



INTUCKER

JUNE 2025 | VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 6



GROWING IN TUCKER
HELPING NEIGHBORS EAT WELL

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Frank Auman
Mayor

Roger W. Orlando
District 1 - Post 1

Cara Schroeder
District 2 - Post 1

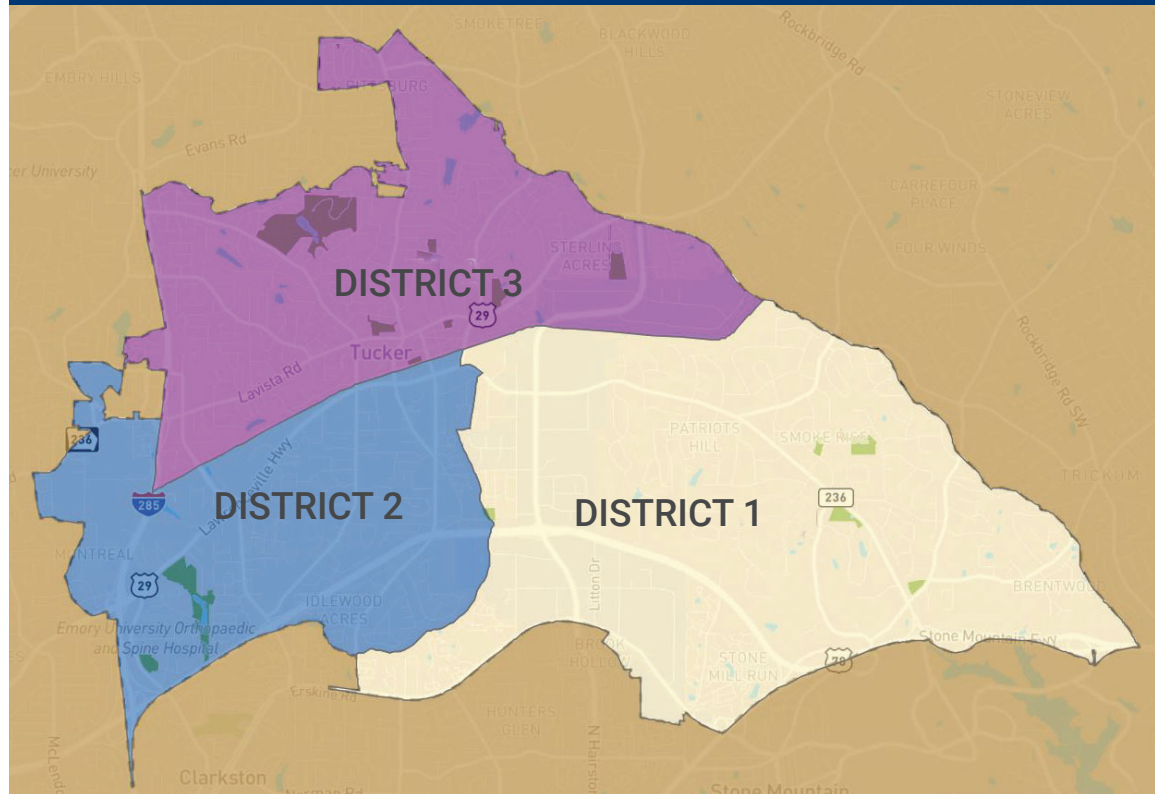
Alexis Weaver
District 3 - Post 1

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



Summer is here! As a mother to two teenagers, May was chockful of life firsts and school year lasts. First job interviews, first car, final exams and preparation for senior year and college applications. Big milestones always remind me to take a moment to breathe, enjoy where we are and look fondly at how we have grown.

The City is coming upon a major milestone, too. This November will be the 10-year anniversary of our referendum to incorporate, and we are taking the opportunity to celebrate our beginning and recognizing our accomplishments over the past decade. The series will be called Tucker: Ten Years in One with monthly highlights of the hard work of

the Mayor, Council and staff, with two large resident celebrations to bookend the year.

The year long celebration will launch this November with the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, honoring those that helped create the City of Tucker, those that stood it up and all that continue to partner in the success and growth of the community. The celebrations will culminate in a huge harvest festival for all to celebrate our City and our community.

But for now, I am going to savor this summer heat and allow it to slow me and mine down a bit. We are going to laugh over family dinners, touch our toes to the sand, and recognize that ten years goes by too quickly, just a blink of the eye really, and that we will never have this time together again.

Enjoy your summer, Tucker!

CITY SOCIALS



nextdoor

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Robin Stevens



FROM THE MAYOR

FRANK AUMAN



For most of the 20th century, Tucker prospered as a growing suburban community in unincorporated DeKalb. In the first decade of the 21st

century, new cities had formed in Dunwoody and Brookhaven, who joined Chamblee, Doraville and Decatur, among other older cities. For a variety of reasons, a group formed to consider cityhood for Tucker in 2013. I was part of that group, as were some of you. It began with a small core of about eight people and quickly grew into a larger group of volunteers. It's long story for another time, but after a lot of work over the course of two years, in April of 2015, the legislature passed a bill which contained a proposed charter and called for a cityhood referendum for Tucker. In November 2015, the bill passed with 74% of the vote, establishing that charter as the foundational definition of the City of Tucker. In early 2016, we held our first elections, in which I became the city's first Mayor. Several members of the original volunteer group were elected to the city council, and many others went on serving in volunteer roles and elsewhere in the new city.

Being part of a Constitutional Federal Republic has two very important implications relevant for the daily decision-making of the city: One, according to our charter, we have well-defined responsibilities, which you may be familiar with, and two, we are NOT just a smaller version of other subdivisions of government such as counties, states or the federal government. We have our responsibilities, and they have theirs, even though the lines are not always as clear as we'd like. Understanding the differences and not presuming to have the authority to act on responsibilities of other governments is a critical part of supporting and protecting those constitutions. The charter lists things that we are uniquely positioned and uniquely authorized to do, and there are more of them than we can ever get to. It's when we stray from those and veer into others' territory that we do damage to our city. It tells us all the parameters

of how to conduct our business and ourselves. In informal terms, it creates and defines our "lane", as in one of my favorite admonitions for all forms of government, which is to "Stay in your lane".

When we veer out of our lane, and into the territory of other government subdivisions' authorities, the best thing that can happen is we waste time and money and energy. We also fail to spend time and money and energy on the things that are in our purview. That's the best case. The worst case is that we unnecessarily divide our community and our elected officials, degrade or destroy relationships that are hard enough to maintain, mistreat our own citizens by improperly subjecting them to unauthorized acts, and potentially bring lawsuits on ourselves.

The council's responsibility is to consider the public's expressed views and desires, add their own (hopefully greater) knowledge and judgment, and then act on behalf of the city. We don't exist to divine the popular will and then do that – in that case, we should just have a pure democracy, which we have rejected for good reason.

We are neither a democracy nor a dictatorship. We are a Constitutional Federal Republic. We elect representatives to serve within the bounds of our carefully considered foundational documents, and when we adhere to them, including amendments as wise and necessary, we will prosper and endure. We can and have survived civil war, alleged attempted coups, efforts to otherwise undermine our governments, and ill intended, ignorant and incompetent leadership at all levels, for 237 years. The president, governor and mayor cannot act as dictators, and chaotic, even violent protesters will not make the rules for the rest of us if we honor and uphold our Constitutions and Charter. It requires discipline and diligence, and it requires an informed and engaged citizenry, just like you, so thank you again for what you do.

Reach out to us, stop us at the grocery store, look at our upcoming meeting agendas and attend our public meetings. You are why we serve.

DATES TO KNOW

- **JUNE 2**
Downtown Development Authority
- **JUNE 3**
Zoning Board of Appeals
- **JUNE 4**
Municipal Court
- **JUNE 6**
First Friday Concert Series
The Chairmen of the Board
Church Street Greenspace
- **JUNE 9**
Mayor & City Council Meeting
- **JUNE 11**
Municipal Court
- **JUNE 12**
Movies on the Green
Mufasa
(rescheduled from May due to weather)
- **JUNE 18**
Municipal Court
- **JUNE 23**
Mayor & City Council Meeting
- **JUNE 26**
Movies on the Green
Wild Robot



FEATURE STORY

NETWORKS' GROWINGS! WHEN INNOVATION DRIVES SERVICE

For more than two decades, NETWorks has been a pillar of support in the Tucker community, alleviating burdens for families through food assistance and financial aid. Now, they're growing—both in physical space and in what they offer.

A significant addition to their efforts is Growings!, an indoor hydroponic farm that produces fresh food year-round. This innovative farm allows individuals in need to shop for produce—completely free of charge—right at NETWorks.

"It is very rewarding," said NETWorks Executive Director David Fisher. "I will say we can't do that work without the support of the community."

A MISSION ROOTED IN COMPASSION

NETWorks began in 2004 as a nonprofit formed by several local churches, committed to responding to the food and financial needs of the community with the hospitality of Christ. Their mission goes beyond immediate relief—they aim to help individuals find long-term solutions to poverty.

"So we are trying to help them meet their hardship both in food shortages and financial shortages," Fisher explained, "but we're also trying to work with them to find ways they can get out of that situation permanently."

That's where Growings! comes in.

HYDROPONICS BRINGS FRESH FOOD AND HOPE

Growings! was the brainchild of Neil Duggan, who now manages the operation. Years ago, he approached Fisher with the idea of using hydroponics to create a sustainable source of food. But at the time, NETWorks was in a small 2,000-square-foot facility, and Fisher didn't see a way to make it work.

"Neil came to me several years ago with the idea of hydroponics, and at that point, we were in a different facility—we had nowhere to do it," Fisher recalled. "I thought, great idea, I can't help you. You cannot help us right now."

Fast forward to today, NETWorks now occupies a 10,000-square-

foot space, and Growings! has blossomed into a thriving operation. The hydroponic farm uses a recirculating water system to grow strawberries, bok choy, lettuce, spinach, kale, Swiss chard, cucumbers, and tomatoes—all fresh, local, and ready to nourish the community.

Duggan took the idea from concept to reality, securing funding from an anonymous donor, church partners, grants, and individual donors. With resources in place, Duggan got to work designing, cutting, welding, and planting.

"It really has been all him, and now he has some volunteers getting involved with the planting, growing, maintaining, and harvesting," Fisher said.



HARVESTING CHANGE

The first Growings! harvest arrived on a Tuesday, and by the next day, people were picking fresh produce off the shelves.

"My favorite part is just seeing it going into a bag and going into a refrigerator," Duggan said.

The impact extends beyond providing food—it's about offering dignity and choice. Visitors can now select their own produce, often fresher than what's available in grocery stores. And for many, NETWorks is a stepping stone to greater financial security.

Fisher shared the story of an elderly couple who shopped at NETWorks while saving for a much-needed hearing aid. Thanks to the food assistance, they were able to reach their goal. Others have found job opportunities posted in NETWorks' lobby and returned to share their success.

"Some come to us at events like Tucker Day and say, 'I used to shop at your pantry, and while I was there, I found out about a job opening. Now I make enough to buy my own groceries and don't need to come to the food pantry anymore,'" Fisher said.

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

NETWorks relies on a dedicated group of volunteers who help run the organization, including Growings!. From planting to harvesting, community members play a crucial role in maintaining the farm.

"There has been a very good group of folks donating their time," Duggan said. "Everybody gets excited when they hear about it, and when they see it, they are just drawn to it. They want to come back and volunteer more and more."

Those interested in lending a hand can sign up to volunteer at NETWorks Growings!.

For Fisher and the NETWorks team, the work is rewarding but never finished.

"It can be emotional at times," Fisher said. "It's very rewarding. While it is sad to see how much need there is, it is beautiful to see how our community responds to that need and helps their neighbors day in and day out, year after year. It is amazing."

And with Growings! thriving, NETWorks' future looks even brighter.





TUCKER HIGH SCHOOL

VALEDICTORIAN & SALUTATORIAN



YEWOINHAREG A. GEBREHANA, VALEDICTORIAN
COLLEGE: GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
MAJOR: BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING
CAREER ASPIRATION: ENGINEER



MELISSA L. MOORE, SALUTATORIAN
COLLEGE: GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
MAJOR: COMPUTER ENGINEERING
CAREER ASPIRATION :HARDWARE ENGINEER

"Congratulations on this amazing accomplishment and milestone. Your hard work and perseverance have and will continue to pay off. Please know that the Tucker High School Community is proud of you and appreciates all you have done to be an example of academic excellence."

Dr. Eric Parker, Principal of Tucker High School

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

ANDREA WAHL

Andrea Wahl is a deserving nominee for Tucker Citizen of the month. She is a Tucker native with deep roots; her family has been in Tucker for four generations. After completing undergrad and postgrad degrees at Berry College and Auburn University, Andrea returned to Tucker to build her home with her husband, Tyler. They have 2 children and live on acreage that has been in Andrea's family for roughly 80 years. They have a hobby farm of animals including an apiary and two rescue dogs.

Andrea is a co-troop leader for Girl Scout troop #25078. For the Daisy troop's inaugural year, she led community service projects like picking up trash, sending valentines to a senior living center and participating in Scouts Day at Tucker First United Methodist Church. The troop partnered with the City's Parks and Recreation Department this year to plant trees for Earth Day in a section of Henderson Park that had been devastated by a pine beetle infestation. She is involved with local community organizations, such as FODAC and Tucker First United Methodist Church.

In every phase of life, Andrea has sought opportunities to serve others by leveraging her natural abilities

and talents. After playing years of travel, high school, and college-level softball, Andrea started coaching Tee-ball this year with the Tucker Parks and Recreation leagues. She coached both 4 & under and 6 & under teams this past season.

By returning to Tucker, Andrea's children attend her elementary school and she loves volunteering now as a parent: volunteering with bake sales, field trips, class parties, and attending many spirit nights at various local Tucker restaurants. She also is the room parent for her daughter's kindergarten class.

As an Ecology Team Lead, Andrea works on projects all throughout the state. When she isn't busy volunteering in Tucker, she's working as a scientist to help protect our natural environment. Andrea plays an active role in her company's booth at the Atlanta Science Festival every year.

I can't say enough wonderful things about my friend. She is always willing to step in and help when you need it. Andrea is smart, kind, supportive, and a natural leader. The Tucker Community is lucky to have her!

Nominated by Kelly Nevins



NEWS FROM INSIDE CITY HALL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Late last year, the Mayor and Council requested and approved the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel to perform a study on Tucker's housing needs and options. In April the appointed members met in Tucker to tour the city, learn the Tucker community, conduct

interviews with community leaders, business/property owners, and residents to research solutions and make recommendations based on community needs combined with successful solutions from other communities. The ULI TAP members brought their expertise in architecture,

urban development, single family development, affordable housing, real estate, housing market analysis, economic development, community development and community planning. The complete study will be presented to Council this month.



PARKS & RECREATION AND ENGINEERING

The Johns' Homestead Park dam and park renovation project is off to a great start. Both lakes have been drained, and the reconstruction of the upper dam is underway. With good weather approaching, the contractors are confident that they will complete the project within the 600+ day timeline and is scheduled to be completed by June 2026. The park renovation and improvements include new parking on Stapp Drive with access to the lake and new pavilion, additional bridges along the trail as well as a new dock/viewing area on the lake. The area is an obvious construction zone with safety issues, and the public is asked to please refrain from entering the area at this time.

The Lake Erin Dam project at Henderson Park began last month. In anticipation of the construction and to provide space for a newly designed play area, both playground sets have been removed and rehomed. The play set for younger children has been relocated to the Church Street Greenspace and the older child play set is now just up the hill from the lake next to the tennis courts in Henderson. Access to the site and a small length of the trail is restricted during construction, but the off-leash dog parks are still open and easy to navigate to via a trail from the tennis courts parking lot.



BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

THE MARTIAL ARTS CENTER OF TUCKER

At The Martial Arts Center of Tucker, instructors and staff are dedicated to more than just teaching self-defense. Under the leadership of Shihan Mike Hernandez, the center fosters character development, enhances physical fitness, and boosts students' confidence in a supportive and engaging environment.

"The martial arts is a discipline that allows students—both children and adults—to discover their best selves," Hernandez said.

With a seventh-degree black belt in Shuri-ryu Karate and Shintoyoshin-kai Jiu-jitsu, Hernandez has been immersed in martial arts since 1976. His journey began at the age of five under the guidance of his father in Miami, Florida. In 2000, he had the opportunity to run his own dojo in Toco Hills, and by 2018, he relocated to Tucker, finding it the perfect home for The Martial Arts Center.

"Tucker has been a great home for our dojo," Hernandez said. "The community has been a tremendous support system, and I feel honored to be in the city."

The Martial Arts Center has become a cherished part of the Tucker community, providing a valuable space for individuals and families. As the sole instructor, Hernandez is passionate about his students' martial arts development as well as their personal growth.

The center offers Karate classes for children ages

5 to 12, along with Karate and Jiu-jitsu classes for students ages 13 and up. In addition to regular training, TMAC is known for its Karate Summer Camps and unique birthday parties for children.

"Parents especially appreciate the inclusive and engaging nature of our birthday parties," Hernandez said. "The parties provide a variety of games where everyone can be safe, have fun, and laugh a lot. Unlike other facilities, our parties focus on the birthday child and include everyone in activities such as rope games, races, and various challenges. A highlight is the ceremonial cutting of the cake with a Samurai sword, which the kids absolutely love. We serve cake early in the party so the kids can burn off the sugar, ensuring they aren't overly energetic when they go home."

The center's Karate Summer Camps are a major draw, blending structured training with creative challenges, intense physical fitness, and exciting games. Designed for children ages 8 to 12, the camps offer a well-rounded experience that keeps kids engaged while fostering discipline and skill development.

For Hernandez, seeing the joy and confidence grow in each student is the most rewarding part of his work. The Martial Arts Center continues to make a positive impact in Tucker, encouraging physical activity, self-confidence, and personal achievement for all who step into the dojo.



WHAT HAPPENED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING?

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

At the start of the business meeting for the Mayor and Council, the City Manager addressed the proposed pickleball court construction at the Tucker Recreation Center:

“After conducting due diligence, I have decided that the City of Tucker will reject all proposals and not award a contract in response to solicitation ITB 2024-017, titled TRC Pickleball Courts Construction at this time,” said McHenry. “The original bids are now over six months old and questions remain concerning the proposed contractor’s license. Should the City decide to move forward, the project will be rebid.”

The Mayor then presented three proclamations for various celebrations of city services:

- Professional Municipal Clerks Week:
May 4-10, 2025
- Economic Development Week:
May 11-17, 2025
- Public Works Week:
May 18-24, 2025

The Council unanimously approved an ordinance to amend the city code to authorize bail bond agents to provide bonds for persons appearing in Municipal Court and a resolution to certify an estimated roll-back rate for 2025 ad valorem property tax as now required by state law. This resolution is not approval of a roll-back rate but certifies the estimate.

As required by the City Charter, the City Manager presented a balanced budget for a first read and public hearing for Fiscal Year 2026. The Mayor and Council are expected to take action on the budget during the first meeting of June.

The Council then adjourned to Executive Session and returned to adjourn the meeting without further action.

Tucker’s Mayor and City Council meet the second and fourth Monday of each month. Meetings are held at City Hall and streamed online at tuckerga.gov/agendas. Tucker City Hall is located at 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350, Tucker, Georgia 30084



NOTICE

The City of Tucker does hereby announce that the 2025 millage rate will be set at a Regular Meeting to be held at City Hall, 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350, Tucker, GA 30084 on June 23, 2025 at 7:00 pm and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2025 PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY

| CITY WIDE | | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|-----------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| CITY WIDE | Real & Personal | 2,318,066,346 | 2,592,211,699 | 2,967,465,123 | 3,421,866,800 | 3,741,073,256 | 3,956,397,961 |
| | Motor Vehicles | 12,839,800 | 9,425,570 | 9,556,920 | 9,185,840 | 8,413,930 | 6,640,050 |
| | Mobile Homes | | | | | | |
| | Timber - 100% | | | | | | |
| | Heavy Duty Equipment | 24,637 | 0 | 0 | 2,066 | 0 | 0 |
| | Gross Digest | 2,330,930,783 | 2,601,637,269 | 2,977,022,043 | 3,431,054,706 | 3,749,487,186 | 3,963,038,011 |
| | Less Exemptions | 235,007,245 | 302,238,645 | 462,491,450 | 608,543,457 | 671,554,035 | 735,330,008 |
| | NET DIGEST VALUE | 2,095,923,538 | 2,299,398,624 | 2,514,530,593 | 2,822,511,249 | 3,077,933,151 | 3,227,708,003 |
| | Gross Maintenance & Operation Millage | 0.9000 | 0.9000 | 0.8480 | 2.2840 | 2.0960 | 2.0360 |
| | Less Rollback (Local Option Sales Tax) | | | | | | |
| TAX | NET M&O MILLAGE RATE | 0.9000 | 0.9000 | 0.8480 | 2.2840 | 2.0960 | 2.0360 |
| | TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED | \$1,886,331 | \$2,069,459 | \$2,132,322 | \$6,446,616 | \$6,451,348 | \$6,571,613 |
| | Net Tax \$ Increase | | \$183,128 | \$62,863 | \$4,314,294 | \$4,732 | \$120,266 |
| | Net Tax % Increase | | 9.71% | 3.04% | 202.33% | 0.07% | 1.86% |

Mayor and Council certified the estimated rollback rate at the May 12 meeting.
Rates for the past five fiscal years are above.
For more information visit tuckerga.gov

AROUND TOWN

UPCOMING EVENTS IN TUCKER



July 3

CELEBRATION

of

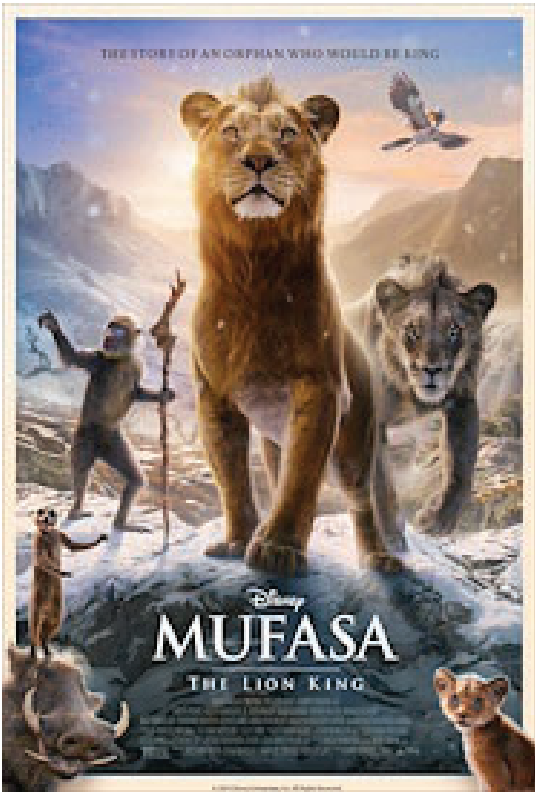
INDEPENDENCE

MAIN STREET

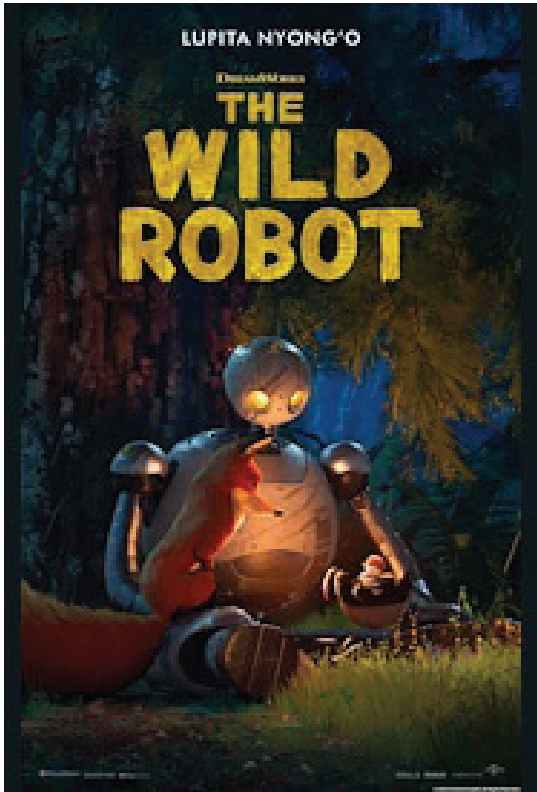
THE FASTER HORSES

TUCKERGA.GOV/SUMMER

JUNE 12



JUNE 26



JULY 17





TUCKER Community Corner



CELEBRATING THE JOY OF OUR FIRST TUCKER COMMUNITY FISHING DAY!

This free family fun event occurs every second Saturday of the month from April to October.

4/19 – ARTucker Festival

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Church Street Greenspace

Formed in May 2015, ARTucker produces an art show with local artists in a friendly, affordable venue providing artists with opportunities to present their creations, and patrons the ability to support the artists as they continue following their passions.

4/24 – Tucker Farmers Market - Opening Day

4-7 p.m.

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church 4882 Lavista Road

Now in their 13th year, the TFM features over 35 local farmers, bakers, growers, and producers from around Tucker, the Atlanta metro, and the state of Georgia.

4/26 – Blue Jeans, BBQ & Blueprints Festival

12-5 p.m.

2380 4th Street

A day of excitement, community, and impact at Habitat for Humanity DeKalb's Annual Blue Jeans, BBQ & Blueprints Festival featuring the Playhouse Olympics! .

5/3 – Tucker Day

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Main Street

Tucker's longest running annual, family-friendly community celebration, hosted by the Mainstreet Tucker Alliance, features a human-powered parade, live music, food vendors, arts and crafts, and lots of kid-friendly activities.