

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

March 2015

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City of Auburn



Downtown Renovations

Downtown Auburn. Where city and campus meet, it's the heart of "the loveliest village." And in 2015, Auburn's downtown will undergo its most significant renewal since the 1970s.

For the past decade, the City of Auburn has been examining the downtown area, including studying downtown parking trends, soliciting public input and planning for downtown's future. In 2005, a study of downtown parking needs and available parking, as well as parking projections through 2015 was presented to the Auburn City Council. That study led to changes in place today with the ground floor of the parking deck now open to metered parking, a new multi-purpose parking lot and event space created on Gay Street, the migration to multi-space electronic parking meters and the adoption of parking space requirements for new downtown residential developments. The study also provided recommendations for a future parking deck to replace the existing municipal parking deck on Gay Street, creating hundreds more parking spaces downtown, with potentially a retail component on the ground floor.

In the years since the initial downtown study was presented, the City Council has seen periodic updates. In 2009, the Auburn Chamber of Commerce Commercial Business Focus Group reported to Mayor Ham on the challenges and obstacles to development in the Urban Core and Mayor Ham appointed a Downtown Study Committee to solicit input on downtown needs from relevant stakeholders. In the 2012 Annual Citizen Survey, 61% identified more downtown parking and a vibrant downtown as very important issues. Intensive public input and public meetings characterized the development of CompPlan 2030, the Downtown Master Plan and the Renew Opelika Road plan, all of which inform future downtown improvement projects.

In 2012, city staff recommended to the City Council the downtown improvements currently underway. Those improvements began with the Gay Street Parking lot, providing 93 parking spaces and a new event space for downtown Auburn. They continue with improvements currently in progress to the downtown alleyways on College Street and Magnolia Avenue. Alleyway improvements will address everything from walkability, lighting and aesthetics to the aging water and sewer infrastructure underneath the alleys. Most importantly, alleyway improvements will improve the sense of safety for pedestrians walking from downtown businesses to the downtown parking surrounding the municipal parking deck.

In addition to the alleyways project, other downtown projects slated for 2015 include improvements at the intersection of Samford Avenue and College Street, improvements at and



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Downtown Renovations *continued from page 1*

around the historic Train Depot and the improvements currently underway on Opelika Road from Gay Street to Ross Street. As this issue of Open Line hits mailboxes, Auburn University continues work on campus at Toomer's Corner and along South College Street. What began as an act of vandalism when the original Auburn Oaks were poisoned will transform into a new chapter in the story of Auburn's most famous corner as the new Auburn Oaks at Toomer's Corner are planted on Valentine's Day. While it will be many months before the trees can be rolled, the return of the trees will be celebrated with a large scale downtown event on Auburn University's A-Day in April. Event planners hope to exceed the attendance of 2013's "One Last Roll" celebration as the Auburn faithful welcome the new trees to the plains.

When the A-Day celebration ends in April, the renovation of the Toomer's Corner intersection will begin. The new intersection will feature a more open design and wider sidewalks with new street trees and seating to enhance the downtown experience for pedestrians. A stamped concrete intersection will boast a permanent Tiger Paw and new decorative poles for street lights and traffic signals. When the work is done, residents and visitors alike will know they've arrived at Auburn's historic Toomer's Corner, known worldwide for its celebrations of collegiate athletics (and for lemonade). Improvements are scheduled to be complete before fall semester begins in 2015, so be sure to make it a point to visit the new Toomer's Corner later this year and take advantage of the new amenities as well as the many businesses, restaurants, churches and special events that downtown Auburn has to offer.

Countdown to Auburn CityFest 2015!

Get ready for Auburn CityFest on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Kiesel Park! This year's event features BBQ and Blues so come and celebrate the soul of the south in music, featuring the Alabama Blues Project, delicious barbeque, children's activities, and a variety of arts & crafts and fine arts exhibitors. Interested in participating in CityFest as a vendor? Fine arts and arts & crafts vendor spaces are still available. Download an application online at www.auburncityfest.com. Auburn CityFest is Auburn's largest, free, outdoor arts and crafts festival. Join us Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Kiesel Park. For more information, visit www.auburncityfest.com.

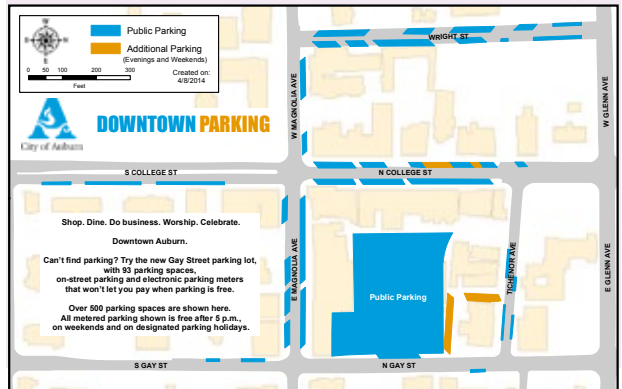
Genealogy 101

The Auburn Public Library will continue its popular Genealogy 101 speaker series on Thursday, March 19 at 3:00 p.m. with a presentation by Richard Robinson, who will speak about the emerging role of DNA in genealogical research. Following our speaker's presentation, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions, exchange ideas, and share resources. All Genealogy 101 programs are open to the public, and refreshments will be provided, courtesy of the Friends of the Auburn Public Library. For more information, please call the Auburn Public Library at 334-501-3190.

Free Parking During Spring Break

Make your Spring shopping hassle-free with meter-free parking in downtown Auburn. Meter-free parking will be available Monday, March 23 through Friday, March 27. In addition to free on-street parking available throughout downtown, free parking can be found on and surrounding the first floor of the Auburn Municipal Parking Deck, accessible from both Gay Street and Tichenor Avenue.

Keep your sales-tax dollars local and enjoy meter-free parking when you shop, dine or do business downtown during spring break. Auburn's sales tax revenue supports Auburn City Schools, funds the maintenance of roads and local infrastructure, and helps make possible community events such as Auburn CityFest.



The Big Event

Mayor Ham has declared Saturday, March 14 "Big Event Day" in the City of Auburn. The Big Event is a one-day, student-run service project sponsored by Auburn University's Student Government Association. The Big Event serves as a way for Auburn students to say "thank you" to the surrounding communities that support them. Project requests must be submitted by February 14. For more information, go to www.aubigevent.com or contact the SGA office at (334) 844-4240.

Board Vacancies

Three vacancies on the **Commercial Development Authority** were announced at the February 3, 2015 meeting and will be filled at the March 3, 2015 City Council Meeting.

One vacancy on the **East Alabama Mental Health-Mental Retardation Board** was announced at the February 17, 2015 meeting and will be filled at the March 17, 2015 City Council Meeting.

Two vacancies on the **Historic Preservation Commission** will be announced at the March 3, 2015 meeting and will be filled at the April 7, 2015 City Council Meeting.

Two vacancies on the **Library Board** will be announced at the March 3, 2015 meeting and will be filled at the April 7, 2015 City Council Meeting.

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



Library Director to Attend Leadership Academy

Library Director Chris Warren is one of thirty-two public librarians chosen to attend the Public Library Association's (PLA) Leadership Academy in March. The Leadership Academy is a program developed in partnership with the International City And County Management Association (ICMA) and the Center for Leadership at Northwestern University, with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The program is designed to "empower public librarian participants with the knowledge necessary to be innovative and successful leaders of change," and to develop "the skills needed to enhance the position and effectiveness of the library within the community."



Friends of the Library Book Sale

The Friends of the Auburn Public Library will hold their spring book sale on Saturday, March 14 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Dean Road Recreation Center. The sale is open to the public, and hundreds of gently used books will be available for purchase, including bestsellers, classics, fiction, nonfiction, textbooks, and children's books. All proceeds benefit the Auburn Public Library. If you would like more information about the book sale, or if you're interested in volunteering or joining the Friends of the Library, please call (334) 501-3190.

Ward 5 Public Meeting

Ward 5 Councilperson Lynda Tremaine will hold a public meeting for Ward 5 at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church in downtown Auburn on Monday, March 2 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting is open to all, but will focus on issues of interest to ward residents. To find out what voting ward you live in and who represents you on the Auburn City Council, go to <http://www.auburnalabama.org/voting-ward>.

WRM Partners with Save Our Saugahatchee

The Water Resource Management Department's Watershed Division relies upon many collaborative partnerships, both internal and external, to help satisfy its obligations as a regulated owner/operator of a small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). Water quality monitoring of the impaired waterways within the City (Saugahatchee Creek, Parkerson Mill Creek, and Moore's Mill Creek) is one of these obligations. The Watershed Division, along with the Lee County Highway Department and the City of Opelika, recently partnered with Save our Saugahatchee (SOS) and the Alabama Water Watch (AWW) organizations to utilize their certified volunteer water quality monitors to help perform required monitoring. By utilizing SOS and AWW certified volunteers, the supporting partners are able to monitor a much larger portion of their respective jurisdictional areas, and at a lower cost, than would be possible with paid staff. This partnership also supports the Watershed Division's education, outreach, and community participation mission.



Daylight Savings Time Begins March 8

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 8 at 2:00 a.m. Remember to move your clocks forward one hour Saturday night. This is also a good opportunity to take a few moments to change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

MEETING SCHEDULE

MARCH

- 2 Cemeteries Advisory Board**, 4 p.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
- 3 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**, 5:15 p.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
- 4 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 6 Tree Commission**, 11:30 a.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
- 10 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
- 12 Planning Commission**, 5 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 17 Library Board**, 2:00 p.m., Library Board Room, 749 East Thach Avenue
- 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
- 19 Water Works Board**, 4 p.m., Water Board Conference Room, 1501 West Samford Avenue

Meeting times and places are subject to change.

For more information, including a map of City meeting locations, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/boards.

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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.

up COMING 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, contact Auburn Public Library's Youth Services at 501-3196.

STORYTIME AND EARLY LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Baby Time - Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. for ages birth – 18 months and their caregivers.

Toddler Time - Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. for ages 18 months – 3 years and their caregivers.

Preschool Time - Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. for preschoolers ages 3 – 5 years and their caregivers.

Puppet Show – Wednesday, March 4 at 3:30 p.m. for ages 3 – 7. Featuring *The Blacksmith and the Magic Eye*.

Pajama Time – Monday, March 9 at 7:00 p.m. for the whole family. Wear pajamas, grab a blanket, bring a favorite bedtime "lovey" and join us for cozy stories, music, and family fun.

Fractured Fairy Tales – Featuring *Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs* by Mo Willems. Wednesday, March 11 at 3:30 p.m. for ages 4 – 7.

Family Storytime – Sunday, March 22 at 4:00 p.m. Bring the whole family for a special celebration of spring on the library lawn! Please bring a blanket to sit on, and join us for stories, songs, parachute games, and fun for everyone. (In the event of rain, the event will be relocated inside.)

Spectrum Storytime – Thursday, March 19 at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 21 at 10:00 a.m. Spectrum Storytime is an educational and interactive program designed for children with sensory integration challenges and their caregivers. For cognitive ages 4 – 7. Please note that registration is required. For more information or to register, please call Youth Services at 501-3196.

OTHER YOUTH SERVICES ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS

Gamers Club – Thursday, March 5 at 4:00 p.m. for ages 9 – 12 and Thursday, March 12 at 4:00 p.m. for ages 13 – 18.

LitWits – Tuesday, March 3 & Tuesday, March 17 at 4:30 p.m. for ages 13 and up. 3/3 – Sports Stories, 3/17 – St. Patrick's Day (and anything green!)

Spring Break @ the Library – Thursday, March 26 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. for ages 13 – 18. Join us for beach ball volleyball, horseshoes, water relays, limbo, and lots of beach-themed fun!

Legomania – Join us every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. for "free play" with Legos®.

ESL/ELL Homework Help – Tuesdays, March 3, 10, 17 & 31 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for grades K – 12. No appointment necessary.

Parks and Recreation

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

March 14...Fit as a Fiddle: A 50+ Lifestyle and Health Fair - Don't miss the 2nd Annual Fit as a Fiddle: A 50+ Lifestyle and Health Fair on Saturday, March 14 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 for them. Businesses and organizations interested in participating may download a vendor form online at www.auburnalabama.org/parks. Spaces will be available on a first come, first serve basis.

March 28...Celebrate Responsible Dog Ownership at Bark in the Park Calling all dog lovers! Auburn Parks and Recreation will host Bark in the Park 2015, celebrating responsible dog ownership, on Saturday, March 28 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Kiesel Park. This FREE community event is open to all dog owners and their favorite four-legged friends. Visit a variety of educational booths, shop with local pet vendors, enjoy dog-related arts and crafts projects, sign your dog up for the Doggie Olympics, enjoy a children's interactive storyteller, and much more!

Now Showing...Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center Exhibitions – Mark your calendar for the following Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center Exhibitions. The exhibits are free and open to the public Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Southern Craftsmen, Through March 12. Selected works in a variety of styles and mediums by Alabama and regional craftsmen.

Annual Graphic Design Juried Exhibition, March 16 - 20. A competitive show of graphic design projects by Auburn University students.

March 5 - 7 & 9...AACT Children's Musical Theatre Production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" - Join us for the Auburn Area Community Theatre's Children's Theatre production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" March 5 - 7 & 9 at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center. All weekday performances are at 6:30 p.m. Saturday features a 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. performance. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for students and seniors. For more information, visit www.auburnalabama.org/arts or contact the Arts Center at 501-2963.

Applications Now Available...SummerNight Downtown Art Walk – Join the City of Auburn, Auburn Arts Association, and Downtown Auburn Merchants for the SummerNight Downtown Art Walk on Friday, June 12 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.auburnalabama.org/arts and are due by June 8. In case of rain, join us Saturday, June 14 from 6 - 9:30 p.m. For more info., call the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center at 501-2963.

