



Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | October 2020

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ELECTIONS 2020



EARLY VOTING

Eligible voters (registered voters residing within the Suwanee city limits; please visit Suwanee.com to find out if you reside in Suwanee city proper) may vote in person at City Hall in the city municipal election **only** (Suwanee City Council Post 5), Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm from October 12 through 30, 2020. Those wishing to vote in any other election (Presidential, U.S. Congressional, State Congressional, Judicial, School Board, County, etc.) should check GwinnettCounty.com for early polling sites and times.

BY ABSENTEE BALLOT

Any registered voter may vote by absentee ballot; you do not need a reason to vote via absentee ballot in the State of Georgia. In order to obtain an absentee ballot for the City of Suwanee municipal election **only**, an absentee ballot application request must be submitted in writing to:

Robyn O'Donnell, Absentee Ballot Clerk
Suwanee City Hall
330 Town Center Avenue, Suwanee, GA 30024

Absentee ballots can also be obtained at Suwanee.com or by emailing rodonnell@suwanee.com, or by visiting City Hall. Absentee ballots can be mailed to voters through October 30, 2020 and must be returned and postmarked by November 3, 2020.



Please note that if you reside with the Suwanee city limits and you wish to vote in both the city municipal election and the other elections, you will need to vote at **BOTH** Suwanee City Hall **AND** your designated polling precinct.

ON ELECTION DAY

City Hall is a polling site for the city municipal election **only** (Suwanee City Council Post 5); if you are casting your vote in any other election (Presidential, U.S. Congressional, State Congressional, Judicial, School Board, County, etc.), you will need to locate **your assigned polling site** by visiting www.mvp.sos.ga.gov. Suwanee City Hall will be open for in-person voting on election day on November 3, 2020 from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm.

Please contact Suwanee Election Superintendent Elvira Rogers (erogers@suwanee.com) with any questions.

I want to vote...

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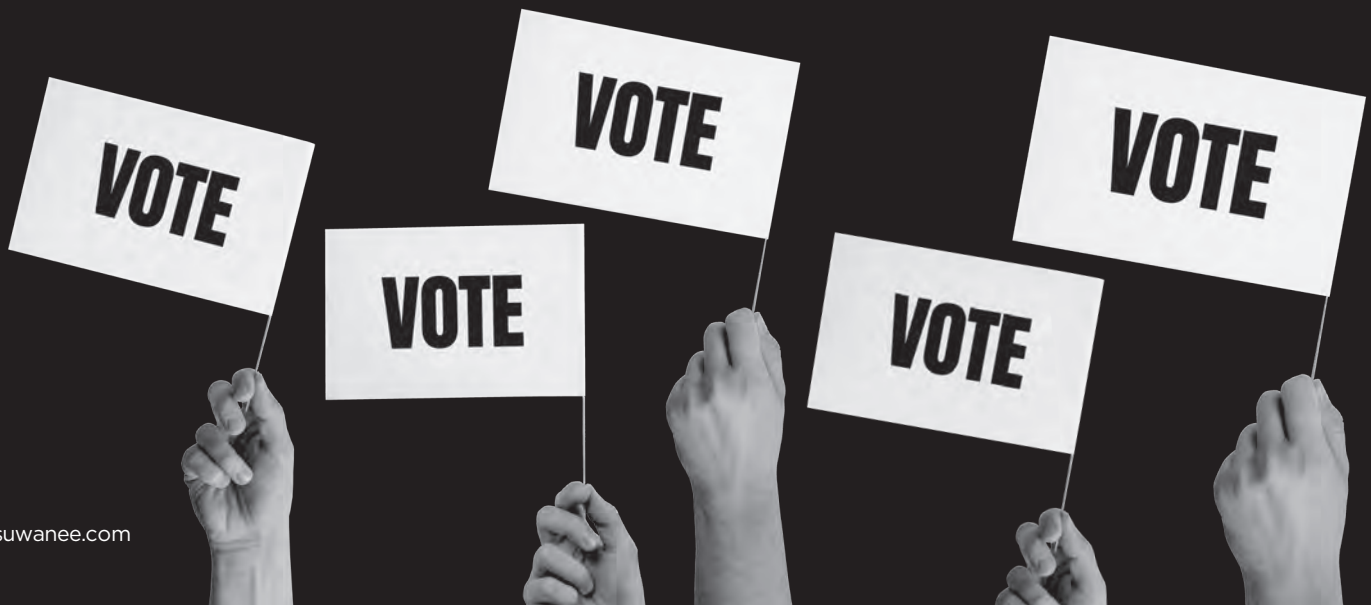
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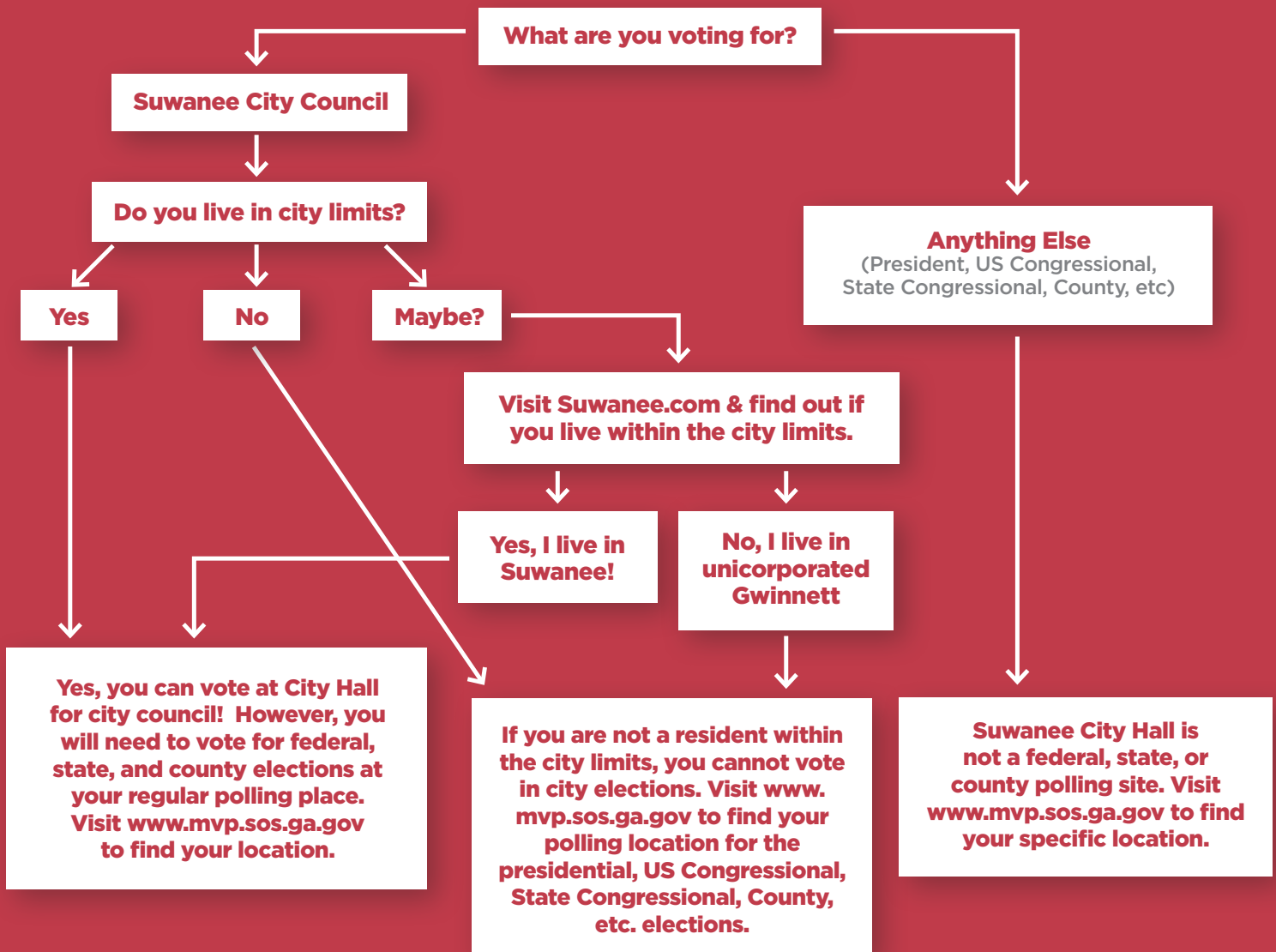
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Can I vote AT CITY HALL?

ANSWER:
It depends

On **November 3, 2020**, Suwanee citizens will flock to the polls to vote in a number of federal, state, county, and (possibly) city elections. But the polling site at which you **cast your vote** is a little bit complicated.



City of Suwanee Employee Named **Event Director** OF THE **Year** by Southeast Festivals and Events Association

The City of Suwanee is proud to announce that **Event & Outreach Manager Amy Doherty** was named **Event Director of the Year** by the Southeast Festivals and Events Association (SFEA). Doherty has produced nearly 500 events in the last 15 years for the City of Suwanee.

“Amy has been responsible for ensuring the success of 40+ events in the near-flawless manner that the citizens have come to expect in Suwanee,” said City Manager Marty Allen. “In all, we estimate over 250,000 people enjoy Suwanee events annually – not including those who frequent the weekly farmers market year-round.”

The best and brightest of the event industry were spotlighted at the 17th annual SFEA Kaleidoscope Awards in Muscle Shoals, Alabama in February, held in conjunction with the SFEA Annual Conference. Top festivals and events throughout the southeast were recognized for their outstanding contribution to the events industry, including multiple Suwanee events:

+ Gold Awards

- **Best Vendor** – Performance Race Services

+ Silver Awards

- **Best Volunteer** – Kate Fanale
- **Best Poster** – Suwanee Fest 2019
- **Best Creative Idea** – Parker’s Passport

+ Bronze Awards

- **Best Event within an Event** –
North Gwinnett Arts Association Lantern
Classes for Glow in the Park 2019



The Southeast Festivals & Events Association is a membership-based organization comprised of festival and event planners, venues, and industry service providers. A panel of experts in event planning, marketing and tourism reviewed entries from five states, looking for originality, creativity, media impact, volunteer programs, and the overall impact to the community.

“Our event team spends hours upon hours behind the scenes planning memory-making events for our citizens,” said Doherty. “It’s nice to be recognized as being among the best in the Southeast for producing some amazing events that make Suwanee a great place to live and play. I’m looking forward to the return of events to Suwanee Town Center once the pandemic is over!”

congratulations

HANGIN' WITH MY Gnomies

Traditionally held in May, the City of Suwanee's beloved Art on a Limb program was displaced this spring, but has returned for November Gnome-ember! The program hides two pieces of original artwork in Suwanee parks and along trails each day in the month of November for people to find and keep.

Tannery Row artist Judy Isaak is the creator of the "SQUEEE!"-worthy gnomes that have been selected as this year's Art on a Limb creation. Isaak is no stranger to Suwanee's Art on a Limb program - she is the creator of the clay birds and tiles from 2013, as well as the wind chimes from 2016.

Isaak has spent over 30 years in the world of pottery, and made it her full-time occupation in 2004, when she moved into her current studio at the Tannery Row Artist Colony in downtown Buford, where she

still works and studies in the rich environment that the group of artists provides. Largely self-taught, Isaak "sometimes has had to make all of the errors before learning the right way to do things." Her artistic education has taken the form of workshops, books, and observation of other artists in various fields.



NECESSITY is the Mother of INVENTION

How a Global
Pandemic
Helped a Local
Government
Streamline its
Processes

Spring always brings changes, but thanks to COVID-19, this spring brought changes to the way the world works. Nearly 52 percent of Americans were still working solely from home in July. A survey found that 82 percent of organizations plan to allow part-time remote working and 47 percent will allow full-time remote working going forward. This spring, City of Suwanee employees had to figure out how to do their jobs remotely, while the city itself had to find ways to keep employees safe and still provide necessary services to our community.

“The shift to working remotely provided opportunities for innovation and rethinking certain practices,” said City Manager Marty Allen. *“Because that’s how we’ve always done it won’t cut it anymore. We’re already starting to see better, more efficient outcomes.”*

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Remote working and communication tools had been adopted by the city prior to the pandemic to promote flexibility, but not until staff was working exclusively from home during the spring and early summer was it fully embraced. The city uses Slack, a digital platform that allows for project communication, collaboration, and collection, allowing for the necessary over-communication that remote work often requires.

“Slack brought all of our work communication to a single hub,” said Assistant City Manager Denise Brinson. “The dedicated channels for each project, team, or even thought process, and has cleaned

out our inboxes and truly improved project management from every aspect.”

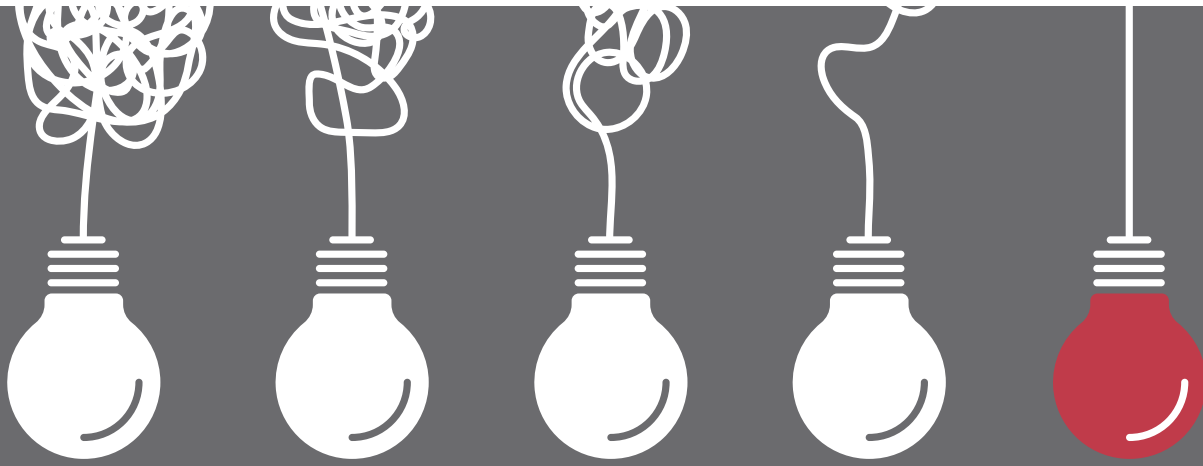
WAITING IN LINE

Most people claim to have brilliant ideas in the shower; Jessica Roth, Suwanee Business Services Director, had one at the DMV.

While waiting with her son, Roth noticed the department’s queue management and noted that a similar system would work well in the city’s municipal courthouse. The timing was just right, as the courthouse underwent an expansion in the spring, and the Qmatic virtual queuing and mobile ticketing systems were included in the renovations. Customers are now able to check-in remotely and wait in their vehicles until contacted by their mobile devices. A dashboard provides real time insights that lead to instant solutions, such as opening another check-in window when the number of customers exceeds a certain limit.

“The pandemic pushed the need for safer queuing, which we thankfully already had in place,” said Jessica Roth. “Qmatic allows us to minimize the number of people in the building and practice social distancing while still providing necessary services to our citizens. Beyond COVID-19, the system offers the ability to wait somewhere other than a waiting room, shortening the perceived wait time.”

Qmatic also allows for employees to work remotely. Recently, a court employee stayed home sick, but wanted to continue fulfilling her duties. Utilizing Qmatic, the employee was able to still



assist with virtual check-in and queuing.

DIGITAL LICENSING AND PERMITTING

The city knew that the technology existed to take licensing and permitting online, but lacked the time to integrate a new process into their existing systems. The pandemic not only demanded that the processes be virtual, but it also freed up the necessary time to implement.

“Building permitting has actually been online for quite a while, but some contractors and builders generally preferred the traditional in-person submittal process,” said Planning & Inspections Director Josh Campbell. “Since spring, builders and contractors are now using it almost exclusively and it is much more efficient.”

EVENTS

Certainly, COVID-19 cancelled most of the 2020 events season for the City of Suwanee. Nearly 40 live events have been cancelled this year; however, a few have found a new life in the digital age. Summer Porch Jam went from an evening of multiple musical performances on multiple porches in Old Town to a Friday night virtual concert series throughout June (still including a variety of front porches).

“We also created an online shopping opportunity for Suwanee Fest, allowing our vendors to set up a digital storefront for shopping for most of September. While Suwanee Fest will (hopefully) return in its true form in September 2021, we will

probably offer digital storefronts for the month as an added service to our vendors and extra shopping for citizens,” said Events & Outreach Manager Amy Doherty.

In response to the needs of local runners, the city has actually added an event to the 2020 schedule. The Run Away from 2020 5K offers the opportunity to complete an official timed 5K on Sunday, October 18. Runners can come to Suwanee Town Center anytime between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm, pick up a bib, and - when ready - cross the starting mats in front of City Hall to start the timing chip. Results will be updated live online.

“At this time, it’s anticipated that the February 21, 2021 Suwanee Half Marathon will operate using a similar rolling start method,” said Doherty.

“

The shift to working remotely provided opportunities for innovation and rethinking certain practices.



Suwanee PD is an Official Drug Take Back Location

Do you have a medicine cabinet full of old, expired medicines? The Suwanee Police Department is registered with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to collect unneeded medicines and safely dispose of pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances, as well as other medicines.

Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines can be discarded, as well as vitamins, pet medicines, vaping devices – anything except needles or liquids. Be sure to remove all personal information before disposing of prescription medicines. **Citizens can dispose of these items safely and anonymously by dropping them off at the Suwanee PD disposal box, located at 373 Buford Highway, any time Monday through Friday, 8:00 am-4:30 pm.**

“One in four teens has misused or abused prescription drugs, and most get them from their family medicine cabinet,” said Suwanee Police Chief Mike Jones. “Our disposal box provides an easy, no-cost opportunity to remove medicines languishing in the home that are highly susceptible to misuse, abuse, and theft.”

SIGN UP for **weather & emergency** NOTIFICATION SERVICE



Stay in-the-know when severe weather is on the way or an emergency situation arises by signing up for the **City of Suwanee's CodeRed emergency notification service**. The service provides subscribers with emergency and general notifications via phone calls, email, and/or text.

“This is a service that our citizens have requested,” says City Manager Marty Allen, “and we’re pleased to be able to provide it in a manner that we believe is effective and cost efficient. Our Council felt that this was a more elegant, versatile, and effective answer to residents’ requests for severe weather notification than tornado sirens. In addition to providing weather-related notifications, the system will be used for other important emergency and non-emergency communication purposes.”

As residents sign up online, they will indicate preferences for how they wish to be contacted and what kinds of information they wish to receive. Residents also will be given the option of opting out of receiving emergency calls by completing a “do not call” form.

Weather notifications are generated through the National Weather Service and are geocoded so that only subscribers in impacted areas are notified. Emergency notifications are issued sparingly and only in instances when the situation requires awareness or action in order to ensure the safety and well-being of residents.

Suwanee residents may sign up for the service at Suwanee.com.



COME TOGETHER, RIGHT NOW

...to Town Center Park to see the new crosswalk!

Well-known for its commitment to public art, visitors to Suwanee can truly find it anywhere they look - including under their feet.

A colorful crosswalk was recently added to Suwanee Town Center Park. The red, black, yellow, white, and blue graphic design was created by Suwanee resident Gerard Gorman and selected by the Suwanee Public Art Commission. Suwanee business Concrete Resurfacing applied Stardek - a formula

of tough acrylics, color pigments, and cementitious materials - to create the artsy walkway.

Located between Ippolito's and Pulse Nail Salon, the crosswalk is equally owned by Kevin O'Brien of Ameriprise Financial and CH Retail Fund, who each enthusiastically gave permission for the project and installation.

For more information on the city's public art efforts, visit Suwanee.com



While this Suwanee Fest didn't look anything like its predecessors, it still couldn't have happened without the **great Suwanee Fest Committee and our amazing sponsors**. Our sincerest appreciation to these community-minded businesses who remained committed as the Suwanee Fest 2020 Sponsors:

Presenting Sponsor:



Platinum Sponsor:



Silver Sponsor:





Congratulations

Suwanee City Councilwoman **Linnea Miller** was honored by the Gwinnett Chamber with the Greater Good Award at the 2020 Moxie Awards. The award recognized Miller as a woman championing her community, whose innovative ideas reach all members of her region and make her community an ideal place to live, work, and play. Previous winners include Gwinnett Chairman Charlotte Nash and Explore Gwinnett Director Lisa Anders.

Administrative Coordinator **Robyn O'Donnell** recently completed the Georgia Clerks Education Certificate Program, receiving the designation of official Georgia Certified Clerk. Robyn began working on her accreditation in 2017, having since completed 105 hours of instruction in public administration in courses such as Community and Media Relations, Finance, Millage Rate Process, Records Management, Elections, and more. The designation also requires written assessments applying knowledge gained to practical local government situations, as well as serving in a local government administrative position for at least two years. Congratulations, Robyn!



City of Suwanee Recognized for Performance Management Leadership

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) recognized the City of Suwanee for the 12th consecutive year for its commitment to data-driven government management and reporting with a Certificate of Distinction in Performance Management.

Certificates of Distinction are awarded to governments providing comparative and benchmarking information to the public, use performance data in strategic planning and operational decision-making, and share their knowledge with other local governments through presentations, site visits, and other networking activities.

“Performance management is a bedrock principle of professional local government management,” ICMA Executive Director Marc A. Ott said. “As the impact of COVID-19 on our communities lingers on, we hope that by recognizing these leaders, we are encouraging others to measure how well their organization is performing, and making a commitment to collect and analyze data, report it transparently, and use it to continuously engage their communities and improve their organizations during these unprecedented times.”

Suwanee is among 19 jurisdictions receiving the Certificate of Distinction, and one of 60 recognized overall.