

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

March 2016

City Council

Bill Ham, Jr., Mayor
(334) 559-8804
bham@auburnalabama.org

Clemon Byrd, Ward 1
(334) 332-8283
clemonbyrd2014@yahoo.com

Ron Anders Jr., Ward 2
(334) 703-9000
ronanders2020@gmail.com

Beth Witten, Ward 3
(334) 740-8575
blueturtlebeth@gmail.com

Brent Beard, Ward 4
(334) 821-4302
brent@alabamacontractsales.com

Lynda Tremaine, Ward 5
(334) 329-8878
ltremaine@charter.net

Dick Phelan, Ward 6
(334) 887-2071
dickphelan@yahoo.com

Gene Dulaney, Ward 7
(334) 887-7908
(334) 466-3191
gdulaney@auburnbank.com

Tommy Dawson, Ward 8
(334) 703-9528
tdawson65@outlook.com

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Open Line is produced by
Office of the
City Manager
144 Tichenor Ave., Ste. 1
Auburn, AL 36830
phone: 334-501-7260
fax: 334-501-7299

web:
www.auburnalabama.org

email:
openline@auburnalabama.org



City of Auburn



Council Approves First Step Towards New Downtown Parking Deck

In January, the Auburn City Council approved the first step in a public-private partnership to bring a new parking deck to downtown Auburn. The parking deck development would potentially include a downtown hotel, urban grocery and commercial, office or conference space.

Auburn's Municipal Parking Deck on Gay Street was built in 1986, and will need to be replaced within the next eight to ten years. The new parking deck would provide parking for the hotel, grocery and retail component in addition to expanding the number of public parking spaces available downtown. As a public private partnership, the project would allow for a new, expanded parking deck to be built downtown without leveraging public funds. Without such a partnership, the City would have to spend upwards of \$12 million in the next decade to replace the current, 30-year-old municipal parking deck.

Public presentations of the project on January 5th and January 26th marked the beginning of a public meeting process leading to a potential development agreement and project approvals still to be voted on by Council. Presentation slides and a term sheet for the project are available online at www.auburnalabama.org/agenda.

Council meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Auburn Council Chambers on 141 North Ross Street. Agendas and meeting materials are posted online at www.auburnalabama.org/agenda on the Friday before each meeting. You can receive an announcement when agendas are posted by subscribing to text or email announcements at auburnalabama.org/enotifier or by following the City on Facebook at facebook.com/CityofAuburnAL or on Twitter @CityofAuburnAL.

2016 Citizens' Public Safety Academy Begins March 3rd

This Spring, citizens are invited to experience firsthand the inner workings of police, fire, emergency communications and codes enforcement as part of the 2016 Citizens' Public Safety Academy (CPSA). The academy is a free program offered to area citizens age 18 and older. Participants will meet on Thursdays from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m., with two Saturday sessions. A graduation ceremony is scheduled for Thursday April 21st. A downloadable application form is available in the online press release for the CPSA at www.auburnalabama.org.

Weekly sessions will focus on a variety of topics from the enforcement of building codes to fire and crime prevention. CPSA students will participate in hands-on events including firearms training from Auburn Police Division, CPR training from Auburn Fire Division, a mock crime scene and more.

Auburn Police Division held the first Citizens' Police Academy in 1995. The program was eventually expanded to include all divisions of the Public Safety Department and in 2008 was renamed the Citizens' Public Safety Academy. Through this program, the Public Safety Department seeks to educate citizens on how the members of the Police, Fire, Codes and Communications Divisions serve the community each and every day.



Free Parking Downtown During Spring Break

Spring Break brings free parking to downtown Auburn. Meter-free parking will be available Monday, March 14 through Friday, March 18. In addition to on-street parking available throughout downtown, parking can be found on and surrounding the first floor of the Auburn Municipal Parking Deck and in the municipal parking lots accessible from Gay Street and Tichenor Avenue.

City of Auburn Flood Protection & Preparation Information

In May 2014, the City of Auburn was accepted into the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). Even though everyone does not own or live on property in a floodplain, the program benefits the community by protecting the environment, making people safer, and saving everyone money. The City received a Class 7 score for our CRS application which gave the citizens of Auburn a 15% discount on their flood insurance for those in the Special Flood Hazard Area and a 5% discount for those in the Non-Special Flood Hazard Area. Below is some information you might find helpful regarding floodplains in the City of Auburn.

Local Flood Hazard

The City of Auburn has an annual precipitation of 52.6 inches and has a history of major storm events. During the last ten years, our biggest rain events occurred in March 2006, November 2006, February 2009, November 2009, July 2011, February 2012, February 2013, August 2013, and December 2015. During major storm events, flash flooding can occur when drainage courses, such as stormwater systems and natural ditches, overflow and flood. Local water bodies and roadways subject to flooding include:

Local Water Bodies: Choctawhatchee Creek, Parkerson Mill Creek, Town Creek, Moore's Mill Creek, Chewacla Creek, Lake Chewacla, Lake Ogletree, Saugahatchee Creek, and Little Loblockee Creek.

Roadways: North Donahue Drive Bridge, Water Crest Drive Bridge, East University Drive Bridge at Summertrees Drive, Moores Mill Rd Bridge at Forestdale Drive, Windway Road Bridge, and Ogletree Road Bridge north of Oak Knoll Circle.

Flood Warning

The City of Auburn, in conjunction with the Lee County Emergency Management Agency, work together to give citizens ample warning in cases of a flooding event. Emergency messages are broadcasted through local radio and TV stations including:

Radio: 93.9 FM WTGZ, 95.9 FM WQSI, 97.7 FM WKKR, 1400 AM WANI, 94.3 FM WGZZ, 1230 AM WAUD, 104.5 FM WAUF-LP, 91.1 FM WEGL, 1520 AM WTLM

TV: WRBL Channel 3, FOX 54 News Channel 8, WTVM Channel 9, WSFA Channel 12, and The Weather Channel (channel number may vary based on service provider)

In the event of heavy rains, it is essential to monitor television and/or radio weather broadcasts for up-to-date forecasts on tornadoes, hurricanes, or flash floods. Please call 911 for any emergencies and 334-501-3100 for any non-emergencies.

Flood Safety

Safety is a **must** when it comes to possible flooding in our area. The following tips can keep you and your family from harm:

- **Do not walk through flowing waters.**
- **Do not drive through a flooded area.**
- **Stay away from power and electrical lines.**
- **Shut off all gas and water valves.**
- **Have a departure plan in case of emergency.**

Additional emergency preparedness tips can be found on page 11 of the 2015-2016 Real Yellow Pages telephone book.

Property Protection Measures

During the past 100 years, flooding has been the number one cause of property damage in North America each year. Property owners can apply permanent retrofitting techniques that can help to eliminate or reduce flood damage:

- **Elevating your house 1 ft. above the base flood elevation.**
- **Flood proofing your house to make the walls and flooring watertight so that water cannot enter.**
- **If you know you are in the flood prone area, flood vent the crawl space under your home so that water can flow through.**

Employees from the Public Works Department are available for site visits to review flooding, drainage and sewage issues and provide one-on-one advice to the property owner on appropriate flood protection measures. We are also available to assist you with reviewing and critiquing retrofit plans for flood-prone residences and buildings.

Are You Insured?

The City of Auburn is an active participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The City feels that we have an important job in keeping citizens informed regarding the floodplain and how it can affect their property. Even if your property is not located in a high risk flood area it is a good idea to buy flood insurance, because almost 25% of all flood insurance claims come from areas with minimal flood risk. Two important facts that citizens should know are:

- **Homeowner's insurance policies DO NOT cover flood damages or losses.**
- **Insurance policies have a 30-day waiting period BEFORE coverage goes into effect.**

There are two types of Flood Insurance Coverage offered: 1. Building Property, up to \$250,000, and 2. Personal Property (Contents), up to \$100,000. The NFIP encourages people to purchase both types of coverage. Your mortgage company can also require that you purchase a certain amount of flood insurance.

Floodplain Development Permit Requirements

To ensure the highest degree of safety, the Public Safety Codes Enforcement Division enforces the Building Code for the City of Auburn. Please be advised that a permit is required for ALL construction in the City of Auburn. Any development without a permit is non-compliant and may result in fines. If you know of any development taking place without the required permits or would like to verify a contractor's license, please contact the City of Auburn Codes Enforcement Division at 334-501-3170. They are located at 171 North Ross Street Suite 100.

Substantial Improvement Requirements

The importance of permit requirements plays an important part in this requirement. In order for the City of Auburn to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), we adopted regulations and codes that apply to new developments in the floodplains. Local floodplain management regulations and codes contain minimum NFIP requirements that apply not only to new structures, but also to existing structures which are "substantially improved (SI)" or "substantially damaged (SD)."

"Substantially Damaged" means damage of any origin sustained by a structure whereby the cost of restoring the structure to it's before damaged condition would equal or exceed 50% of the market value of the structure before damage occurred.

"Substantially Improved" means any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvements of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure before the "start of construction" of the improvement. This term includes structures which have incurred "substantial damage", regardless of the actual repair work performed.

The City of Auburn requires an elevation of 1 ft. above the base flood elevation for new construction and for existing structures before they are repaired.

Do You Live In Or Around a Special Flood Hazard Area?

The City of Auburn Public Works Department is available to assist in providing more information on whether a property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area. Upon requests the following Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information will be provided: The community number, the map panel number and suffix, the date of the FIRM's Index, the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) shown on the FIRM, the elevation datum used on the FIRM, and the availability of Elevation Certificates (EC's) for review. For more general information, you can view your property in relation to the local floodplains online using the City's interactive mapping system at <http://www.auburnalabama.org/maps>.

Drainage System Maintenance

The City of Auburn's Public Works Department maintains the storm drainage system and helps to keep the creeks and streams in the City of Auburn clean and free of debris and pollutants. In order for the drainage system to operate efficiently the ditches, streams, and channels must be kept clean. Debris, even leaves and grass clippings, can obstruct the flow of water and cause overflow onto streets and yards. Residents and business and property owners can play a huge role in this effort by maintaining ditches and streams on their property and by notifying the City when maintenance is needed on the right of way. The City Code prohibits taking any action that can impede the flow of water in ditches and waterways. If you know of any illegal dumping of debris or any action that could affect the drainage system, please contact the Public Works Department at 334-501-3000.

Natural and Beneficial Functions of the Local Floodplain

Floodplain areas and wetlands provide a wide range of benefits to both human and natural systems. Wetlands in and around the City of Auburn are a valuable asset. Flood control and water

quality are the two most important aspects of our local floodplain. Wetlands absorb water during heavy rainfall or flooding and slowly release the waters downstream reducing flood damage. Wetlands and wetland plants help to absorb and filter potentially harmful chemicals and pollutants into our waterways. The City of Auburn is home to several identified undeveloped floodplain areas which are VITAL for several endangered or threatened species unique to this area, as well as provide recreation, education, and research important to our local economy. The City of Auburn has implemented several successful projects to protect our local wetlands: Town Creek Park Stream Restoration, Pocket Wetland at County Dumpster/Compactor Site, Wrights Mill Road Elementary School wetlands, and Parkerson Mill Creek Restorations in 2013 and 2015.

For more information regarding the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System, please contact the Public Works Department at 171 North Ross Street Suite 200, 334-501-3000 Or visit our website at www.auburnalabama.org/pw

MEETING SCHEDULE MARCH

- 1 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**, 11:45 a.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
Committee of the Whole, 6:55 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
City Council, 7 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 2 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 4 Tree Commission**, 11:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 714 E. Glenn Avenue
- 7 Cemeteries Advisory Board**, 4 p.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
Ward 5 Public Meeting, 5:30 p.m., St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 136 East Magnolia Avenue
- 8 Greenspace Advisory Board**, Noon, Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
Historic Preservation Commission, 4 p.m., DSB Conference Room, 171 North Ross Street
Board of Education, 6 p.m., AHS Multi-Media Room, 405 South Dean Road
- 10 Planning Commission**, 5 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 15 Library Board**, 4 p.m., Library Conference Room, 749 East Thach Avenue
- 17 Water Works Board**, 4 p.m., Water Board Conference Room, 1501 West Samford Avenue
- 22 Committee of the Whole**, 6:55 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
City Council, 7 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 29 Auburn Bicycle Committee**, 7 p.m., Library Conference Room, 749 E Thach Avenue

Board Vacancies

One vacancy for the **Library Board** will be announced at the March 1, 2016 meeting and will be filled at the April 4, 2016 City Council Meeting.



Two vacancies for the **Historic Preservation Commission** will be announced at the March 1, 2016 meeting and will be filled at the April 5, 2016 City Council Meeting.

Citizens interested in serving are encouraged to contact their City Council member or notify the City Manager's Office.

City Management

Charles M. Duggan, Jr.
501-7261
City Manager
cduggan@auburnalabama.org

Kevin A. Cowper
501-7262
Assistant City Manager
kcowper@auburnalabama.org

James C. Buston, III
501-7201
Assistant City Manager/CIO
jbuston@auburnalabama.org

Economic Development Dept.
Phillip Dunlap, Director
501-7270
pdunlap@auburnalabama.org

Environmental Services
Department
Timothy L. Woody, Director
501-3080
twoody@auburnalabama.org

Finance Department
Penny Smith, Director
501-7221
psmith@auburnalabama.org

Human Resources Department
Steven A. Reeves, Director
501-7240
sreeves@auburnalabama.org

Library
Chris Warren, Director
501-3190
cwarren@auburnalabama.org

Municipal Court
Jim McLaughlin, Judge
501-3180
jmclaughlin@auburnalabama.org

Parks and Recreation Department
Rebecca O. Richardson,
Director
501-2930
brichardson@auburnalabama.org

Planning Department
Forrest E. Cotten, Director
501-3040
fcotten@auburnalabama.org

Public Safety Department
William H. James, Director
501-3110
bjames@auburnalabama.org

Public Works Department
Jeffery L. Ramsey, Director
501-3000
jramsey@auburnalabama.org

Water Resource Management Dept.
Eric A. Carson, Director
501-3060
ecarson@auburnalabama.org

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Auburn City Schools
Karen DeLano, Superintendent
887-2100
ktdelano@auburnschools.org

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Open Line Feedback

Do you have any suggestions, feedback, or story ideas that you would like to share?

If so, please contact us at openline@auburnalabama.org or call 501-7266.

upCOMING EVENTS

Due to space considerations, we are unable to publicize events that are not directly affiliated with a City department.

Auburn Public Library

For more information about these and other library programs, please call 501-3190.

STORYTIMES

Baby Time – Tuesdays, at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., for ages birth through 24 months.

Toddler Time – Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., for ages 18 months through 26 months.

Preschool Time – Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., for ages 3 through 5.

Fractured Fairy Tales - Wednesday, March 2 at 3:30 p.m., featuring *The Princess and the Pea* by John Cech.

Family Storytime – Sunday, March 27 at 4:00 p.m. Bring the whole family and join us for interactive stories, songs, games, and family fun.

BOOK GROUPS

Forever YA Book Club - Tuesday, March 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Auburn Public Library, featuring *An Ember in the Ashes* by Sabaa Tahir.

Show & Tell Book Group - Monday, March 21 at 4:00 p.m. (Afternoon Group) and 6:30 p.m. (Evening Group) at the Auburn Public Library. Everyone is free to read any book(s) – fiction or non-fiction – and present it to the group.

Read & Reflect Book Group – Tuesday, March 29 at 10:00 a.m. at the Harris Senior Center, featuring *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion

FOR TEENS!

PSAT/NMSQT Prep Class - Planning to take the PSAT? Not sure where to start? Let The Auburn Public Library and Auburn University's Honor Serves Program help you! This class is geared towards 9-11 graders who plan on taking the PSAT/NMSQT in October 2016. Wednesday, March 2 at 5:30 p.m. • Wednesday, March 9 at 5:30 p.m. • Wednesday, March 23 at 5:30 p.m. • Wednesday, March 30 at 5:30 p.m. • Wednesday, April 6 at 5:30 p.m. • Wednesday, April 13 at 5:30 p.m.

GENEALOGY 101

Civil War History - Thursday, March 17 at 3:00 p.m. – Dr. Lynn Price McWhorter of Auburn University will discuss the Civil War and help us better understand the actions of our ancestors.

Parks and Recreation

For more information on any of the events listed, or to register for a program, contact Auburn Parks and Recreation at 501-2930 or visit www.auburnalabama.org/parks.

Special Olympics Events: Come out and support Lee County Special Olympics for our special events during the month of March!

• **Sectional Aquatics Meet** will be held on Friday, March 4 at the Opelika Sports Plex

• **Bowling Tournament** will be held on Monday and Tuesday, March 7 and 8 at AMF Lanes

• **Basketball Tournament** will be held on Thursday and Friday, March 10 and 11 in Dothan, AL

For more information, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/specialolympics or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/specialolympicsalleeeo.

Fit as a Fiddle Health and Lifestyle Fair – Don't miss the 3rd Annual Fit as a Fiddle: A 50+ Health and Lifestyle Fair on Saturday, March 12 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Harris Center. This free event offers members of the 50+ community an opportunity to visit with doctors, fitness experts, senior communities and volunteer organizations offering products and services tailor made specially for them. Businesses and organizations interested in participating may contact Gabby Meredith, Community Programs Coordinator, at (334) 501 - 2946 for an application. For more information, visit www.auburnalabama.org/parks.

Countdown to CityFest 2016! – Mark your calendars for Auburn CityFest 2016: **Arts in the Park** on Saturday, April 30 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Kiesel Park. It's our sweet sixteen and we want to invite you out to the park for day filled with delicious food and treats, children's activities, fantastic music and a variety of arts & crafts from local and regional artists and craftspersons. Interested in participating in CityFest as a vendor? Spaces are available for non-profits, food, arts & crafts and fine arts, as well as for the Juried Art Show, held on Thursday, April 28. Download an application today at www.auburncityfest.com. Auburn CityFest is Auburn's largest, free outdoor arts and crafts festival. For more information, please visit www.auburncityfest.com.

35th Annual Easter Egg Hunt – Celebrate spring at the 35th Annual Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by Wells Fargo and Auburn Parks and Recreation, on Saturday, March 26 at beautiful Kiesel Park beginning at 10:30 a.m.! Kids 12 and under are invited to search for more than 35,000 eggs over a four-acre area! Remember to arrive early to find parking and your child's correct age group! Egg hunt start times will be staggered by age group, with ages 3 & Under at 10:30 a.m., 4 – 6 at 10:45 a.m., 7 – 9 at 11 a.m. and 10 – 12 at 11:15 a.m. In the event of rain, the egg hunt will be held on Sunday, March 27 at 2 p.m. For more information, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/parks.

Coming Soon...Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center Exhibitions – Mark your calendar for the following Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center Exhibitions. Exhibitions are free and open to the public Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. For more information, please call the Arts Center at (334) 501 – 2963 or visit www.auburnalabama.org/arts.

• **Annual Graphic Design Juried Exhibition, March 7 – 11:** A competitive show of graphic design projects by Auburn University students.

• **Forty Two Fifty Plus, March 22 – April 29:** An invitational exhibition of large-scale two and three dimensional works by regional artists.

SummerNight Downtown Art Walk vendor and sponsor applications are now available. Join the City of Auburn, Auburn Arts Association and Downtown Merchants Association for the SummerNight Downtown Art Walk on Friday, June 10 from 6 – 9:30 p.m. in downtown Auburn. This FREE community event features live music and artwork from area artists on display throughout downtown. Area artists, downtown businesses and restaurants are encouraged to participate. Applications are available online at www.auburnsummernight.org. In the event of rain, join us on Saturday, June 11 from 6 – 9:30 p.m. For more information, call the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center at (334) 501 – 2963 or visit www.auburnalabama.org/arts.