

Suwanee connects

inside
this issue...

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ROCK

Soul Asylum to Suwanee wing fest

The wings aren't the only things that will be flavorful at Suwanee's August Concert & Wing Festival on August 8. Soul Asylum will serve up a tangy musical performance, especially if you came of age during the late '80s/early '90s alternative rock/grunge era.



2 Envisioning Tomorrow's Downtown



3 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang



7 Businesses by the Numbers

After forming in Minneapolis in 1981, Soul Asylum, known for its first two years as Loud Fast Rules, was a frontrunner of American college rock and garnered a reputation as the country's best live band. Mid-1980s audiences were struck, according to Soul Asylum's Wikipedia article, by "the band's onstage swagger, scruffy Midwestern appearance, and extremely loud, frenetic sound – mixing tuneful but unrestrained punk, hardcore 1970s rock, country, and self-effacing kitsch." The article goes on to quote an early reviewer's description of the band's sound as "some unholy mix of Kiss and Hank Williams thrown under the wheels of a runaway train."

Suwanee's August Concert and Wing Festival will begin at 5p.m. at Town Center Park.

after releasing its first album, Soul Asylum is promoting a new studio album on its Facebook and PledgeMusic.com page.

Today the band consists of founding member Dave Pirner, Michael Bland on drums, Winston Roye on bass, and Justin Sharbono on guitar.

Commenting on one of the band's videos, one fan recently posted her memories: "These guys were really cool by my standards when I was a teen. It was the emotion behind the music. I had someone to provide some real comfort for me when life was so turbulent, to inspire me.... This kind of music is basically some of the last of the good modern rock scene."

Appropriately, "Runaway Train," from Soul Asylum's sixth album, *Grave Dancers Union*, released in 1992, became the band's biggest hit, peaking at #5 on the Billboard Hot 100. Other hits include "Somebody to Shove," "Black Gold," and "Misery." Thirty-one years

Suwanee's August Concert and Wing Festival will begin at 5 p.m. at Town Center Park. As headline performer, Soul Asylum will take the stage around 8 p.m.

Envisioning tomorrow's

DOWNTOWN

About 45 people participated in an April 20 hands-on visioning workshop that is helping to shape the update to Suwanee's Downtown Master Plan. A draft of that updated plan will be presented at an open house from 4-8 p.m. Thursday, July 9, at City Hall.

At the April workshop, planning consultants shared market analysis information and reviewed discussion topics while participants shared ideas and feedback related to parks

that began in 2008 and that the Suwanee area should anticipate strong growth.

Based on current conditions, Suwanee's downtown area could, Noell said, support up to 60 new detached home sales annually, 200 new apartment units, 90 independent and assisted living beds, and 10,000 square feet each of office and retail space.



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and transportation as well as what kinds of uses and buildings might work best in the Town Center and Old Town areas.

David Laube with Noell Consulting Group reported that analysis of Suwanee's market indicates that residential building and sales have substantially recovered from the economic downturn

While keeping market realities in mind, TSW's Woody Giles, a planning consultant working on the downtown master plan update, encouraged participants to "dream big."

Through public input opportunities, Giles noted, citizens have expressed interest in additional walkability, parking, and small gathering places; more diverse housing; bringing more people to downtown; creating a "Main Street" feel; and revitalizing Old Town.

Additional public feedback will be accepted when the draft of the Downtown Master Plan update is presented at the July 9 open house.

'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' flies into TCP July 24 & 25



In its ninth season, Broadway in the Park's 2015 production will bring nearly everyone's favorite flying car to Suwanee, introducing new generations to the captivating magic of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. A mostly high school cast will bring the musical fantasy adventure, based on the 1968 film, to the Town Center stage July 24 and 25. Performances begin at 7 p.m.

In addition to *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, a middle school cast will perform *The Finish Line*, an original musical written by Suwanee Performing Arts' Patty and Elise Etherton and Bernie Davis. *The Finish Line* features a young, rebellious girl who loves racing more than anything. The story ends at the 1910 Grand Prix, which is where the *Chitty* story begins.

"*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is a fun story for all ages," says Director and Production Coordinator Patty Etherton. "No matter who you are, you're going to love this show."

The play features fun characters, including the Child Catcher, Baron and Baroness Bomburst, Vulgarian spies, and Truly Scrumptious as well as unforgettable songs.

Between the two plays, about 125 high school, middle school, adult, and children actors will perform. The production also will feature a live orchestra, the Broad Street Concert Band at Sugar Hill. And producers plan to employ projection (and great acting) to make Chitty fly.

Additional youth volunteers will work behind the scenes building sets, creating costumes, and ensuring that the on-

stage magic works properly. If you're interested in being part of the technical crew, contact Amy Kimball-Niepmann at amy@suwaneeacademy.com.

Etherton and Davis, through Suwanee Performing Arts, Inc., have hosted Broadway in the Park for the past eight summers.

“*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is a fun story for all ages. No matter who you are, you're going to love this show!”

"What else would we do for the whole summer," Davis wonders.

"The youth in our community who are passionate about the arts are invested in this production now," adds Etherton. "It's what we do in Suwanee. It's become a tradition."

In the past, the rain-or-shine performances have drawn approximately 4,000 people for each show. Performances are free and open to the public, but the best seating is reserved for corporate sponsors (\$500 per six-person tables) and patrons (\$250

per table). If you'd like to help make Chitty fly and enjoy prime seating or want access to limited "on the ground" seating reserved for families with small children (\$10 each), contact Suwanee Performing Arts at info@suwaneeperforms.com or 678-482-6333.

Training promotes police department's 'knowledgeable, ethical, professional' mission

While the state requires that Georgia law enforcement officers receive a minimum of 20 hours of training annually, Suwanee police officers average approximately 80 hours of on-the-job training each year.

"We want a better, well-trained, more professional officer," says Lt. Bryan Hickey, training division coordinator with the Suwanee Police Department, who adds that such training promotes the department's goal, which is embroidered on uniform patches, to have "knowledgeable, ethical, and professional" officers.

Suwanee officers participate in a variety of in-service training programs, ranging from legal updates to DUI detection, from computer forensics to use of the asp. Every quarter, officers receive training in defensive tactics and judgmental use of force, not, says Chief Mike Jones, because of standards set by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (which has assessed Suwanee as among the less than 5 percent of accredited agencies across the country) but rather to offset liability. All officers are required to achieve firearms requalification each year as well.

Much of Suwanee's in-service training takes place at the police training facility in the Gateway area. Through the facility, Suwanee officers have access to outside-the-department trainers and classes as well as a state-of-the-art virtual simulator. Of the 7,715 hours of training that occurred at the facility in 2014, Suwanee officers accounted for 2,209 hours. Suwanee hosted 36 different classes last year, offered through an array of law enforcement training programs and attended by police officers from across the country.

"The training center has really helped us facilitate advancing our officers' training," says Jones.

But that in-service training takes place after an officer has been hired.

"The first step to having a good officer," says Jones, "is doing a good background check." Suwanee's background check for potential officers includes a polygraph, psychological evaluation, physical evaluation, home visit, and references.



“
The training center has really helped us facilitate advancing our officers' training.
”



Once hired, officers spend 10 weeks at mandate school learning the basics, including use of weapons, testifying, making arrests, writing reports, and emergency vehicle operations. Suwanee's new officers attend North Central Georgia Law Enforcement Academy in Austell. If officers fail, notes the chief, it's usually because they can't qualify with weapons or emergency vehicle operations.

After mandate school, Suwanee officers spend 14 weeks (or more if needed) riding along with a field training officer.

"Now they're starting to learn our culture, our procedures and processes, our radio signals" says Jones. "That's when they really start to learn to be a Suwanee police officer."

After being released from the field training program, a supervisor will shadow a new officer's calls and traffic stops for a two-week period.

"My philosophy," says Jones, "is that the more training and education an officer has, the better officer he or she will be because they'll know what to do, they'll have better communication skills. They're less likely to need to use force because they can talk through a situation."

In 2014, Suwanee's 37 sworn police officers responded to 61,770 calls for service, made 831 arrests, and handed out

16,929 traffic citations. Of those 61,770 calls for service, use of force was applied in three cases or in 0.005 percent of the calls. Two of those 2014 cases involved use of a taser; the other was a hard-hand technique. In all cases, the use of force was found to be within policy and levels of use of force deemed appropriate. (By the way, Suwanee officers who choose to carry a taser are required to first experience being shot with one.)

"I attribute a lot of that to education and training of our officers," says the chief. "It costs a little bit to provide training. I have found, though, that if you try to go cheap on hiring and training, it can cost you on the back end."





May the odds be ever in your favor Watch Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss Everdeen in *Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1* at Movies Under the Stars June 6.

Double features under the stars

Movies Under the Stars is bringing double features to Town Center Park this summer. Upcoming movie nights on June 6 and July 18 will feature films appropriate for young children on a digital board at 7 p.m. and movie selections for slightly older audiences on a big screen beginning around 8:45 p.m.

The 7 p.m. movie on June 6 is *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. This 2014 film starring Steve Carell and Jennifer Garner is rated PG for rude humor. “*Alexander* is funnier than one would expect,” says Blake Goble of *Consequence of Sound* on RottenTomatoes.com. “In a weird way, it’s full of refreshingly cranky, dorky goofing.”

The third installment of the *Hunger Games* series, *Mockingjay – Part 1*, will be the second feature. Jennifer Lawrence stars as Katniss Everdeen, who fights to save a nation moved by her courage. The movie is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence and action and some disturbing images and thematic material. Critic Richard Roeper declared the film “A solid lead-up to the finale [due out in November].”

On July 18, the recently released *Home*, an animated film about an alien on the run from his own people, will be shown at 7 p.m. The PG film features the voices of Jim Parsons, Rihanna, and Steve Martin. On RottenTomatoes.com, Bilge Ebiri with *New York Magazine/Vulture* said: “A surprisingly moving tale of friendship and family, dressed up as an adorably frivolous sci-fi comedy.”

The second feature will be *Galaxy Quest*, a 1999 film starring Tim Allen, Sigourney Weaver, and Alan Rickman that received a 90 percent “fresh” rating on RottenTomatoes.com. “Boldly going where few parodies have gone before” [Kevin Courrier with *Globe and Mail*], the film follows adventures of the alumni cast of a space opera television series. The movie is rated PG for some action violence, mild language, and sensuality.

The movies are free and open to the public. Bring chairs, blankets, and snacks. No alcohol may be brought into the park, but food and beverages, including beer and wine, may be purchased from Town Center merchants.

Also coming soon...

Food Truck Friday

June 5 • 5:30-9:30 pm
(music starts @ 7 pm)
Town Center Park

Tentative food truck line-up:
Atlanta Burger Truck, Bollywood Zing, Five Finger Philly, Pressed for Time, Freckled and Blue, Happy Belly, Linkz Express, On Tapa the World, Rey’s Cuban Café, Wow!, and Yoli’s Street Food

Musical line-up:
Jon Cole, Liz Brasher & Her Band

Braves Game on the Green

August 1 • 5 pm
Town Center Park
Activities start at 5 pm;
game at Phillies starts at 7

Food Truck Friday

August 7 • 5:30-9:30 pm
(music starts @ 7 pm)
Town Center Park

Tentative food truck line-up:
Blaxican, Bollywood Zing, Five Finger Philly, Freckled and Blue, Hail Caesar, Mac the Cheese, Rey’s Cuban Café, Tracy’s Tasties, Viet-Nomie’s, and Wow!

Musical line-up:
Brent Daniel, Cody Marlowe & the Dead Flowers

Suwanee

BUSINESSES

by the numbers

While their real specialty is customer service, staff members in the City's business services department deal with numbers all day long as they work with businesses, taxes and fees, and licensing. And those numbers offer a really interesting peek at Suwanee's business community.

For example, a glance at the top classifications of Suwanee businesses (as indicated by North American Industry Classification System codes) indicates that Suwanee residents should be well-fed and well-coiffed with healthy pearly whites. That is, the top classification for Suwanee businesses is restaurants, which total 93 and make up 6.68 percent of all commercial businesses in the City. Beauty salons come in #2 with 54 such businesses, and Suwanee's 24 dentists come in #5. Residential remodelers (30 such businesses) and computer programming services (26) are in the third and fourth most common categories, respectively.

In all, Suwanee is home to 1,391 businesses. The average number of employees per business is 8.2, but Suwanee's largest employer, Southeastern Freight, has 402 employees.

Here are some additional numbers of interest, pulled together by business services department staff members....



→1,102

commercial businesses in Suwanee; the remaining 289 licensed businesses are home-based

→237

new businesses opened in Suwanee in 2014; January is the most popular month to open a new business

→135

Suwanee businesses closed or changed ownership in 2014

→11,466

people employed by Suwanee businesses

→2,051

people working for Suwanee's top 10 employers: Southeastern Freight, Meggitt Training Systems, Walmart, Kroger, Quality Technology Services, Publix, Flowers Bakery, Lowes, Blockbuster Textiles, and Hisense USA

→41

full-service restaurants; the other 52 restaurants offer limited service

→66

alcohol licenses issued by Suwanee in 2015; 40 of those are for restaurants

→\$3,053,108

reported revenue on mixed drinks (does not include beer and wine) sold at Suwanee restaurants

→\$743,228

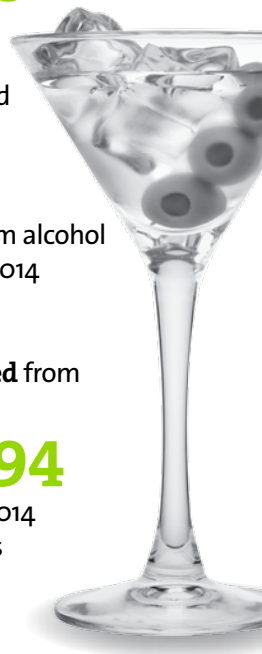
excise taxes collected from alcohol wholesalers in fiscal year 2014

→\$33,593

total tax revenue collected from Town Center businesses

→\$23,123,094

total sales generated in 2014 by Town Center businesses





< *Ball and the Red Staircase*



Friends >



FOR YOUR FAVORITE ART PIECE



The Herd >

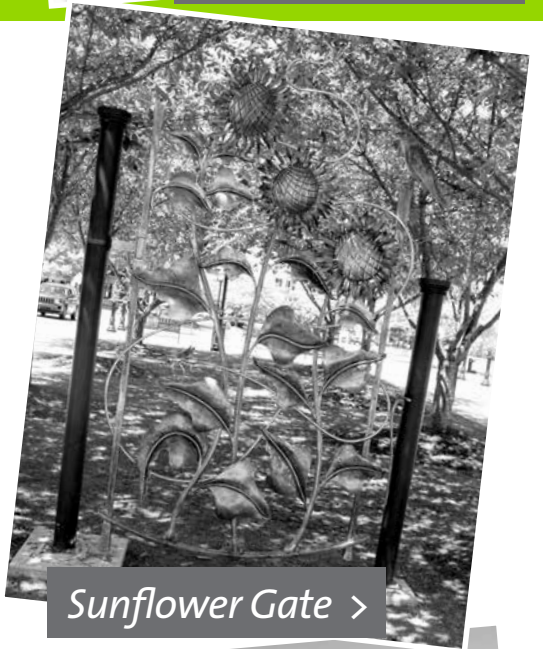


< *The Three Muses*

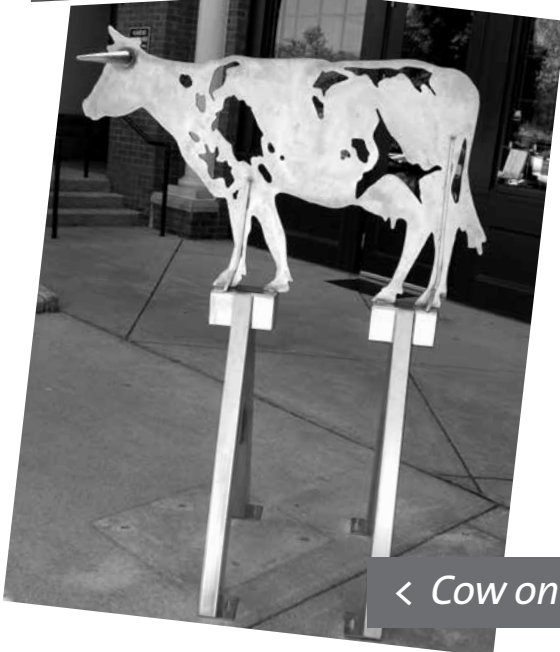


Corey >

The 2015-17 Suwanee SculpTour exhibit, a walkable public art encounter in and around Town Center Park, is currently on display through March 2017. Printed tour guides are available at City Hall or may be downloaded at suwanee.com.



Sunflower Gate >



< *Cow on a Horse*

Be sure to vote via the Community/SculpTour page at suwanee.com for your favorite piece among the 17 sculptures and increase its chances of being the one that the City purchases to add to its permanent art collection at the end of the exhibit.



Father and Son >

Gwinnett County homes that are priced well frequently receive multiple offers and typically move very quickly.



Seller's market

The Suwanee real estate market remains hot in an overall market that is heating up and finally rebounding from the recent recession. This, according to a group of Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Metro Brokers realtors who shared market information recently with City of Suwanee staff, means that, particularly in Suwanee, it's a seller's market.

Metro Broker Realtor Courtney Horton reported that the current inventory of homes metrowide is only about 41,000. In the Suwanee area, the supply of inventory is just above 2.5 months. Gwinnett County homes that are priced well frequently receive multiple offers and typically move very quickly. "It's a very different market than the one of just a few years ago," she says.

As an example, Horton notes that over the last six months, only three homes within the Gwinnett County 30024 zip code area were sold through foreclosure.

In today's market, sellers often are working with an accepted offer as well as a back-up offer. Of the homes sold over the past six months in Gwinnett County's 30024 zip code, 80 percent sold within 95 percent of list price, Horton reports. Eleven percent sold above list price and 15 percent at asking price. "The competition is fierce right now," Horton says.

Other current real estate trends noted by the group from Metro Brokers include:

- New builds tend to include lots of upgrades.
- More sellers are getting into the market as home values rise and fewer remain "underwater." Many former rental homes are coming on to the market.
- Appraisals are coming in higher.
- Suwanee sellers are tending to stay in the community and upgrading.

The average price of homes sold in the Suwanee/Buford/Duluth area in April compared to two years ago is up 31.6 percent and the median price is up 18.6 percent.

The group of realtors noted that buyers typically express interest in Suwanee, Alpharetta, or John's Creek and that schools, affordable housing, community life, arts and entertainment, and transportation access are among key factors considered. They also noted that the Suwanee market generally is not accessible to a lot of first-time homebuyers. A large majority of homes sold in the Gwinnett County 30024 area over the past six months were in the \$200,000-\$400,000 range.

The realtor group predicts that the housing market, and the Suwanee market in particular, will remain a seller's market over the next year, especially if interest rates remain low.





for business

The following companies received new business licenses from the City of Suwanee in March and April:

- **Afghani Kebab House**

80 Horizon Drive

- **The Albright Agency**

960 Scales Road

- **ALDI**

1165 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

- **Anytime Fitness**

302 Satellite Boulevard

- **ChoicesToYou.com**

950 Scales Road

- **Cuts and Colour Salon by Natasha**

3725 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

- **Fairfield Inn & Suites**

105 Celebration Drive

- **Ferby Ferre**

80 Horizon Drive

- **Geiger Automotive USA**

375 Satellite Boulevard

- **Georgia Underwriting Association**

3355 Annandale Lane

- **GK Group**

4175 Silver Peak Parkway

- **Guardian Angels Homecare**

145 Satellite Boulevard

- **Guild Mortgage Company**

335 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

- **H&S Resources of Georgia**

4411 Suwanee Dam Road

- **The Hawes Law Firm**

3725 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

- **L'Amour Mode**

140 Satellite Boulevard

- **Lightspeed Automation**

3594 Baxley Point Drive

- **Oasis Wellness Center**

3463 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

- **Optimas OE Solutions**

3400 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

- **Peach Machine Works**

340 Sharon Industrial Way

- **Penn Station East Coast Subs**

3320 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

- **The Potts Company**

4000 Smithtown Road

- **RJ Employer Consulting**

4411 Suwanee Dam Road

- **Rossi North America**

3355 Martin Farm Road

- **Sesmas Tree Service**

360 Sharon Industrial Way

- **Sherry's Fabrics and Upholstery**

1300 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

- **Signature Ballroom**

80 Horizon Drive

- **Tax Pros**

80 Horizon Drive

- **Tomorrow's Hope Montessori School**

305 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

- **Total Vision Suwanee**

1000 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

- **Varisoft Technologies**

970 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

- **Viral Vapes**

3370 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

- **Yoga Dawning**

3449 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road

- **Yong Sor Clothing Distribution**

3631 McGinnis Ferry Road



Welcome to City Hall

Three individuals recently joined the City of Suwanee staff.

Dacula resident **Thomas Dickinson** and Norcross resident **Aaron Johnson** have joined the public works department. Dickinson was previously a traffic technician in Ohio and is a licensed barber. A graduate of Mill Creek High School, Johnson worked previously as a warehouse worker, landscaper, and on Suwanee's event staff.

North Gwinnett High School graduate **Stephanie Motes** is currently attending Peace Officer Standards and Training classes in order to become a certified police officer. She also has taken criminal justice classes at Valdosta State University.

Council posts expected on fall ballot

The mayor's position and two City Council posts are expected to be on the ballot in November. Suwanee's current mayor is Jimmy Burnette. Doug Ireland and Dick Goodman currently hold the Council posts #1 and #2, respectively, which are scheduled to be on the ballot this fall. Candidate qualifying will take place the week of August 31. More information about qualifying will be available in the August issue of *Connects* and at suwanee.com.



A good-for-the-heart workplace Sarah McPhail, left, with the American Heart Association presented Suwanee's Fit Friendly Award to Administrative Services Director Elvira Rogers and Mayor Jimmy Burnette.

Suwanee is fit-friendly

The American Heart Association has recognized the City of Suwanee as a fit-friendly worksite. The association's **Fit Friendly Award** acknowledges employers who champion the health of employees and work to create a culture of physical activity and health in the workplace.

Suwanee's employee-managed wellness program, SWELL, earned recognition for, among other things, installing a treadmill desk, publishing wellness information in the employee newsletter, providing physical activity classes and general nutrition education, and offering biometric screenings and annual health-risk assessments.

upcoming events

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

J June

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|----|--|----------|
| 2 | Planning & Zoning Commission | 6:30pm |
| 3 | Public Arts Commission | 6pm |
| 5 | Food Truck Friday (TCP) | 5:30pm |
| 6 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |
| 6 | Movies Under the Stars
Double Feature (TCP) | 7pm |
| 8 | Harvest Farm Managing Board | 4:30pm |
| 8 | Suwanee Fest Planning Committee | 6:30pm |
| 11 | City Council Workshop | 5:30pm |
| 11 | Proposed FY2016 Budget Public Hearing | 5:30pm |
| 16 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |
| 16 | Downtown Development Authority | 7:30am |
| 20 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |
| 23 | Proposed FY2016 Budget Public Hearing | 5:30pm |
| 23 | City Council Meeting | 6:30pm |
| 27 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |

J July

- | | | |
|----|---|----------|
| 1 | Public Arts Commission | 6pm |
| 3 | Holiday: City Hall Closed | |
| 4 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |
| 7 | Planning & Zoning Commission | 6:30pm |
| 9 | Downtown Master Plan –
Draft Plan Open House | 4-8pm |
| 11 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |
| 13 | Harvest Farm Managing Board | 4:30pm |
| 13 | Suwanee Fest Planning Committee | 6:30pm |
| 16 | City Council Workshop | 5:30pm |
| 18 | Georgia Tarheels Sports Presents
Cheyanne Faith's 5K/Fun Run (TCP) | 8am |
| 18 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |
| 18 | Movies Under the Stars
Double Feature (TCP) | 7pm |
| 21 | Downtown Development Authority | 7:30am |
| 21 | Zoning Board of Appeals | 6:30pm |
| 24 | Broadway in the Park:
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (TCP) | 7pm |
| 25 | Suwanee Farmers Market (TCP) | 8am-noon |
| 25 | Broadway in the Park:
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (TCP) | 7pm |
| 28 | City Council Meeting | 6:30pm |

Unless otherwise noted, City of Suwanee public meetings are at City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue. Dates subject to change; check suwanee.com for updates.

City of
Suwanee
Georgia

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Dick Goodman 678/446-7520
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