a state championship and win a state championship,” Vann says. “We’ve just got to work hard every day, got to grind, got to be there for each other, stay positive throughout the season and just care for each other.”

If the Tigers are able to make a second straight appearance in the state championship game, Vann will surely be one of the reasons. In the meantime, he knows he’s serving as a role model for younger teammates and kids in the Tucker community.

“Everybody looks at the football team,” Vann says. “Just by me being able to go to college... making it to college, that’s a good honor. Everybody in the City of Tucker [is] just looking up to me and wanting me to do big things for myself...so it means a lot.”

You can watch Vann and other prep stars from across the country in the U.S. Army All-American Game in San Antonio on January 6, 2018. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. on NBC.

# TEAM TUCKER SPOTLIGHT

## Sonja Szubski - City-Community Connector



**How long have you lived in Tucker?** My husband and I bought our house in 2007, but I grew up just around the corner from Tucker so it has always been a part of my life.

**Have you been involved in any community groups?** Yes! I sat on the board of Tucker Civic Association for a few years and, in those roles, I was able to work with other community organizations all over Tucker. I have sat on the School Council and served on the PTO of our local school. I also started the cityhood advocacy group Tucker 2014 with a group of friends and volunteered with Tucker 2015. Those were fun and exciting years.

**How did you decide to join the City in a communications role?** I had the privilege of staying home with my children while they were little, but with both of my children in elementary school, I decided I would look for a position that interested me. After a year of not looking (whoops!), I saw a Facebook post about a job opening at City Hall while I was on vacation. I read the description and I realized it would be a perfect fit for me! So, I scrambled to get together a resumé while at the beach and I applied. It really was kind of a spur of the moment decision and a whirlwind process, but I am thrilled to be here, to say the least.

**What are your main job responsibilities?** My title is City-Community Connector and it is unique to Tucker. That means the position is still being built. I see my role as a bridge-builder or liaison between the community, the community organizations of Tucker and our new City Government. This is an exciting time for our new City and I want to make sure the community stays involved and is heard.

## OFF THE WALL

**What's your favorite restaurant?** There are so many great restaurants here in Tucker and we have a steady rotation going on. My favorite new additions would be Nothing Bundt Cakes and Donut City.

**Which movie could you watch over and over?** This is a tough one for me. It is a tie between Clue and Best in Show.

**Who was your childhood crush?** Michael J. Fox, of course.



**Georgia or Georgia Tech?** This is a loaded question for the Szubski family. While I attended UGA, Georgia Tech is what brought my husband, Ben, to the South and it's where we first met. We are season ticket holders for the Yellow Jackets and I no longer wear Red and Black, even though red is one of my best colors. I like to joke that giving up UGA was part of the pre-nuptial agreement.



**Have any hobbies?** I would like to say that I enjoy cooking and exercising in my spare time, but neither is true. Honestly, in my spare time I hang out with my family and volunteer.

**What is your vision for the relationship between the City and civic groups?** One of collaboration and joint vision for the future growth of Tucker, both community-wise and economically.

**What is your favorite part about living and working in Tucker?** The commute! I live 1.7 miles from City Hall. Plus, I get to work with all of my friends all throughout Tucker.

# TUCKER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## BUSINESS OF THE MONTH GEORGIAN HOME REALTY

When the Festival boutique shop closed its doors on Main Street earlier this year, real estate broker Jessica Crocker saw an opportunity.

“This space came available,” she recalls. “It was much more space than we needed, but we knew we would fill it up.”

Crocker and her colleagues did some renovations, then moved their Georgian Home Realty offices into the space at 2343 Main Street, right in the heart of Tucker’s thriving downtown.

“Tucker is a buzzword in real estate right now,” Crocker explains. “People from Midtown are moving here. It’s Small Town, U.S.A., but right on the edge of Big Town, U.S.A., so people really like it here.”

Georgian Home Realty has four agents, all from around Tucker, who specialize in the buying and selling of homes in this area. They say it’s definitely a seller’s market, which keeps their boutique real estate shop busy.



“The big corporate America real estate conglomerate kind of got ruined in the collapse,” Crocker recalls. “We are more of a team. We help each other with our listings and our marketing ideas and showing properties if one of us can’t get there. We really do work together.”

As for buying and selling in Tucker, they say things are changing.

“It was very affordable to live in Tucker and that’s, what I think, brought people here,” Crocker says. “But our prices have gone up a lot here in Tucker recently [and] that’s a good thing.”

For more information about Georgian Home Realty, visit their website at [www.georgianhomerealty.com](http://www.georgianhomerealty.com).

## CITIZEN OF THE MONTH MEL KNIGHT

“It is with great pleasure that we nominate retired DeKalb County Police Lt. Melanie ‘Mel’ Knight as Tucker’s citizen of the month.

While serving the citizens of DeKalb County, Mel came into contact with many individuals down on their luck, needing protection or just needing a helping hand. Through hard work and volunteering her time and energy, Mel was able to cultivate a network of contacts, resources and friends.

Even before Mel retired, she was well known in the Tucker community from activities such as gathering donations for needy children at Christmas, instigating the Shop with a Cop Program, working at a local food bank and helping at the abused women’s shelter.

Mel has continued in these roles after retirement. She has assisted many of her neighbors and citizens of Tucker, whether in need of funds, sick or elderly. She knows who to contact to get needed home repairs and who to refer to for other basic needs.

Mel has supported the city of Tucker by assisting in numerous events such as Tucker Day, Beat the Badge, Trunk or Treat and the Chili Cook-Off. She was also instrumental in helping organize the Inaugural 5K Road Race.

Many people slow down and put their feet up once they retire. Instead, Mel has become more involved in the community and we believe she epitomizes public service and community. She is a shining example of the type of person Tucker is honored to call a citizen.”

*Nominated by Peggy Shell, Cathy Pierce, Debra Timms, Lavonne Randall, Kelley Samaras, Eric McCaskill and Marietta Slemp*



# “ASK RIP” ANSWERS YOUR PARKS QUESTIONS



**Sarah Suhar** – *I was wondering if there are any plans to develop a dog park for Tucker residents in the near future? I think the city and its residents would hugely benefit from this and would love to see this happen for our new city.*

Sarah, one of the things folks will find out as they get to know me is that I'm a dog lover just like you. And, just like you, my wife and I have to travel to other communities to take our dog to the dog park.

As I've stated before, one of the first big projects for our Parks & Recreation Department will be a Parks & Rec master plan. That's where those types of issues will be discussed by residents and other stakeholders in the community. You can expect to see news about public forums and opportunities to provide input on the master plan in early 2018.

I will tell you there are several challenges as we look at adding park amenities. The biggest challenge with installing a dog park is finding the right location. So we will be seeking input on where in the City people would most like to see a dog park.

**Steve Hagan** – *As we move toward developing a Parks master plan, do you believe the goal of establishing a neighborhood park or larger park of some description (natural area, ball field, tot lot, pool, etc.) within a 10- or 15-minute walk of all residents as promoted by the Trust for Public Lands a worthy one for Tucker or would you favor some other goal?*

Steve, that's not just the goal of the Trust for Public Lands, it's also a National Recreation and Park Association standard. In an urban environment where land is precious, those goals are worth striving for, but they're sometimes not very easily obtained. That said, we are certainly going to do all we can to meet those guidelines. Our master plan process will give us a much better idea of what we can and cannot do in that regard.

**Robert Matthews** - *I've lived just outside Tucker for 18 years and still don't know the location of any Tucker city parks. Will you publish a map showing where (and what) they are?*

Robert, it's funny you ask that. Our GIS Department has just published a new online feature to help folks inside and outside of Tucker explore our parks. It's an application called "Tucker Outdoors" and it allows the user to search parks by different amenities. Want to know which parks have soccer fields? Looking for a picnic shelter? Searching for a great hiking trail? You can find it all on our homepage with "Tucker Outdoors".

Additionally, as we assume responsibility for our Parks & Recreation from DeKalb County, we will be doing other marketing of all our parks. We want to make sure that everyone knows what great outdoor options we have here in Tucker and about the improvements we're making to those parks.

**Lori D. Jones** - *Will the Tucker Rec Center continue to offer day camps for children during school breaks and summers?*

Absolutely. There are no plans to change any of the programming currently being offered at the Rec Center. Understanding how important Tucker Rec is to the community, our intention is to build upon and improve the existing programming.



**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.**

# TUCKERGA.GOV

City of Tucker

Phone : 678-597-9040

4119 Adrian Street

Email : [info@tuckerga.gov](mailto:info@tuckerga.gov)

Tucker, GA 30084

Facebook : [facebook.com/cityoftucker](https://www.facebook.com/cityoftucker)



## COMMUNITY CORNER

It is with great excitement that we announce the new Community Calendar on the City's Website. All Tucker area organizations and schools are invited to register and share their upcoming community events and volunteer opportunities. Go to [tuckerga.gov](http://tuckerga.gov), click on "Calendar" and choose "Community Calendar" from the dropdown menu. Go through the registration process and create your first event! Come back often to see what is going on in Tucker.

While on the website, be sure to sign up for our email list. Currently we send out a weekly announcement of City meetings and our monthly newsletter. With the addition of the Community Calendar, we will start emailing weekly community events driven by your postings on the Community Calendar!

### 11/4 – TUCKER OPTIMIST FALL BARBECUE

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (or when food sells out)

Tucker's Optimists will be serving up chopped pork and half-chicken plates for \$10 at the barbecue pit across from the Tucker Post Office. Whole pork butts can be pre-ordered for \$40. Proceeds from the sale go to local youth-oriented projects. Details and pre-order information at [www.tuckeroptimistclub.org](http://www.tuckeroptimistclub.org).

### 11/4 – ARTucker

11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tucker Rec Center

ARTucker, an indoor artists market, will once again be hosted at the Tucker Rec Center on Saturday, November 4. Peruse handcrafted gifts from local Georgia artists. Admission is free.



### 11/6 – TCA Veterans Job Fair

10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Rehoboth Baptist Church

Tucker Civic Association – in partnership with the Atlanta VA Medical Center, Goodwill of North Georgia and DeKalb Realtors Association – will give veterans the opportunity to meet with recruiters from local and national companies. Those job seekers will also get help on writing and printing a resumé. More information visit TCA online at [www.tuckercivic.org](http://www.tuckercivic.org).

## KELLEY COFER PARK: FOR GOODNESS SNAKES TUCKER

Reptile enthusiasts got up close and personal with some sssss-lithery wildlife at the For Goodness Snakes Tucker day on October 15 at Kelley Cofer Park.



**PLEASE DELIVER TO:**

