

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

April 2015

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City of Auburn



On the Ballot: The 2015 Five mill Special Election

The Auburn City Council has called for a special election to be held on April 28, 2015 to ask voters to approve funding for construction of a new Auburn High School.

The referendum is not a call for a new tax or a tax increase. Instead, it asks for voter approval on how to use revenue from the Special Five Mill Property Tax, authorized in 1920 by the eighth amendment to the Alabama constitution. The Special Five Mill Tax Fund has been in place in Auburn since at least 1948 with revenue from this property tax accumulating in a dedicated fund until it is used. The five mill fund contains revenue that can only be used to pay for projects as explicitly approved by Auburn's citizens. This revenue cannot be used for general government operations, and is specifically set aside to repay money that is borrowed to finance projects that meet legal criteria.

Auburn residents have typically voted on new five mill projects every two or three years. In the last five mill election in 2012, voter approved projects included the Harris Center, Frank Brown Rec Center renovations and downtown parking improvements. Past five mill projects have included everything from traffic infrastructure to quality of life projects such as the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center, construction and expansion of the Auburn Public Library and the Town Creek Park and Cemetery.

Mayor Ham announced last year plans to use the five mill fund, generating approximately \$3.7 million annually, as part of a strategy to assist Auburn City Schools with their facility needs in the face of rapid enrollment growth. If citizens vote "yes" on April 28th, Auburn City Schools will have much of the funding needed to move forward with the construction of the new high school.

Auburn City Schools is the fastest growing school district in Alabama over the last five years, with over 3,000 new students over the last ten years and over 4,500 new students projected over the next decade. As part of Auburn City Schools' plan to manage enrollment growth, four new elementary schools have been built since 1998 and primary schools have been realigned to make the best possible use of existing facilities. Additional funding provided by the five mill would allow construction of a new high school. Auburn City Schools would then re-task the current high school, and renovate other secondary facilities, to better keep pace with growth while maintaining the exceptional quality for which Auburn City Schools is known.

For more information on the upcoming vote, please visit <http://www.auburnalabama.org/elections>.

Auburn CityFest 2015

Presented by the Opelika-Auburn News

Join Auburn Parks and Recreation for Auburn CityFest 2015, presented by the Opelika-Auburn News, on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Kiesel Park. CityFest is Auburn's largest, FREE, outdoor festival featuring live music, children's activities, arts & crafts and fine arts exhibitors, food, non-profit booths, and much more! CityFest is FREE to the public and is a rain or shine event.

Juried Art Reception

Join the Auburn Arts Association for a night of fine art, great food by Jim N' Nicks and Cakeapotamus, and entertainment by Phillip Rowton at the 11th annual Juried Art Show and Preview Reception! Held in collaboration with Auburn CityFest, this Auburn Chamber Business After-Hours event will be held on Thursday, April 23 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the historic Nunn-Winston House at Kiesel Park. Works will be exhibited at Auburn CityFest on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

City of Auburn Flood Protection & Preparation Information

In May 2014, the City of Auburn was accepted into the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). Even though everyone does not own or live on property in a floodplain, the program benefits the community by protecting the environment, making people safer, and saving everyone money. The City received a Class 7 score for our CRS application which gave the citizens' of Auburn a 15% discount on their flood insurance for those in the Special Flood Hazard Area and a 5% discount for those in the Non-Special Flood Hazard Area. Below is some information you might find helpful regarding floodplains in the City of Auburn.

Local Flood Hazard

The City of Auburn has an annual precipitation of 52.6 inches, and has a history of major storm events. During the last ten years our biggest rain events occurred in March 2006, November 2006, February 2009, November 2009, July 2011, February 2012, February 2013, and August 2013. During major storm events flash flooding can occur when drainage courses, such as stormwater systems and natural ditches, overflow and flood. Local water bodies and roadways subject to flooding include:

Local Water Bodies: Choctawhatchee Creek, Parkerson Mill Creek, Town Creek, Moore's Mill Creek, Chewacla Creek, Lake Chewacla, Lake Ogletree, Saugahatchee Creek, and Little Loblockee Creek.

Roadways: North Donahue Drive Bridge, Water Crest Drive Bridge, East University Drive Bridge at Summertrees Drive, Moores Mill Rd Bridge at Forestdale Drive, Windway Road Bridge, and Ogletree Road Bridge north of Oak Knoll Circle.

Flood Warning

The City of Auburn, in conjunction with the Lee County Emergency Management Agency, work together to give citizens ample warning in cases of a flooding event. Emergency messages are broadcasted through local radio and TV stations including:

Radio: 93.9 FM WTGZ, 95.9 FM WQSI, 97.7 FM WKKR, 1400 AM WANI, 94.3 FM WGZZ, 1230 AM WAUD, 104.5 FM WAUF-LP, 91.1 FM WEGE, 1520 AM WTLM

TV: WRBL Channel 3, FOX 54 News Channel 8, WTVM Channel 9, WSFA Channel 12, and The Weather Channel (channel number may vary based on service provider)

In the event of heavy rains, it is essential to monitor television and/or radio weather broadcasts for up-to-date forecasts on tornadoes, hurricanes, or flash floods. Please call 911 for any emergencies and 334-501-3100 for any non-emergencies.

Flood Safety

Safety is a **must** when it comes to possible flooding in our area. The following tips can keep you and your family from harm:

- **Do not walk through flowing waters.**
- **Do not drive through a flooded area.**
- **Stay away from power and electrical lines.**
- **Shut off all gas and water valves.**
- **Have a departure plan in case of emergency.**

Additional emergency preparedness tips can be found on page 12 of the 2014-2015 Real Yellow Pages Telephone book.

Property Protection Measures

During the past 100 years, flooding has been the number one cause of property damage in North America each year.

Property owners can apply permanent retrofitting techniques that can help to eliminate or reduce flood damage:

- **Elevating your house 1 ft. above the base flood elevation.**
- **Flood proofing your house to make the walls and flooring watertight so that water cannot enter.**
- **If you know you are in the flood prone area, flood vent the crawl space under your home so that water can flow through.**

Employees from the Public Works Department are avail-

MEETING SCHEDULE

APRIL

- 1 Board of Zoning Adjustment,** 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 3 Tree Commission,** 11:30 a.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
- 6 Cemeteries Advisory Board,** 4 p.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
- 7 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
- 9 Planning Commission,** 5 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 14 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
- 21 Library Board,** 2:00 p.m., Library Conference 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
- 23 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.

able for site visits to review flooding, drainage and sewage issues and provide one-on-one advice to the property owner on appropriate flood protection measures. We are also available to assist you with reviewing and critiquing retrofit plans for flood-prone residences and buildings.

Are You Insured?

The City of Auburn is an active participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The City feels that we have an important job in keeping citizens informed regarding the floodplain and how it can affect their property. Even if your property is not located in a high risk flood area it is a good idea to buy flood insurance, because almost 25% of all flood insurance claims come from areas with minimal flood risk. Two important facts that citizens should know are:

- **Homeowner's insurance policies DO NOT cover flood damages or losses.**
- **Insurance policies have a 30-day waiting period BEFORE coverage goes into effect.**

There are two types of Flood Insurance Coverage offered: 1. Building Property, up to \$250,000, and 2. Personal Property (Contents), up to \$100,000. The NFIP encourages people to purchase both types of coverage. Your mortgage company can also require that you purchase a certain amount of flood insurance.

Floodplain Development Permit Requirements

To ensure the highest degree of safety, the Public Safety Codes Enforcement Division enforces the Building Code for the City of Auburn. Please be advised that a permit is required for ALL construction in the City of Auburn. Any development without a permit is non-compliant and may result in fines. If you know of any development taking place without the required permits or would like to verify a contractor's license, please contact the City of Auburn Codes Enforcement Division at 334-501-3170. They are located at 171 North Ross Street Suite 100.

Substantial Improvement Requirements

The importance of permit requirements plays an important part in this requirement. In order for the City of Auburn to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), we adopted regulations and codes that apply to new developments in the floodplains. Local floodplain management regulations and codes contain minimum NFIP requirements that apply not only to new structures, but also to existing structures which are "substantially improved (SI)" or "substantially damaged (SD)."

"Substantially Damaged" means damage of any origin sustained by a structure whereby the cost of restoring the structure to its before damaged condition would equal or exceed 50% of the market value of the structure before damage occurred.

"Substantially Improved" means any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvements of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure before the "start of construction" of the improvement. This term includes structures which have incurred "substantial damage," regardless of the actual repair work performed.

The City of Auburn requires an elevation of 1 ft. above the base flood elevation for new construction and for existing structures before they are repaired.

Do You Live In Or Around a Special Flood Hazard Area?

The City of Auburn Public Works Department is available to assist in providing more information on whether a property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area. Upon requests the following Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information will be provided: The community number, the map panel number and suffix, the date of the FIRM's Index, the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) shown on the FIRM, the elevation datum used on the FIRM, and the availability of Elevation Certificates (EC's) for review. For more general information, you can view your property in relation to the local floodplains online using the City's interactive mapping system at <http://www.auburnalabama.org/maps>.

Drainage System Maintenance

The City of Auburn's Public Works Department maintains the storm drainage system and helps to keep the creeks and streams in the City of Auburn clean and free of debris and pollutants. In order for the drainage system to operate efficiently the ditches, streams, and channels must be kept clean. Debris, even leaves and grass clippings, can obstruct the flow of water and cause overflow onto streets and yards. Residents and business and property owners can play a huge role in this effort by maintaining ditches and streams on their property and by notifying the City when maintenance is needed on the right of way. The City Code prohibits taking any action that can impede the flow of water in ditches and waterways. If you know of any illegal dumping of debris or any action that could affect the drainage system, please contact the Public Works Department at 334-501-3000.

Natural and Beneficial Functions of the Local Floodplain

Floodplain areas and wetlands provide a wide range of benefits to both human and natural systems. Wetlands in and around the City of Auburn are a valuable asset. Flood control and water quality are the two most important aspects of our local floodplain. Wetlands absorb water during heavy rainfall or flooding and slowly release the waters downstream reducing flood damage. Wetlands and wetland plants help to absorb and filter potentially harmful chemicals and pollutants into our waterways. The City of Auburn is home to several identified undeveloped floodplain areas which are VITAL for several endangered or threatened species unique to this area, as well as provide recreation, education, and research important to our local economy. The City of Auburn has implemented several successful projects to protect our local wetlands: Town Creek Park Stream Restoration, Pocket Wetland at County Dumpster/Compactor Site, Wrights Mill Road Elementary School wetlands, and Parkerson Mill Creek Restoration 2013.

For more information regarding the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System, please contact the Public Works Department at 171 North Ross Street Suite 200, 334-501-3000

Or visit our website at www.auburnalabama.org/pw

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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 – Featuring “Monster in My Closet,” Wednesday, April 1, at 3:30 p.m. for ages 3 – 7.

Pajama Time – Monday, April 13 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!

Spectrum Storytime – Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 a.m. Spectrum Storytime (SST) is an educational and interactive program designed for children with sensory integration challenges and their caregivers. For cognitive ages 4 – 7. Registration is required. For more information or to register please call Youth Services at 501-3196.

Family Storytime – Sunday, April 26 at 4:00 p.m. Bring the whole family and join us for stories, songs, parachute games, and family fun!

OTHER YOUTH SERVICES ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

LitWits – Tuesdays, April 7 & 21 at 4:30 p.m. for ages 13 to 18. (4/7 - Poetry; 4/21 – Non-fiction).

Fractured Fairytales – Featuring “The Three Ninja Pigs,” Wednesday, April 8, at 3:30 p.m. for ages 4 – 7.

Gamers Club (Now every week!) – Thursdays at 4:00 p.m. for ages 10 – 18.

Legomania – Join us every Saturday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. for “free play” with Legos®.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Read it! Write it! Share it! Homeschool Book Reports – Monday, April 26 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. for ages 5 - 18. Read a book, write a report, and then come share it with your friends at the library! This program is designed for homeschooling students ages 5 – 18 to help students learn written, oral, and listening skills while sharing the books they have been reading. Students ages 5 – 10, 2:00 p.m. Students 11 – 18, 3:00 p.m. Registration is required. For more information or to register please call Youth Services at 501-3196.

Poet-tea Night – Thursday, April 23 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. for ages 13 – 18. Join us for a night of “Poet-tea.” Bring your favorite works of poetry to read aloud, design your own black-out poetry, and sip some tea like a sir, or lady! Snacks and coffee will also be served. A door prize will be raffled off to a lucky attendee! For more information please call Youth Services at 501-3196

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.

34th Annual Easter Egg Hunt Sponsored by Wells Fargo – Saturday, April 4 • 10 a.m. • Kiesel Park FREE to the public! Search for more than 35,000 eggs over a four-acre area! Allow time for traffic and parking. *NEW THIS YEAR!* Egg hunt start times will be staggered by age group. In case of rain, join us Easter Sunday at 2 p.m. 3 & Under Hunt @ 10:30 a.m. • 4 – 6 Hunt @ 10:45 a.m. • 7 – 9 Hunt @ 11 a.m. • 10 – 12 Hunt @ 11:15 a.m.

Bike Bash 2015 – April 11 • 8 a.m. • Pick Elementary School Offering 3, 10, 20, and 30 mile rides. Register by April 3 to guarantee a t-shirt. Sign up online at bikebash.org/register. Pre-registration (by April 3): S5 (12 & under) • S15 (13 & up). Registration (after April 3): S7 (12 & under) • S20 (13 & up).

Scale Back Alabama Weigh-Out Week: April 6-12 Visit any of our Recreation Centers during this week to enter your final weight. Don't forget, team and individual prizes will be awarded statewide and locally at the end of the Scale Back Alabama program.

Spring Invitational 2015 – March 30 – April 30 Invitational exhibit featuring recent and new works by selected area and regional artists

The May Show – May 4 – 30 Works based on an announced theme by local and area artists and craft persons.

Register for Summer Camps – Register for summer camps, programs, and events beginning Monday, May 4 at 8 a.m. at the Harris Center. Registration continues through Friday, May 22. Spots fill quickly, so be sure to sign up for summer camps early. Download a copy of the summer brochure beginning Thursday, April 2 at www.auburnalabama.org/parksbrochure.

Sundown Concert Series at Town Creek Park. Enjoy a night (or several nights) of entertainment at Auburn's newest park...Town Creek Park. Nestled in the middle of Auburn, Town Creek Park is the perfect setting to listen to the enchanting sounds of local and regional musicians. Bring the family, a picnic, and your lawn chairs and enjoy a free, relaxing evening of entertainment before the dog days of summer set in. Speaking of...don't forget to bring your favorite four-legged friends! Join us every Thursday evening in May! Entertainment TBA. For more information, contact Dana Stewart at 501-2930 or dstewart@auburnalabama.org.

