



INTUCKER

NOVEMBER 2025 | VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 11



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TUCKER

ELECTED OFFICIALS

FRANK AUMAN
Mayor

ROGER W. ORLANDO
District 1 - Post 1

CARA SCHROEDER
District 2 - Post 1

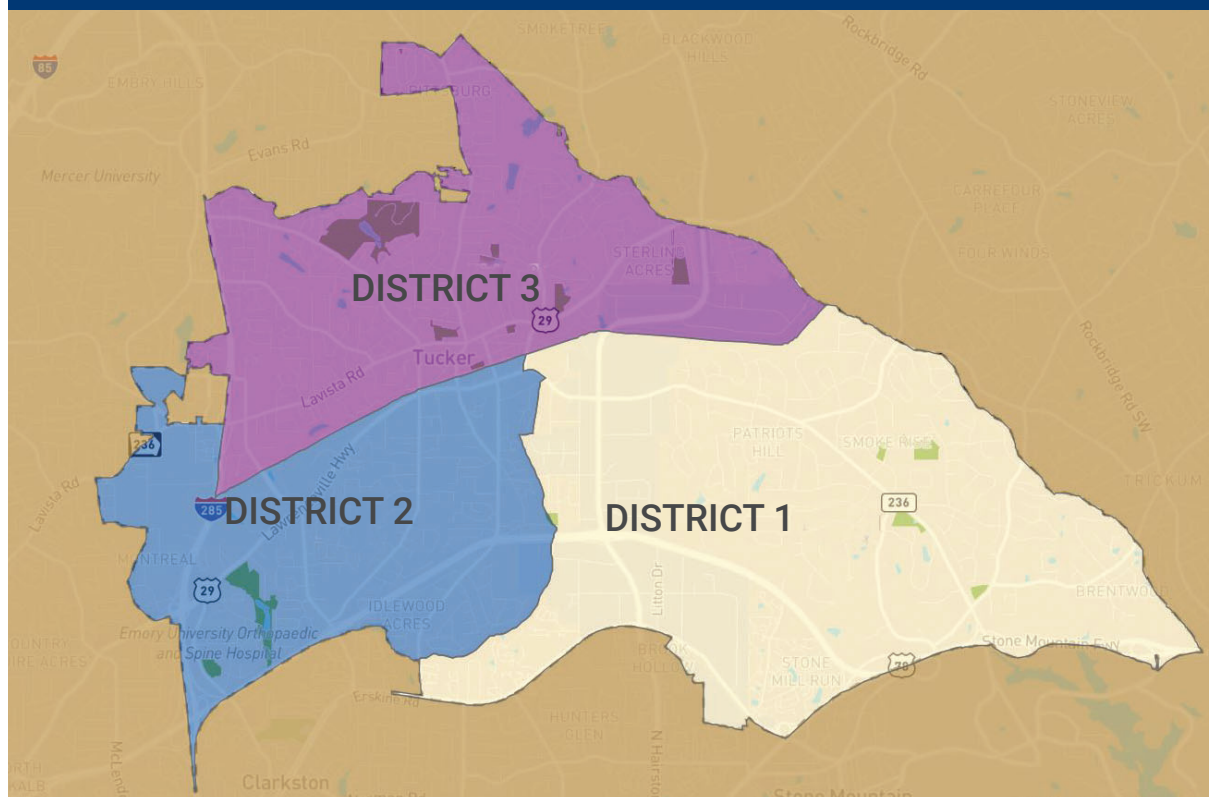
ALEXIS WEAVER
District 3 - Post 1

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



This month marks the ten-year anniversary of the referendum to incorporate Tucker as a self-governing city. Preparing the celebrations for the upcoming year has sparked a journey of nostalgia that brings back all the joy, frustration and heartache of the cityhood years.

The cityhood movement for Tucker was truly grassroots led and began in 2013. None of us had political backgrounds and the love for our town and community is what brought us together and forged the bonds of lifelong friendships. What should have been a straightforward legislative process under the Gold Dome took an extra year of negotiations and studying due to another cityhood group with an overreaching map that extended far into the heart of Tucker.

The sheer number of calls placed and emails our community sent to our elected representatives downtown was astounding. One representative said he would vote yes for Tucker just to make the emails stop.

By the start of the legislative session in 2015, both cityhood efforts had a map and a referendum, and the real work started.

The one thing I remember most about the time leading up to November 3, 2015 is the warmth and support of my neighbors, friends and the Tucker community overall. So many people opened their homes to us hosting information meetings, so many donated money for yard signs, website hosting, and more. It wasn't hard to convince Tucker it was a community with a heart and an identity, and the vote was a landslide with 73% approval.

I am proud of what we have done as a community and a government over the past 10 years and I hope you join us in celebration in the coming 12 months!

CITY SOCIALS



nextdoor

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Robin Stevens

CELEBRATING OUR FIRST DECADE



EST. 1892 - INC. 2016



FROM THE MAYOR



Last month I wrote about the promises we made in forming the City of Tucker, and how we have sought to fulfill those promises. The progress we have made in executing on our vision of improving the quality of life for our residents and creating a place we can all be proud to call home, has been substantial and visible in every corner of the city, and this month, I want to highlight some of that progress in our first ten years.

Our inaugural Council meetings were in March and April of 2016, and we started from scratch. In those first few months, volunteers from Tucker 2015 and the newly elected Council worked diligently to meet and begin voting on the vital decisions necessary to stand up the City's operations. We had to do everything from opening a bank account to finding a place to meet. We had to begin a Code of Ordinances by passing Chapter 1. One of the best and most consequential decisions we made was to secure contracts with three firms to provide all the start-up staff we needed to meet our obligations, which we accomplished by July.

Much of our first four years were filled with three kinds of activities: Establishing revenues, expenses and budgets; establishing service delivery for things like parks programming, permitting and zoning applications; and lots and lots of formal planning. You might remember all the time and effort our community put into our Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Parks Master Plan, Trails Master Plan, and a range of others.

That four year mark is notable because it was almost exactly four years into cityhood that COVID changed everything. Just as we were finding our footing, we had to adapt to an entirely new way of operating,

not only in how we held meetings and delivered services, but also in how to keep our businesses operating wherever possible, how to support our families with students learning and parents working from home, how to keep our parks and green spaces available for exercise, relaxation and an escape from the confines of home, and many other challenges.

As COVID eased and we've returned to a more normal environment, the city has continued to push ahead at a rapid pace. I am immensely proud of the services we provide and the improvements we've delivered for Tucker residents and businesses, and it's all based on that early planning and the more recent updates to those plans. We've brought a lot of new development to Tucker, but projects are scrutinized and required to meet the standards and expectations set by our community. Roads, parks, business districts and previously neglected areas have all seen dramatic change for the better. And as council and staff have continued to modify and refine the Code of Ordinances to reflect the desires of the community, we have set the stage for even more smart growth into the future, all led by the neighbors you've elected to serve.

Fiscally, the City has exceeded expectations at every turn. While we have added property tax to cover the cost of services now provided by the city instead of the county (like Parks and Public Works), the total tax burden for citizens of Tucker is now less than it would have been had we remained unincorporated. That's right: The total of taxes and fees paid by a resident of Tucker today is less than what it would be if they were just a county resident. While holding down taxes, we have also created significant

"rainy day" financial reserves for the city. And we did all this while expanding and improving service delivery, and completing an impressive array of capital projects around the city.

It is challenging to enumerate all of our accomplishments and improvements, but our communications team will spend this next year reflecting and recalling them. Many are small and of the sort that you wouldn't necessarily notice as we've gone along, but when you put them all together, they are making a tremendous impact. One specific project that is hard to miss is the new Tucker Town Green. Identified as a goal in the Comprehensive Plan, the City was able to realize this vision through responsible budgeting and with the aid of ARPA funding. Later this month, we will celebrate the opening of this community gem with live music and a public gathering. I sincerely hope you will join us on November 14, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., with the official ribbon-cutting scheduled for 6:00 p.m. to allow for maximum attendance. This event is unique, as it serves to celebrate our past, our journey, and our future potential.

The City's unwavering commitment to its promises and demonstrated progress has firmly established our foundation. Next month, I will share my hopes and vision for Tucker's potential as we move into our second ten years. I hope to see you soon!

TUCKER 10



Tucker Together and Tucker 2014 raised \$30,000 in a short amount of time to conduct a feasibility study. The study would be a major step towards securing a referendum. In December of 2013 Santa joined residents on Main Street and gifted the completed study announcing Tucker's feasibility to operate as an independent government entity.



At the close of the legislative session in 2014, Tucker's bill was put on hold. Tucker 2014 rebranded to Tucker 2015 with an eye on the future and continued with community outreach with neighborhood meetings, participation at Main Street festivals like Tucker Day and the weekly Tucker Farmers Market.



After all the campaigning and voting, Tucker swore in the first Mayor and representatives for Districts 1 and 3 on the stage of Tucker High School. Both seats in District 2 were in a run-off to be decided a week later and sworn in at Tucker Recreation Center.

Initially, City Council meetings were held anywhere there was space, and a City Hall was chosen before staff moved in to start business in July of



2016. In preparation for an Open House Celebration in 2016, community volunteers decorated and organized the event.

In 2017, the need for Council to have official chambers and more office space for staff was solved with the addition of the City Hall Annex on First Ave. This space also served as the Municipal Court Room.



The County voted in 2017 to levy a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax which enabled Tucker to start major street repaving and sidewalk additions throughout the city. To date over 100 miles have been resurfaced.



The City expanded the longstanding volunteer events on Main Street with the addition of the TKR Summer of Fun in 2018. The Movie on Main and the July 3 Celebration of Independence and Fireworks Spectacular brought thousands to Tucker's Main Street and continue to grow year after year.



Tucker's Charter states that it will manage all parks, greenspaces and recreation programs. In 2018, the City assumed management from Dekalb County and has since expanded acreage and programming, and improved fields and many amenities.



Storytelling and protecting history are a big part of municipal responsibilities. In 2018, the City partnered with residents of the historic Peters Park neighborhood to share their stories through the decades and the legacies of the founding families.



Manufacturing Day was launched in 2018, as well. What started as an opportunity to tour Tucker's large manufacturing district has since turned into a partnership with Tucker High School and WorkSource DeKalb.



The Council's second elections were in 2019, with the Mayor and Post 1 for each of the three districts, and the second council was sworn-in January of 2018. This first term was shortened to get on the typical municipal cycle of elections.



Twenty-twenty was a year of difficult events bringing a global pandemic and national unrest. The City successfully pivoted and was able to support residents and businesses with mask giveaways and utilized Cares Act and ARPA funds to provide small business grants to keep doors open. In response to the decline in sales for local restaurants, the City launched the annual Tucker Restaurant Week.



FEATURE THE FIRST DECADE (CONTINUED)



Groundbreakings are an excellent and fun way to highlight the City's growth and expansion of business opportunities. Several large corporations call Tucker home and have made major investments in the community



Thanks to Georgia's tax credits and Tucker's ability to span the decades in aesthetics, the City has been the film site of several blockbuster TV shows and movies. From Main Street to our neighborhoods, Tucker is the Hollywood of Georgia.



The Bee Habitat at the Tucker Nature Preserve is a great illustration of the City's collaboration between residents and volunteer groups like Friends of Tucker Parks. Leveraging funds from the County and the City, the Friends group was able to design and recruit the apiary for educational purposes.



Tucker has received several grants from County Commissioners and Community Development Block Grants throughout the years that have been used to improve park amenities and specific projects like signage and street beautification.



Residents approved the addition of Public Works services in 2023, and the department started work summer of 2023. Since then, the City has closed out all inherited work orders and significantly cut down response time for potholes and other major road maintenance.



As cities mature and settle into governance the time for fun projects arrives. Public art has been on the request list since day one and in 2023, Tucker commissioned its first mural with Catlanta for the Model Mile of the trail network.



Celebrating the opening of a small business is one of the joys for government. Businesses choosing Tucker as their home shows their trust in the City and the community. Tucker boasts over 2,000 small businesses.



"Where can I park?" is probably the most asked question, outside of "How can we get a Trader Joe's?". There are 988 parking spots within 1 block of Main Street, 298 are public, City owned spots. The City has partnered with Main Street Church to create shared parking in an effort to alleviate all day parking on Main Street. This month 27 new spots will be added at the Tucker Town Green.



Another sign that the City is maturing is the creation of the City Standards Guidebook to foster continuity and placemaking. In the coming years, signs will be replaced and gateway welcoming monuments.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING?

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE



The Mayor and Council met twice in October with light agendas.

The October 14 meeting was held on a Tuesday due to the federal holiday of Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day with a quorum of five. Councilmembers Nguyen and Trocchi were excused by their peers before a 5-0 vote to approve the agenda for the evening and another to approve the nine item consent agenda:

- Both September meetings minutes
- Four contracts for: Maintenance & Operations of Traffic Signals, Engineering services for Mountain Industrial Blvd at Highway 78, contract amendment for Fitzgerald Park Field 4 Lighting, and a contract cancellation for pool maintenance.
- A relocation agreement with Georgia Power for Brockett Road Sidewalk
- A resolution to amend the fee schedule concerning current Instructor percentages and aquatic fees
- An ordinance to amend chapter 10 of the code pertaining to multifamily code compliance

The Council also voted a 5-0 approval of an ordinance to amend the Tucker code chapter 46 to expand the Downtown Entertainment District Boundary to add the Tucker Town Green.

There were then two first reads and public hearings for two SLUPS and an ordinance. The SLUPS were to allow for a massage establishment to operate within Northlake Mall, and a consideration to extend the SLUP for 2247 and 2251 Northlake Parkway. This was followed by a first read and hearing of an ordinance for a rezone to amend four conditions of zoning related to the rental components. All three will go for a vote in December.

The second meeting of the month convened with a full seven member quorum. Before unanimously approving the consent agenda, the Council voted 7-0 to add an agenda item to New Business: Item I.2, Contract C2025-DC-CDBG-ADA-EQUIP-PO26-1889 for the purchase and installation of ADA Playground Equipment at Fitzgerald Park.

Staff reports included the September financials from the Finance Director, upcoming agenda items from the City Manager and a staff update on downtown parking, both current opportunities and possible additions in the future.

The Mayor and Council then heard a first read and public hearing of an ordinance for a rezoning to allow for townhomes and concurrent variances to garages, parking and setback regulations at 4372 Chamblee Tucker Road. This was followed by the added item from the start of the meeting. The Council voted unanimously for construction of an ADA playground in the Fitzgerald Park Sports Complex. This project is fully funded by a DeKalb County Community Development Block Grant.

The Mayor and Council recessed to executive session as required for personnel, real estate and litigation. They returned to vote to approve the purchase of property for \$1.925 million for the use of the Public Works Department. The facility currently used is a lease that is expiring and will not be extended. The new facility will be located at 4840 Hammermill Road and its purchase financed through the Georgia Municipal Association to be paid over 15 years through their Bricks and Mortar Program.

Tucker's Mayor and Council meet the second and fourth Monday of each month at City Hall, 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B, Tucker, Georgia 30084. You may also watch online at tuckerga.gov/agendas

DATES TO KNOW

- **NOVEMBER 1**
KICKOFF TO TUCKER
TEN YEAR CELEBRATION
Church Street Greenspace
- **NOVEMBER 4**
ZONING BOARD OF
APPEALS
- **NOVEMBER 10**
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
- **NOVEMBER 11**
CITY BUILDINGS CLOSED
IN OBSERVANCE OF
VETERANS DAY
- **NOVEMBER 14**
TUCKER TOWN GREEN
GRAND OPENING
- **NOVEMBER 15**
CAMPFIRE & COCKTAILS
5-8 P.M.
Kelley Cofer Peach Pit
- **NOVEMBER 20**
PLANNING COMMISSION
- **NOVEMBER 24**
MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL
MEETING
- **NOVEMBER 27-28**
CITY BUILDINGS CLOSED
IN OBSERVANCE OF
THANKSGIVING



BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

ALPHONSE VIZAH DESIGNS

Tucked away at 3531 Lawrenceville Highway in Tucker, GA, lies a vibrant studio where fashion is deeply personal and every garment tells a story. This is the home of Alphonse Vizah Designs, a clothing store specializing in handcrafted African designs for all occasions, but its true heart lies with its owners, Comlan and Christine Akakpo-Vizah.

For ten years, this dedicated husband-and-wife duo has brought vibrant style and joy to the Tucker community and beyond. Comlan is the master designer, translating vision into meticulously tailored garments, while Christine manages the day-to-day operations. It's a powerful partnership built on a shared passion, but fueled by a difficult journey.

"Our favorite part is to see the smiles on the customers' faces and see people that are wearing the clothes very happy," Christine said. "When they are happy we are happy."

Comlan and Christine grew up in Togo, West Africa. Comlan nurtured a love for fashion from a young age, teaching himself to sew before earning his bachelor's degree in fashion and apparel design in Togo. After marrying, the couple moved to the United States in 2003, hoping to build a new, easier life.

"It was not what we expected," Christine recalled. "We thought it would be easy for us. We had to work harder to pay bills for us."

To support his family, Comlan initially took a demanding warehouse job, setting his design dreams aside. Then, tragedy struck: a workplace accident cost him two fingers. To compound the stress, he was fired and received no workers' compensation. Following his recovery, Comlan made a life-altering decision: he would return to his deepest passion, designing clothes from their home.

When a storefront became available on Lawrenceville Highway, the couple seized the

moment. That location became the permanent home of Alphonse Vizah Designs. Since then, they have been busy outfitting men and women for life's big moments, weddings, parties, church services, shows, and even creating stylish maternity wear.

Customers often rave about the craftsmanship. Breanna Blalock, for instance, described feeling "like a queen" in a custom blue and yellow patterned dress, complete with a sequin waistband and puff sleeves, which she wore to an African royalty birthday party.

"I made an appointment at the store and picked out the fabric," Blalock said. "Alphonse was very thorough to take my measurements and listen to my vision for the dress design. It was a quick turnaround and they made my experience great!"

Even music artist Bridget Lewis praised his work on a custom top she wore to her single release party: "Alph Wear (Alphonse Vizah Designs) made my beautiful top for my single release 'When I Pray' his work is impeccable," Lewis said. "Show him what you envision he will make it with precision." Comlan's designs have even reached the North Pole. Their Instagram page features a fun photo of Santa Claus wearing a Comlan-designed Santa outfit!



While the store has created years of great experiences, the Akakpo-Vizahs have faced bumps in the road, especially the drastic challenge brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a business specializing in clothing for special occasions, the near-total shutdown of social gatherings severely impacted their bottom line.

Christine noticed many places shutting down and saw a sharp decline in customer visits. To deal with the crisis, the company made a smart pivot. They began making fashionable masks that customers loved, selling them successfully online. Along with making a profit, they found ways to give back,

donating masks to local hospitals and churches.

Over the past decade, their company has expanded its reach, selling select pieces nationwide through Etsy. Looking to the future, they plan to strengthen their online presence by selling exclusively through their own website and are even considering a slight rebrand to "Alph Viz."

Ultimately, Comlan hopes to offer free classes to teach others how to design and create their own clothing. The couple loves bringing smiles to their customers one stitch at a time, and they want to expand that feeling of joy to people globally.



CITIZENS OF THE MONTH

CITYHOOD VOLUNTEERS



This month I am breaking the rule that staff can't nominate a Citizen of the Month. I have only done that once before for a special dedication of gratitude, but this time is so important, too!

I would like to nominate the volunteers that made up Tucker Together, Tucker 2014 and Tucker 2015. I would not want to try to list all that were involved as I would hate to forget anyone. There were countless volunteers that knocked on doors, delivered yard signs, posted on Facebook, and hundreds that sent emails of support.

In the winter of 2013, there were rumblings of a new city wanting to be created but was swallowing part of what had always been known as Tucker. In response, Tucker organizations held a meeting at Tucker Middle School to educate and garner interest in Tucker incorporating. That night, the night before the last day of the legislative session, a small group of new friends convinced a State Representative to drop a placeholder bill to allow for the start of the discussion.

Tucker Together was the first group to form as an education organization. They held four meetings to cover what it would mean to incorporate, what services would be provided, and what the process would entail, first step being to raise \$30,000 for the state required feasibility study. Tucker Together was a 501

(c) 3 and limited to education and fundraising. A different group then stepped forward and created Tucker 2014 to advocate and raise money. The two groups worked together towards the common goal of uniting Tucker and raised \$30,000 in one month the summer of 2013.

The feasibility study came back just in time for the 2014 legislative session, and Tucker 2014 was hard at work meeting with neighbors, educating and advocating for the creation of the City of Tucker and lobbying under the Gold Dome.

There were three cityhood initiatives, each vying for map that overlapped the others. Tucker 2014 continued to raise money to hire professional help under the dome and several key members and residents spent hours talking to state representatives and state senators, speaking during hearings, and taking time away from their families for the betterment of their community.

The overlapping maps and the inability for the three to compromise pushed the bills into the following legislative year with the directive to come to an agreement during the recess.

Tucker 2014 rebranded to Tucker 2015 and expanded their volunteer reach. The 2015 legislative session was full of angst, promises made and not kept by the opposing cityhood

efforts, late nights and personal events missed. By then end of the session, and down to the wire, both Tucker and the Lakeside City Alliance came out with referendums in hand and a map compromise.

The following seven months the volunteers of Tucker 2015 doubled their efforts to advocate for a yes vote. There were several weeks when six out of seven days held meetings with neighbors, businesses and Tucker organizations. It was a whirlwind and stressful but in the end it was worth it.

The vote to incorporate Tucker as a city was on November 3, 2015 and Tucker spoke loudly with a 73% approval that YES, WE WANT TO BE A CITY!

Many from Tucker Together, Tucker 2014/2015 went on the serve the city as elected officials, appointed members of boards and commissions, the Charter Committee and even staff. The memory of the motivation for incorporation lives and the goal has been achieved.

Thank you, Tucker, volunteers, supporters, voters and all residents. We are all Citizens of the Month.

Nominated by Sonja Szubski

AROUND TOWN

UPCOMING EVENTS IN TUCKER

**TUCKER TOWN GREEN
GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION**

**FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 14
4-7 P.M.**

**LIVE MUSIC, FOOD,
DRINKS AND COMMUNITY**

4226 RAILROAD AVENUE

NOV. 15 **5-8 P.M.**



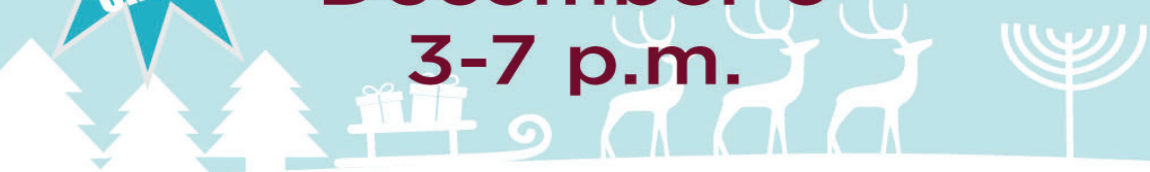
**THE PEACH PIT
AT KELLEY COFER PARK**

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

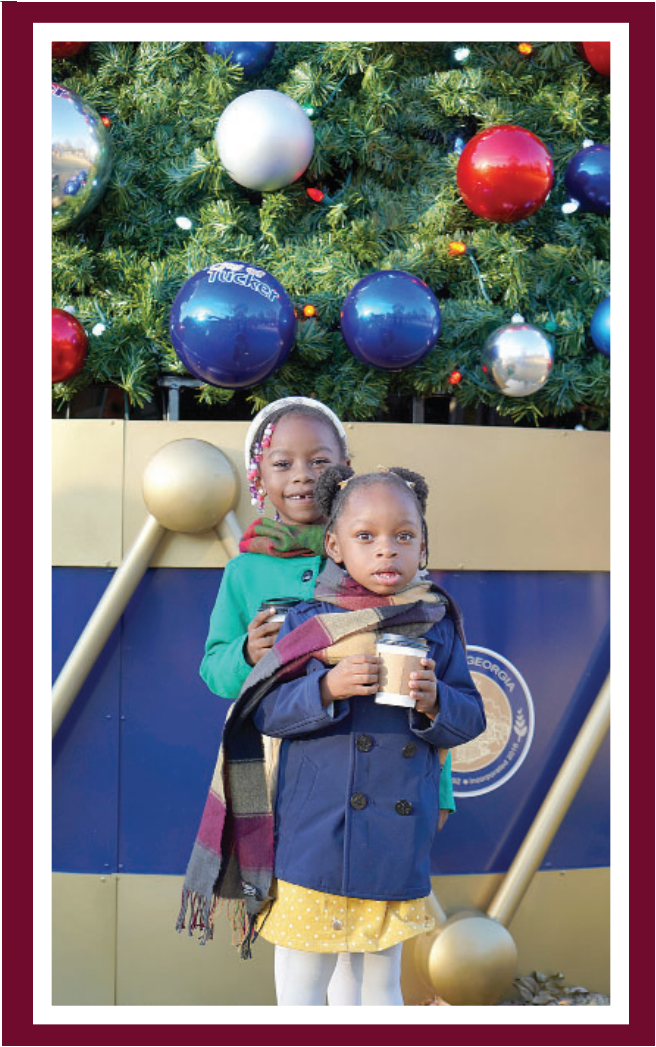


**NOTE:
LOCATION
CHANGE**

**December 6
3-7 p.m.**



**TUCKER TOWN GREEN
4226 RAILROAD AVENUE**





TUCKER *Community Corner*



The Tucker Football League is celebrating 70 years of excellence! The teams ran onto the field with the Tucker High School Tigers in their annual Homecoming tradition last month.