



official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | June 2021

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Get Outside!
It's Parks &
Recreation Month



summer porch jam

6.18

6 - 10 P M
OLD TOWN
SUWANEE,
GEORGIA
SUWANEE.COM



HAPPY BIRTHDAY. BIG SPLASH FOUNTAIN!

Grab the cake and balloons (but don't bring it into the fountain area): everyone's favorite fountain is turning 15 years old this year!

Located in Town Center Park, Big Splash Fountain is one of Gwinnett County's largest interactive fountains and features 43 jets using 1,400 gallons of (recycled) water every minute!

The Big Splash grand opening on June 17, 2006 served as a fundraiser for Suwanee's adopted sister city of Long Beach, Mississippi. The Suwanee community raised more than \$25,000 for Long Beach's recovery from Hurricane Katrina.

"We expected that the fountain would bring even more people to Town Center Park," said Hardin Watkins, who was the Suwanee City Manager when Big Splash opened. "The draw dramatically exceeded our expectations. It's been overwhelmingly popular."

While the City encourages splashing, delighted squeals, and fun in the fountain, several rules are necessary to ensure the safety of splashers, as well as keep the fountain in tip-top shape:

- ◆ No food, gum, beverages, or glass containers in the fountain area
- ◆ No pets in the water (Sorry Fido - the water is chlorinated!)
- ◆ No water balloons, water guns, or other toys
- ◆ Please keep rocks, stones, and other small objects outside the fountain area
- ◆ No skates, skateboards, scooters, or bicycles

"One of our biggest jobs is maintaining the fountain," said Luis Lopez from the Suwanee public works department. "Every day we test the chlorine, change the filters, blow off the top, and clean the grates. Every two weeks, we refresh the entire fountain with clean water."

"It's really important that everyone help us ensure that rules are followed in order to protect everyone's safety and the integrity of the fountain," said Lopez. "We'd hate to have to close the fountain for repairs because kids were putting rocks, trash, or socks down the jets."

Big Splash Fountain is scheduled to officially reopen July 1, 2021!



2006



2021



FUN

for All Ages!



The Suwanee City Council, City Staff, Public Arts Commission, and representatives from CPL and Reeves Young gathered on April 27 to cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Station Park.

Formerly known as City Hall Park, this pocket park is located between the Suwanee police station and StillFire Brewery (formerly the fire station). Renovations began in the fall and include artificial turf ripe for cornhole, new seating, and a refurbished playground. The restructuring also improved the alignment of the trail linking Buford Highway and Main Street, visually linking the existing Town Center and location of the future Town Center Park expansion. Additional lighting was also provided to improve safety.

“Station Park was an opportunity to recapture an underutilized space. We refurbished a 23-year-old park and transformed it into a place where people will want to congregate,” said Bryon McCarley from CPL, who provided an overview of the park design at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The city also officially unveiled the three-story, 2,848-square-foot mural, *Transformation* by Lauren Stumberg, on the municipal courthouse. The mural is part of the City of Suwanee’s “1% for art” developer component of its own public art program.



From THE DESK of

DENISE BRINSON
CITY OF SUWANEE ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

The VALUE of PLACEMAKING

Fiscally Responsible Fun!



As an economic development professional for over 30 years, things have certainly changed within my profession. When I first started out in Florida, the goal was all about recruiting and retaining prestige businesses. Over time, the importance of blending economic development with placemaking has evolved into a must-have strategy for great cities. For Suwanee, placemaking and economic development are nearly indistinguishable.

Communities everywhere care about more than just job creation and tax revenue. While understanding the financial implications of development is certainly important, there's more to consider when making sustainable communities. In fact, there are times when "grass" generates more economic development return than commercial buildings - that's when "grass" is a community park that *increases the value of everything around it*. Let's talk about that.

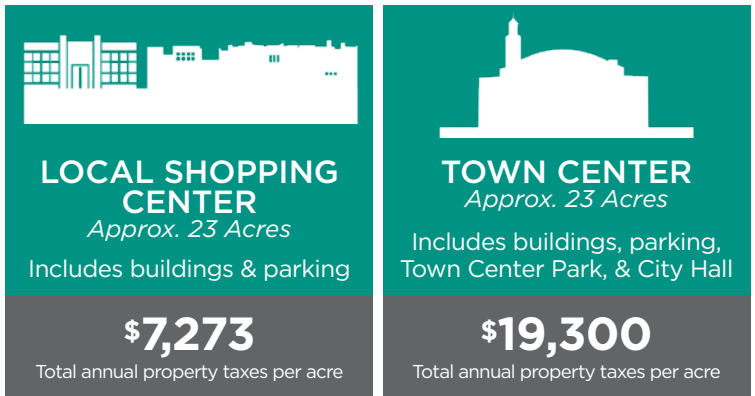
Twenty years ago, the land where Town Center Park currently sits was ripe for a suburban shopping center. Located at the intersection of two major roads, every traditional economic model screamed *build a shopping center here!* The city had a different plan and proactively took steps to develop Town Center (but that's a story for another day!).

Join me for a moment as I "nerd-out" on a real-life case study right here in Suwanee. Riddle me this... where am I:

- If I was in **Orlando**, I would be in **Disney World**.
 - If I was in **Atlanta**, I would be in **Hartsfield-Jackson Airport**.
 - If I was in **Suwanee**, I would be in...
- ...Suwanee Town Center!**

Why? Disney, the airport, and Suwanee Town Center (ten acres of park and all) each serve as an important *economic engine* for their respective area.

We all know what a great place Town Center is and what it means for our residents and visitors. Now let's take a look at some actual numbers: below is a tax comparison of Town Center and a local shopping center. The figures shown are 2017 property taxes for Gwinnett County, Gwinnett County Public Schools, and City of Suwanee.



Let's explore and compare numbers of two nearly identical pieces of property in the city that were developed very differently. The first site was developed with a conventional shopping center. As noted earlier, Town Center could easily have also been a shopping center. Instead, the city created a park with a mixture of shops, restaurants, offices and residential. Both areas are about 23 acres, but Town Center includes 10+ acres of beautiful urban park area. While of course parks have associated costs, Town Center also serves as our city's

“front yard” and an economic value multiplier for the surrounding area.

Tax revenue is one way to measure financial value. The above figures show that Town Center - even with its ten-acre park - generates more tax revenue per acre than a conventional shopping center does over its whole site. Now let's remove the park and City Hall from the equation and compare the per acre value of just the commercial building and parking:



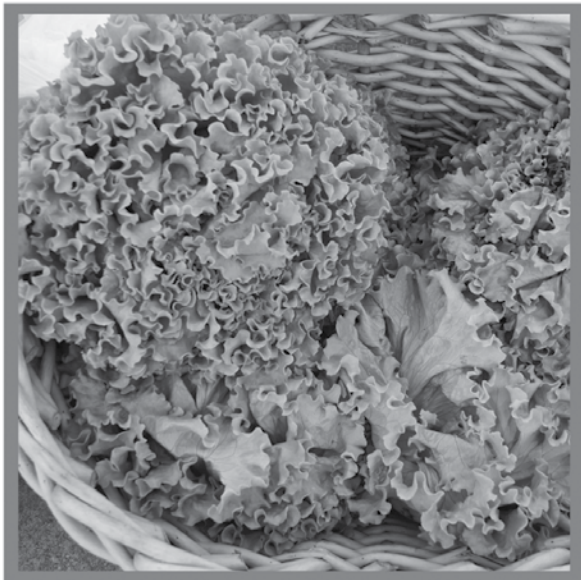
Much like Central Park in New York City, Town Center Park increases the value of everything near it. The park

creates the opportunity for more vertical mixed-use form that capitalizes on the park's influence. Town Center Park is a “beach” - making the surrounding land beach-front property.

While this article's focus is on dollars and cents as it relates to Suwanee's downtown in comparison to a shopping center, it's really the non-quantitative elements that makes downtown our economic engine. Town Center and the activity that it brings to the area is a big factor in what makes Suwanee..well, Suwanee. It's special. It's a community-wide asset and home to informal gatherings, as well as events and larger-scale activities like Suwanee Fest, WoofStock, and Beer Fest (my personal favorite). We live in a time that many of us could live and work wherever we want, but we choose to live here, in a walkable, interesting, fun area. Oh, and by the way: it also makes financial \$ense.

Denise Brinson has spent the last 23 years working with the City of Suwanee and currently serves as the Assistant City Manager. In this capacity, Denise directs all economic and community development efforts including downtown development, promotional and branding efforts, public art, event management, and all things fun.

Please note that this comparison is purely looking at the numbers and is also not meant to disparage shopping centers in any way. Retail locations such as this serve an important purpose for our community. Also, please note this is not intended to be a comprehensive fiscal impact analysis, but a more compact example. **If you want a deeper dive, check out *The Gwinnett Report - The Dollars and \$ense of Development Patterns* prepared by Urban3.**



LETTUCE CELEBRATE!

Suwanee Farmers Market

Saturdays | 8 am-Noon
Town Center Park

Suwanee.com

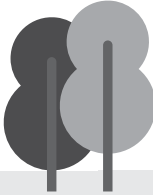
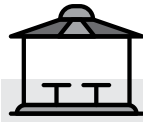
GET OUTSIDE!

ME, MYSELF, AND I



A QUIET PLACE TO READ... WHITE STREET PARK

Nestled in the historic Old Town district, White Street Park is home to Harvest Farm community garden and the orchard. The expansive lawn space is the perfect place to settle down with a good book, or bring your own hammock – a local Scout recently installed hammock stands as his Eagle project!

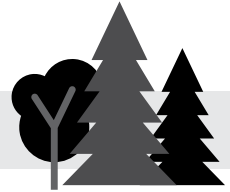
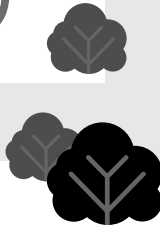


FRIEND TIME



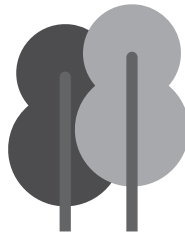
BEER ME TWICE...STATION PARK

This pocket park sits between the police station and a brewery and is an excellent spot to grab a friend and a drink and watch the trains go by. No worries if you and said friend have to bring the kiddos along – there is a recently renovated, fenced playground.



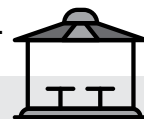
BEER ME ONCE...MARTIN FARM PARK

Located at Martin Farm Road and Suwanee Creek, this park provides parking and access to the approximately five mile Suwanee Creek Greenway. There's also a brewery for the 0.0 crowd.



AN ACTIVE ADVENTURE... SUWANEE CREEK

Home to an 18-hole disc golf course and orienteering course, Suwanee Creek Park also serves as the trailhead for the Suwanee Creek Greenway. The 85-acre park has been left mostly in its natural condition and features additional hard- and soft-surface trails.



JULY IS NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH

The City of Suwanee has eight distinctive parks, miles of greenway and trails, and a grand total of over 325 acres of greenspace! With so many options, it's hard to choose where to go and what to do. Here are some fun ideas to get you started on your next Suwanee parks adventure!

NEED A PLACE FOR...

DATE NIGHT



A ROMANTIC EVENING... TOWN CENTER PARK

Feel the love while enjoying take out dinner for two al fresco on the luscious grass of Town Center Park. You never know who might be playing on stage! Though BYOB is NOT allowed, you CAN purchase alcohol from many of the Town Center restaurants.

FAMILY FUN

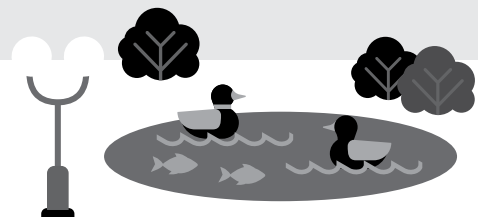
THE PERFECT PLACE TO PLAY... PLAYTOWN SUWANEE

It's the kind of playground that kids' dreams are made of! Take a ride on a magical bus, storm the castle, play Honest Abe in a log cabin, set sail, ride an elephant, blast off - if kids can imagine it, it can be done at PlayTown!



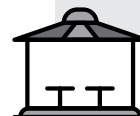
FRIENDLY COMPETITION... MAIN STREET PARK

Couples that play together, stay together. Challenge your SO to a game of pick-up basketball, bring your boards and show off at the skate park, or just wander around historic Old Town Suwanee.



GET BACK TO NATURE... SIMS LAKE PARK

The 62-acre park includes a seven-acre lake with a dock and 1.2-mile looping trail. Leave your mark the responsible way: snap and upload a photo at the photo station to be included in our time lapse photo project!



PAVILIONS AVAILABLE FOR RENT.

VISIT SUWANEE.COM FOR MORE IDEAS!

EARTH EVERY

SPOTLIGHT ON PLASTIC LITTER

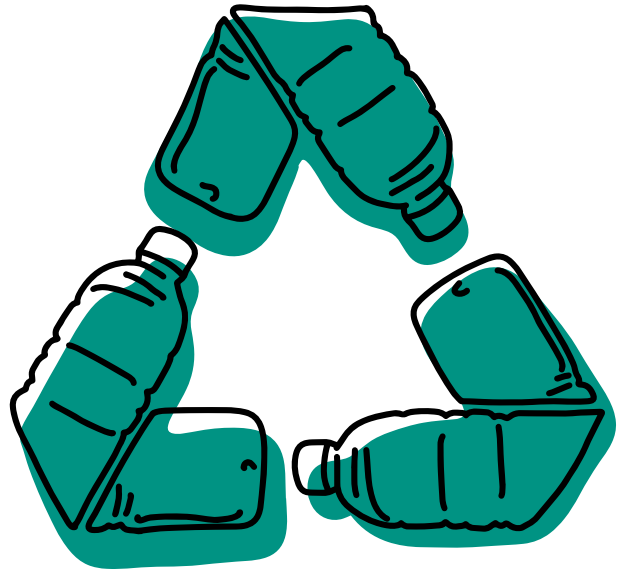
On a cold morning in January, volunteers suited up in bright vests and fanned out on a two-mile stretch of McGinnis Ferry Road between Satellite Boulevard and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Their mission? To collect as much litter as possible. What happened after volunteers collected 25 bags of trash was a little unusual: they dumped them all out!

In order to understand the exact contents and sources of litter in our community, volunteers-turned-citizen-scientists spent the latter half of the event sorting the plastic litter into categories and recording the types, brands, and quantities. After the cleanup and litter audit was complete, the recyclables and trash were disposed of properly.

The Suwanee event was one of 17 that Gwinnett Recycles, a grassroots organization that exists to help keep materials out of landfills and the environment, hosted in every city in Gwinnett. The nine-month project, which culminated on Earth Day, ultimately brought in 267 bags of litter—more than five tons of trash. Volunteers logged 10,042 pieces of plastic litter removed from roads, woods, wetlands, and waterways all across the county and developed an in-depth report about their findings.

“Our top takeaway from the project was that our community is experiencing a plastic pollution crisis,” said Laura Hernandez, founder of Gwinnett Recycles. “96 percent of that trash comes from products like bottles, bags, and wrappers that are used for just a few minutes and then persist in landfills or the environment for eons. Everywhere we looked, we found plastic breaking apart into smaller and smaller toxic bits that enter our water supply and food chain.”

DAY DAY:



TOP BRANDS FOUND:

Suwanee

PepsiCo
Coca-Cola
QuikTrip
Niagara
Walmart

Gwinnett

PepsiCo
Coca-Cola
Kroger
Walmart
McDonald's

TOP PLASTICS FOUND:

Suwanee

Drink bottles
Bags
Snack wrappers
Styrofoam cups
Candy wrappers

Gwinnett

Drink bottles
Bags
Snack wrappers
Cigarette butts
Styrofoam cups

For a deeper dive, download the full report here.





RED, WHITE, AND BREW!

SUWANEE BEER FEST RETURNS THIS SUMMER

Suwanee's favorite craft beer festival is back and better than ever! Suwanee Beer Fest returns to Town Center Park on Saturday, June 26.

A new summer date also means a brand new theme! Instead of the traditional St. Patrick's green in March, Beer Fest will celebrate all things summer while rocking the good ol' red, white, and blue! Bring your best #Murica game to the park and get ready to sample of more than 350 craft beers while enjoying live tunes from Bon Jovi cover band Slippery When Wet and 90s rock tribute band Sucker Punch.

Guests can also look forward to food trucks, vendors, and festival games such as cornhole, giant Jenga, giant beer pong, axe throwing, and more. The Georgia Beer Garden will also return, featuring some of our favorite homegrown Peach State breweries. Don't worry, non-beer lovers: seltzers, ciders, and wine samples are also available.

A portion of proceeds from Suwanee Beer Fest will benefit Cooper's Crew, a local nonprofit dedicated to raising funds and awareness to cure childhood cancer and providing scholarships to students who have overcome unique hardships or adversities.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, this award-winning 21-and-over festival has sold out in previous years. Tickets and more information are available at SuwaneeBeerFest.com.

What can we say, except *You're Welcome!*

Broadway in the Park Presents *Moana* and *The Pirates of Penzance*

Suwanee Performing Arts (SPA) is bringing adventure on the high seas to Town Center for their annual Broadway in the Park event! The free, family-friendly show features Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, followed by Disney's *Moana*, at 7 pm on July 30 and 31.

Broadway in the Park is the Suwanee Performing Arts' signature summer production performed in the park each July. The Town Center amphitheater is transformed into a Broadway-style stage with professional lighting, sound, costumes, sets, and our community's most talented student actors and actresses.

Standing the test of time, *The Pirates of Penzance* debuted in 1879, and remains a beloved musical. Audience members should prepare themselves to laugh out loud, and attempt to learn the lyrics to *I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General*.

Based on the 2016 Disney film *Moana*, the coming-of-age tale follows the titular character as she sets sail across the ocean to save her village and discover the truth about her heritage. Set sail on an epic journey of self-discovery and camaraderie, along with demigod Maui, as Moana learns to harness the power that lies within.

"Broadway in the Park is SPA's biggest fundraiser of the year," said Assistant City Manager Denise Brinson. "The city is thrilled to host this annual event on the Town Center stage and help support an organization that brings so much to our community."

Reserved, socially distanced seating should be pre-purchased at SuwaneePerformingArts.org or 678-482-6333.





MOVIES UNDER THE STARS
JULY 17 | 6PM

I feel the need...the need for a
DOUBLE FEATURE

STRAIGHT OUTTA 1986!

»»»» Movies Under the Stars makes its triumphant return to Town Center Park on Saturday, July 17 with a totally rad 1986 throwback double feature.



6PM An American Tail

Young mouse Fievel Mousekewitz and his family emigrate to the U.S. from Russia after their home is destroyed by cats. "There are no cats in America," Papa Mousekewitz sings, "and the streets are paved with cheese." Crossing the Atlantic, a fierce

storm throws Fievel from the ship, and he loses contact with his family. Luckily, he manages to sail to New York in a bottle. There, activist mouse Bridget, streetwise mouse Tony, and a kindly cat named Tiger help reunite Fievel and his family.



Approximately 8PM Top Gun

"Talk to me, Goose..." This film - starring some no-name actor - follows young fighter pilot Lieutenant Pete "Maverick" Mitchell and his co-pilot Lieutenant Nick "Goose" Bradshaw as they train at the U.S. Navy's elite Fighter Weapons

School. This aviation-themed cult classic remains pop culturally relevant decades after its release. Prepare for its 35-years-in-the-making sequel, *Top Gun: Maverick*, scheduled for release in November 2021.

CITY LAUNCHES BRAND-NEW VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The City of Suwanee has revamped its volunteer program to make it easier for citizens to get plugged in and find volunteer opportunities that best suit their talents and interests.

Those interested can visit Suwanee.com and begin creating a volunteer profile. Once the profile is complete, potential volunteers will begin receiving emails when opportunities arise that might interest them. The system will also keep track of volunteer hours with the city, simplifying the process for students to track their time for school credit.

"The City of Suwanee loves to engage with its citizens in a variety of ways. Using diverse talents and interest makes Suwanee a great community to live, work, and play," said Event & Community Outreach Manager Amy Doherty.

The city has volunteer opportunities in a variety of areas, such as with the police, serving on boards and committees, working with kids, and at events. There are even volunteer areas for our younger citizens as well! Contact Amy Doherty at adherty@suwanee.com or visit Suwanee.com/Engage/Volunteer-Opportunities for more details.



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

THE SUWANEE WELCOME CENTER
HAS BRAND-NEW

SUMMER SWAG!

WATER
BOTTLES
T-SHIRTS
GIFTS
& MORE



3930 CHARLESTON MARKET STREET
IN TOWN CENTER

OPEN TUESDAY-SATURDAY, 11AM-5PM

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the **2021 STAR students and teachers** from Suwanee cluster high schools! Each STAR student is the senior in the top 10 percent of his or her class with the highest SAT score. STAR students select a teacher to honor as the educator who has had a strong influence on their academic career.

Collins Hill High School

STAR Student:

★ Wells Bussey

STAR Teacher:

★ Jeremy Lumpkin

North Gwinnett High School

STAR Student:

★ Sarah Park

STAR Teacher:

★ Andrea Boyce

Peachtree Ridge High School

STAR Student:

★ Brian Ji

STAR Teacher:

★ Victoria Enloe

Suwanee City Council member **Linnea Miller** received a Certificate of Excellence from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia for completing 150 hours of training through the Gwinnett Municipal Association and Carl Vinson Institute. Great job, Linnea!



The City of Suwanee Annual Report, *How the Covid Didn't Steal 2020*, won a Platinum **Muse Creative Award** in the Publications category. Muse Creative Awards is an international competition for creative excellence in media design, production, and execution. The city also won Silver Muse Awards for their "Spring Fake" airbrushed t-shirt design in the Marketing & Promotional category, and Top This! in the Event category.

Welcome to
Suwanee
CITY HALL



CAIRA WILKINS
BUSINESS SERVICES

TAMMY HILER
BUSINESS SERVICES



LEXI HAMILTON
COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICER

UPCOMING EVENTS

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

JUNE 21

| | | |
|-----------|--|---------|
| 1 | Planning Commission | 6:30 pm |
| 5 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |
| 5 | CHOA Superhero Sprint | 8:00 am |
| 9 | Public Art Commission | 6:00 pm |
| 10 | City Council Workshop | 5:30 pm |
| 10 | Public Hearing on Proposed FY 2022 Budget | 5:30 pm |
| 12 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |
| 12 | Race to Cure Sarcoma | 8:00 am |
| 14 | Suwanee Fest Committee Meeting | 6:30 pm |
| 15 | Downtown Development Authority | 7:30 am |
| 15 | Zoning Board of Appeals | 6:30 pm |
| 18 | Summer Porch Jam (Old Town) | 6:00 pm |
| 19 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |
| 22 | City Council Meeting | 6:30 pm |
| 22 | Public Hearing on Proposed FY 2022 Budget | 5:30 pm |
| 26 | Suwanee Kiwanis Shamrock Run | 8:00 am |
| 26 | Suwanee American Craft Beer Fest | Noon |

JULY 21

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|---------|
| 3 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |
| 5 | City Hall CLOSED | |
| 6 | Planning Commission | 6:30 pm |
| 10 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |
| 10 | Sizzlin' Summer Concert | 6:00 pm |
| 12 | Suwanee Fest Committee Meeting | 6:30 pm |
| 14 | Public Art Commission | 6:00 pm |
| 15 | City Council Workshop | 5:30 pm |
| 17 | Movies Under the Stars | 6:00 pm |
| 17 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |
| 20 | Downtown Development Authority | 7:30 am |
| 20 | Zoning Board of Appeals | 6:30 pm |
| 24 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |
| 24 | Max's Moon Run | 7:00 pm |
| 27 | City Council Meeting | 6:30 pm |
| 30 | Broadway in the Park | 7:00 pm |
| 31 | Farmers Market | 8:00 am |

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



MAYOR Jimmy Burnette 770/868-7115
COUNCIL Pete Charpentier 770/757-3323
 Heather Hall 410/979-7905
 Beth Hilscher 678/546-3388
 Linnea Miller 678/592-4150
 Larry Pettiford 678/464-3651

CITY MANAGER Marty Allen 770/945-8996
POLICE CHIEF Cass Mooney 770/945-8995
EDITOR Abby Wilkerson 770/945-3386

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**