



Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | August 2023

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IT'S ALL FOR YOU SUWANEE

19TH ANNUAL AUGUST CONCERT HEADLINED BY SISTER HAZEL



Suwanee Town Center Park is set to come alive with the 19th Annual August Concert on Saturday, August 12, featuring a headline performance by alternative rock band Sister Hazel!

Known for their unique blend of pop, folk rock, classic rock, and southern rock, Sister Hazel is no stranger to the Suwanee Town Center Stage. The band previously headlined the August Concert, captivating the audience with their infectious energy and soulful melodies.

Sister Hazel's music has left an indelible mark on the music industry, leading to their recognition as "one of the Top 100 Most Influential Independent Performers of the last 15 years" by *Performing Songwriter Magazine*. "All For You," a single from their second album, soared to No. 11 on the Billboard Hot 100 in the summer of 1997, becoming the band's most successful hit to date.

Over the years, the band has found success not only in rock and alternative music, but also in the country genre. The band has achieved four consecutive entries on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart and recently made their debut on the iconic Grand Ole Opry stage.

Opening bands begin at at 6:30 pm with Sister Hazel taking the stage at approximately 8:15 pm. Beer, wine and food will be available from Town Center businesses and on-site vendors; as always, no BYOB. Off-site parking and shuttles are available; visit Suwanee.com for more information.



SUWANE CARES

Mental Health Clinician Co-Responder Program

In an effort to provide a more well-rounded approach to mental health or other related incidents that are not necessarily in the criminal realm, the Suwanee Police implemented a behavioral health unit, also known as Suwanee Cares.

Suwanee Cares partners police officers with trained mental health clinicians from View Point Health. When a call is received pertaining to a possible mental health situation, both the officer and clinician are dispatched together. This partnership frees up officers to handle criminal behaviors, and helps the mentally ill in our community to get the help that they might not have received otherwise. Clinicians also have the unique capability to follow-up with patients and provide specific resources.

“The main reason this program was implemented is the rise in homelessness and mental health issues; police officers aren’t traditionally trained in handling these situations,” said Suwanee Police Captain Dwayne Black, who oversees the program. “We needed to come up with a way to handle such incidents with care and compassion while also keeping everyone safe.”

Rockdale, Newton, Dekalb, and Cobb counties have similar programs that allow clinicians and officers to work together to help those experiencing a mental health crisis.

“Some of the positive results have been that I was able to get individuals linked with care, some who have not had mental health treatment in years,” said Pamela Webb, a partnering clinician. “I have been able to divert a suicide attempt, I’ve helped individuals with housing, clothes, and mental health resources.”

“

“In the first year of the program, we’ve responded to over 125 call from people in crisis. The clinicians have given VA referrals to homeless veterans, drug and alcohol counseling, and provided 15 consultations with Home First Gwinnett where they attempt to help find temporary lodging. They’ve also helped three suicidal individuals get the help they needed.”

Captain Dwayne Black
Suwanee Police

CANDIDATE QUALIFYING DATES SET FOR COUNCIL POSTS

The qualifying period for Suwanee City Council positions expected to be on the November 7, 2023 ballot will take place August 21-23, 2023. Residents interested in running for a four-year term as a city council member must first officially qualify at City Hall between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm on the dates specified. Qualifying closes at 4:30 pm on August 23.

Mayor, City Council Post 1, and City Council Post 2 are up for election this fall. Jimmy Burnette currently serves as the Mayor of Suwanee; Heather Hall currently occupies Post 1; Larry Pettiford currently occupies Post 2. Elections for Mayor and City Council posts are non-partisan.

The qualifying fee is \$270 for city council positions and \$450 for the position of mayor.

Candidates must have resided in the city limits for at least 180 days and be a registered voter in order to qualify as a candidate. For more information regarding qualifying and elections, please contact Election Superintendent Robyn O’Donnell at rodonnell@suwanee.com or

770-904-2790, or visit Suwanee.com.



2023 ELECTIONS IMPORTANT DATES

Candidate Qualifying
August 21-23

**Absentee Ballot
Applications Accepted**
August 21-October 27

**Voter Registration/Change
of Address Deadline**
October 10

Runoff Election (if necessary)
December 5

Advanced Voting
9:00 am-5:00 pm
on the following days:
October 16-21
October 23-28
October 30-November 3

General Election
Tuesday, November 7

Poll Officials

The City of Suwanee is now accepting applications for Poll Officials for advanced voting and Election Day. Chosen applicants will be paid \$20 for training, \$13/hour during early and absentee voting, and \$200 on Election Day. On Election Day, the Poll Manager will be compensated \$250. Those interested in becoming a Poll Official should contact Election Superintendent Robyn O’Donnell at rodonnell@suwanee.com or **770-904-2790**.

★ SUWANEE VETERANS ★ MEMORIAL

Honor Your Service Member with a Commemorative Plaque

The City of Suwanee's newest park, Town Center on Main, will be home to a number of unique features, including a veterans memorial. The memorial, *Greater Good*, will be incorporated into a water feature within the park. The park is currently under construction, with an estimated completion date of Summer 2024.

The city is offering Suwanee residents and business owners an opportunity to honor and recognize loved ones, living or deceased, who have served or are currently serving our nation through any military branch by purchasing a plaque that will be incorporated into the memorial.

The 8" x 4" etched stainless steel plaques will be installed on the walls of the walkway leading to the memorial. Each plaque can accommodate up to four lines of text with 30 characters per line. There is an option to include more than one name per plaque in order to recognize multiple service members.

A maximum of 300 plaques will be sold on a first-come first-served basis, with priority given to City of Suwanee residents and business owners. Service members are not required to call Suwanee home in order to be commemorated with a plaque. The cost per plaque is \$300 with a limit of two plaques per purchaser. Orders will open at 8 am on September 1, 2023 at Suwanee.com.

SCAN TO
PURCHASE A
PLAQUE FOR
THE SUWANEE
VETERANS
MEMORIAL



Local Cultural Assets

RHODES HOTEL

Currently home to Huthmaker Violins, the stately folk Victorian home on Russell Street was built in 1880 by Daniel Born for his daughter, Lillie, and her husband, Henry Rhodes. Henry served as the head of the Suwanee School Board as well as the railroad depot agent

The couple remodeled the home throughout the years, adding guest rooms to create Suwanee's first hotel. The 4,000-square-foot house was conveniently located near the train depot and boasts eight fireplaces, seven bedrooms, three parlors, wraparound porches, and a carriage house. With amenities ranging from carriage rides to homemade dinners, the Rhodes Hotel was known as one of the finest places to stay on the line.

The Rhodes Hotel served as a respite for travelers, particularly local teachers, who would reside in the hotel during the week and take the train home to Atlanta on the weekends. *Gone with the Wind* author Margaret Mitchell was a frequent guest, using Suwanee as an escape from the Atlanta society gossip.

SUWANEE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN PRESERVATION INITIATIVE

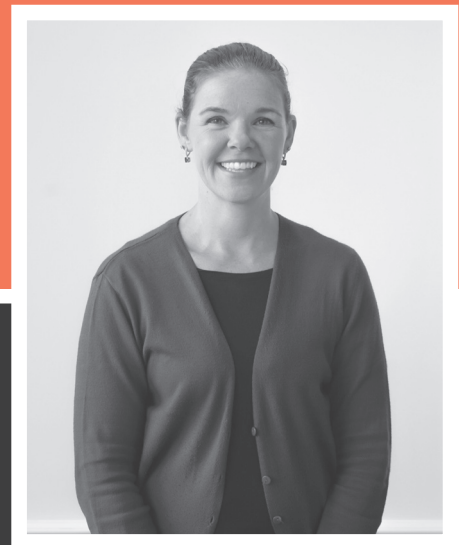


As her Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Ashlee Tam spent several months identifying Suwanee's local cultural assets, researching and writing about them, and interviewing "local legends" who impacted people and places (and some place names) in Suwanee. Visit Suwanee.com or scan the QR code to read more and view the videos. You might see a few familiar faces, and learn something too!

From THE DESK of

MICHELLE HUNTER

CITY OF SUWANEЕ HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION DIRECTOR



BEHIND SUWANEЕ'S BEAUTIFUL PARKS,
SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS, AND INCREDIBLE EVENTS ARE
**140 FULL-TIME, PART-TIME,
& SEASONAL EMPLOYEES**
WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

In order for the City of Suwanee to maintain our standards and continue to improve as a community, we must hire the right talent, keep them engaged, and celebrate their successes.

In FY2023, the city received over 825 applications/resumes for a total of 31 full-time, part-time and seasonal positions. The human resources department individually reviews each application/resume before qualified applicants are forwarded to the hiring manager in the department. Our goal is to hire the right person for the job who wants to work to make Suwanee an award-winning city.

Once we get the right person for the job, human resources works to get them acclimated to their new role as quickly as possible. One of the responsibilities of the human resources department is to engage our team in a variety of ways and focus on the whole person. Much of this engagement is facilitated through the city's wellness program, SWELL (Suwanee Wellness - Employees Loving Life). The SWELL program facilitates regular lunch-and-learn programs with topics such as Estate Planning, Retirement Planning, Making the Most of your Benefits, and Healthy Lifestyle Choices, to name a few. In addition

to these learning opportunities, the city participates in wellness challenges such as Maintain Don't Gain, Holiday Hustle (step challenge), and CHP City Challenge.



In Suwanee, we believe in celebrating employees and their successes individually and as a team. Celebrating successes could be as simple as an employee sharing during our monthly staff meeting to receiving an award at our annual Employee Recognition Event;

anything from children's successes or the welcoming of new pets to earning industry awards for work. We understand our employees have lives outside of work. We want them to give their all in their personal lives just like they give their all to our citizens and our community.

Next time you encounter a Suwanee employee, remember they are one of the few selected to keep our community safe, fun, and beautiful. While we regularly celebrate them, a simple thank you from a citizen probably means just as much. You may even be interacting with an award-winning Suwanee employee.

The Building Officials Association of Georgia named City of Suwanee Building Inspector

Joe Alexander

the 2023 Building Official of the Year!



Congratulations,

Joe!

JUST KEEP SWIMMING RUNNING

One would think Tom Owens was a lifetime runner. But the 65-year-old athlete began training for his first race – the 1997 Peachtree Road Race – at age 39. Approximately 300 races later, Owens secured local bragging rights in May as the first person to complete the 2023 Suwanee Running Series.

The City of Suwanee hosts nearly 20 races in Town Center and on the Suwanee Greenway annually; those who compete in five within the year complete the Suwanee Running Series.

“When I was younger and really into it, I did 15-20 miles a week. Then I’d go do a race on the weekends, even during the winter,” Owens said.

But life got in the way, including raising children, becoming involved with Scouts, and even suffering a heart attack in 2000. Like many of us, Owens rediscovered running during the pandemic.

“I found the Suwanee Running Series and I thought, ‘hey, I could do that,’” said Owens, who was also one of the first to complete the inaugural running series in 2022.

Owens enjoys the Suwanee Running Series because it’s not just about running; he likes that the events are connected to a charity, and he can help give back to a good cause. Though he has already completed the 2023 running series, he plans on running more Suwanee 5ks. Owens’ goal is just to keep going, and maybe inspire others to get started as well.

“My son and his wife have started running – they did the Old Town 5k and Go Gray for A Cure with me this year.”

He says that it’s not about how fast you are; it’s about doing it for yourself and finishing the race.



“

Just stay with it.

That’s all I did. If you’re not sure you can do it, just start by walking. Just stay with it.

Tom Owens

”

UPCOMING SUWANEE RUNNING SERIES EVENTS

There’s still time to complete the 2023 Suwanee Running Series! All you have to do is complete five of the races below to earn your very own limited edition Suwanee Running Series finisher t-shirt, compliments of the City of Suwanee and Big Peach Running Co.

Scan for more information about the Suwanee Running Series



- Aug 5** Gwinnett Chamber Button Down Dash
- Aug 26** Annandale Extra Mile 5k
- Sept 23** Care for Cops 5k
- Oct 14** Spooky Spirits 5k
- Nov 11** Walk to End Alzheimer’s
- Dec 2** HappyFeat Run Run Rudolph 5k
- Dec 9** Ugly Sweater 5k

ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION SELECTS SUWANEE AS RECIPIENT FOR 2023 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) announced it will provide critical planning and technical support to five metro Atlanta communities through the agency’s Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP), including the City of Suwanee.

The city will work with ARC staff to build upon the 2015 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan Update to develop a vision for an activity node around the roundabout at the intersection of Buford Highway and Russell Street to better connect Old Town and Suwanee Town Center. The project will guide desired downtown land uses based on market studies and set design expectations for development in the area.

Winning projects were chosen through a competitive process that solicited proposals from local governments, Community Improvement Districts, and non-profits across the Atlanta region. ARC provides a combination of staffing resources and grants to support a wide range of initiatives that aim to improve quality of life for residents.

“This year’s CDAP projects are highly innovative and hold the potential to spark meaningful change,” said Samyukth Shenbaga, Managing Director of Community Development at ARC. “These are the kind of ideas and initiatives needed to improve quality of life and make our region more equitable. We’re excited to roll up our sleeves and get started.”



Congratulations to the City of Suwanee employees who won the 2023 Corporate Health Partners Step Challenge! Thirty-six city employees participated in the four-week step challenge, competing against other Georgia cities to see who is the most active.

WAY TO GO, TEAM SUWANEE!

CITY OF SUWANEE New HISTORIC SIGNAGE

Summer Porch Jam attendees and visitors noticed a few additions to historic downtown Suwanee this summer. The city recently completed a project that included signs at various locations of historical significance throughout Old Town Suwanee.

After careful consideration, the city selected six local cultural assets of historical significance to receive informative signage:

- Suwanee Methodist Church
- Pierce's Corner
- Suwanee Caboose
- Everett's Music Barn
- Rhodes Hotel
- Jackson Street Cemetery

Each location represents an important piece of Suwanee's history. Many of the sites served as community gathering places with historical significance dating back to the early days of the city in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The signage features text and photos that tie the history of Suwanee with the current character and feel of today. QR codes on the signs link to more detailed information about each location, including informative videos.

Ashlee Tam conducted the historical research that laid the foundation for this project as part of Suwanee's Historic Downtown Preservation Initiative and her Girl Scout Gold Award Project.



Local metal fabricators Metal Products Company volunteered to create the metal bases of the new historic signs. Founded in 1941, Metal Products Company got its start making parts for Liberty Ships during World War II, but moved on to petroleum tanks after the war ended. In 1978, the business moved from Atlanta to Main Street Suwanee, where it remains today.

"Over the years, we've done several different things for the city; we've always had a good relationship. We don't do a lot of artistic, creative stuff; we just do it for the city because we think it's fun," said Burcher Gammage, whose grandfather founded the company.

Gammage heard about the historic signs project and was eager to help. A high-pressure waterjet was used to cut the steel, resulting in a beautiful piece of informative art.

PLAYTOWN SUWANEE V2.0

PLAY IT FORWARD 2023



CITY OF SUWANEE UNVEILS DESIGN FOR

New Community-Build Playground

On Saturday, July 15, the City of Suwanee officially revealed the playground design for the PlayTown Suwanee 2.0 community-build scheduled for October.

The design was unveiled by the volunteer PlayTown committee in conjunction with the city's Movies Under the Stars event in Town Center Park. The custom-designed playground will be at the same location and have a similar footprint as the original. The updated playground incorporates features that evoke the essence of the original design while adhering to modern inclusivity standards. It will be constructed using more environmentally friendly, durable materials, ensuring longevity and minimal upkeep.

The city partnered with Leathers & Associates - the designer and project management team behind the original community build - to return to Suwanee to help modernize PlayTown Suwanee for a new generation. The project team organized interactive design brainstorming sessions with several classrooms from Suwanee area elementary schools. Additionally, design sheets were sent home with elementary school children and made available at Suwanee.com.

The committee now shifts its focus to securing the 1,500 needed volunteers for the playground build October 9-15, 2023.



We need volunteers of ALL abilities and interests! Whether you are a construction expert, a little bit handy, or have never even held a hammer, we've got a way for you to be involved in a truly impactful project.

PlayTown co-chair
Colette Grodzicki



VOLUNTEER

The collective build experience offers a hands-on opportunity for citizens give something tangible back to their community, resulting in a beautifully constructed, unique expression of shared pride. Other opportunities to be involved include first aid, food service, donations, and purchasing a personalized fence picket to be displayed at PlayTown.

Those interested in volunteering or purchasing a picket can visit Suwanee.com for more information

UPCOMINGEVENTS

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

AUGUST23

1	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 pm
4	Red Cross Blood Drive	10:00 am
4	Food Truck Friday	5:30 pm
5	Gwinnett Chamber Button Down Dash 5K	7:45 am
5	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am
8	Harvest Farm Managing Board Meeting	6:00 pm
9	Suwanee Public Art Commission Meeting	6:00 pm
10	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
10	Millage Rate Hearing	5:30 pm
12	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am
12	August Concert	6:30 pm
14	Suwanee Fest Planning Meeting	6:00 pm
15	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
15	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting	6:30 pm
19	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am
22	Millage Rate Hearing	Noon
22	Millage Rate Hearing	6:30 pm
22	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm
26	Annandale Village Extra Mile 5K	7:30 am
26	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am
26	African American Culture & Arts Festival	2:00 pm

SEPTEMBER23

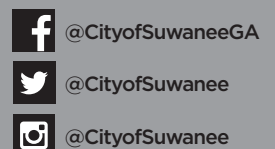
2	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am
4	CITY HALL CLOSED	
5	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 pm
7	Suwanee Fest Parade Participant Meeting	6:00 pm
9	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am
11	Suwanee Fest Planning Meeting	6:00 pm
12	Harvest Farm Managing Board Meeting	6:00 pm
13	Suwanee Public Art Commission Meeting	6:00 pm
14	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
16	Suwanee Fest Parade	9:00 am
16	Suwanee Fest	10:00 am
17	Suwanee Fest	Noon
19	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
19	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting	6:30 pm
23	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am
23	Care for Cops 5k	8:00 am
26	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm
30	Suwanee Farmers Market	8:00 am

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

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ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER	Denise Brinson	770/904-3385
CITY CLERK	Robyn O'Donnell	770/904-2790
FINANCIAL SERVICES	Amie Sakmar	770/904-2797
PLANNING & INSPECTIONS	Josh Campbell	770/904-3372
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PUBLIC WORKS	Bob Dean	770/904-3373
EDITOR	Abby Wilkerson	770/945-3386

**CITY OF
SUWANEE,
GEORGIA**

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



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.