

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

October 2018

City Council

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New faces to join the Auburn City Council in November

Eight thousand, five hundred and eighty-five Auburn residents showed up on Aug. 28 to vote for their new Auburn City Council representatives, and three new council members have been elected. Five seats, including mayor, will move on to a runoff election on Oct. 9, 2018, since no candidates received more than 50 percent of the votes in the races for mayor, Ward 2 and Wards 4-6. Please note, the following results are unofficial until the results are canvassed by the Auburn City Council on Sept. 4, 2018.

The following candidates will be sworn in on Nov. 5, 2018:

Ward 1: Connie Fitch Taylor

Ward 7: Jay Hovey

Ward 8: Tommy Dawson

The following candidates will move on to the runoff election on Oct. 9, 2018:

Mayor: Ron Anders & David Hill

Ward 2: Kelley Griswold & Todd D. Scholl

Ward 4: Jim Ryan & Brett Smith

Ward 5: Steven Dixon & Walter M. Northcutt

Ward 6: Sarah Brown & Bob Parsons

Campaign sign reminders

All political signs must be removed by seven days after the election, or Sept. 4., unless a candidate is in the runoff election. Runoff election candidate signs may remain up until seven days after the runoff election, or Oct. 16.

Your City Council

Under Alabama's Council-Manager law, the Mayor represents the City at large and is a voting member of the City Council. The Mayor and the other eight Council members set the policy for the City, approve the City's two-year budget and pass local laws. The City Council also appoints citizens to serve as members of the 21 boards and commissions of our City government, including the Auburn City School Board, the Auburn Water Works Board and the Planning Commission. The City Council appoints the City Manager, who is responsible for the day to day operation of the city.

An active, involved citizenry is a key component of Auburn's city government, and Auburn's City Councils have had a long history of seeking the community's input in decision making. Citizens are encouraged to speak at any of the 24 council meetings held each year and take part in the numerous public meetings that characterize major city initiatives such as the Northwest Auburn Neighborhood Plan, CompPlan 2030, Renew Opelika Road and the Downtown Master Plan. One of the most important ways the Council receives citizen input is through the annual Citizen Survey, the results of which are key in setting the City's budget priorities.

There are many ways to communicate with your City Council. Contact information for each council person is posted on the City's website at auburnalabama.org/CC. The new council members will be listed on the front of the December Open Line. If you're not sure which council member represents you, you can find out by entering your address in the City Services bar at the bottom of auburnalabama.org and clicking "Search."



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City of Auburn

New downtown Auburn parking regulations

The City of Auburn has collaborated with the Downtown Merchants Association and the community to refine changes to downtown parking regulations, which went into effect in August, to make parking more available in downtown Auburn.

To improve parking conditions in downtown Auburn, the following projects are underway or have been completed:

- The East Glenn Avenue Parking Lot has opened, which includes 88 free public parking spaces within a 10-minute walk of Toomer's Corner.
- The Magnolia Avenue Employee Parking Lot opened in August with 97 spaces for downtown employees.
- Auburn Bank's surface parking lot on Magnolia Avenue, which has approximately 185 spaces, is now available for public use Monday-Saturday after 6 p.m.
- Construction is underway on a 600- to 650-space parking deck fronting Wright Street on the former Baptist Student Center property.
- Beginning on Sept. 6, downtown valet parking will be available Thursdays through Saturdays at times to be announced. Valet parking will be \$1 per hour during lunch hours on Thursdays and Fridays and free on evenings and Saturdays.

The council approved the following changes at its Aug. 7 meeting, which went into effect in August:

- All metered parking is limited to two hours to make parking more available by increasing parking turnover.
- Parking meter rates have increased to \$1 per hour to help offset the cost of parking regulation enforcement, operation and maintenance. Mechanical meter rates will remain 25 cents until they are replaced by kiosks.
- Parking meter hours of operation have extended to 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Monday through Friday to encourage parking turnover and to provide consistency with free parking in the evening that is available at Auburn Bank.
- Parking meter violation fines have increased to \$20 for the first violation, \$30 for the second and \$50 for the third on the same day in the same parking space to further deter violations.
- The maximum accrued fine to tow a vehicle from a metered parking space has been lowered to \$100.

All parking regulation changes are based upon recommendations made in the 2017 Parking Study, amended by input from stakeholders including the Downtown Merchants Association and business and community input. The goal of the changes is to be responsive to community input asking for more available parking downtown.



Scott Cummings settling into role as Auburn's new Public Works director



After years working with municipalities across the state, new Public Works Director Scott Cummings is proud to serve the City of Auburn.

"I'm one of the few people that have seen the City from the inside and the outside looking in. Having been a consultant for other municipalities around the state, it's clear that Auburn is a benchmark city concerning our management structure and the way we serve the public," Cummings said.

"This is where I live. It's where I've raised my kids, so it's exciting to reinvest my time here."

Cummings joined the City in the spring after working as a consultant to municipal clients, helping them develop operating procedures, navigate reorganization and develop and implement strategic plans. Before that, he worked with the City of Auburn as an assistant city engineer and director of the Water Resource Management Department.

Cummings graduated with a bachelor's in civil engineering from Auburn University in 1987 and entered the workforce. He later returned to the university and earned a master's in civil engineering in 1994. During his first stint with the City in the mid-2000s, Cummings helped reorganize the City's Water Resource Management Department and converted the city's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System into an all-encompassing water quality support system by networking its functions within the structure of the City's water and sewer services.

While work in his early career focused on the technical side of the public works field, Cummings's consultant work allowed him to focus more on vision setting and developing sustainable workforce and operation strategies. As the new Public Works director, Cummings has played a part in implementing the City's reorganization, which began earlier this year and included moving the City's engineering services from a division in Public Works to its own department.

"I'm excited about being a part of the reorganization because it promotes the City moving forward. It gives us a management structure that's more adaptable to what the future will hold and helps us navigate how to develop preventative maintenance strategies for all of our Public Works assets," Cummings said.

Moving forward, Cummings said Public Works remains the frontline response team for the community's infrastructure-related questions or concerns. Public Works will continue to work closely with Engineering Services, which will provide the technical resources needed to support infrastructure creation and repairs. So far this year, Public Works has completed projects like the downtown employee parking lot on Magnolia Avenue and renovations to the Shell Toomer Bike Path. Other projects to come with the start of the new fiscal year in October include ADA improvements around town, improvements laid out in the Northwest Auburn Neighborhood Plan and other sidewalk repairs to ensure pedestrians have safe and accessible ways around town.

You can reach Cummings at (334) 501-3000 or scummings@auburnalabama.org.

18th Annual Downtown Trick-or-Treat

Join Auburn Parks and Recreation for the best Halloween party in town on Wednesday, Oct. 31, from 6–8 p.m. in downtown Auburn. Enjoy an evening filled with spooky tunes, a costume contest and of course, candy and treats! This is a great alternative to door-to-door trick-or-treating because downtown merchants have plenty of treats for everyone. This event is FREE to the public. For more information please visit auburnalabama.org/parks or the city's Facebook page at [facebook.com/CityofAuburnAL](https://www.facebook.com/CityofAuburnAL).



Briggs & Stratton to open Auburn distribution hub, creating 20 jobs

Briggs & Stratton Corp. announced plans in August to open a 400,000-square-foot distribution center in Alabama, adding 20 new jobs to its significant manufacturing presence in Auburn.

The new Alabama distribution hub, focusing on Briggs & Stratton engines and other products, will allow the company to reduce delivery times to its customers in the Southeast region. The new facility is expected to be operational by spring 2019.

The Auburn center is part of a broader strategic plan by Briggs & Stratton to consolidate a number of smaller warehouse operations throughout the U.S. into two large operations. The company will also open a new distribution hub in Germantown, Wisconsin, under this plan, which will be in addition to the company's existing service and parts distribution center located in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

"By consolidating our current footprint into two large distribution centers, we're increasing efficiencies to more effectively serve our customers," said Bill Harlow, director of global distribution and warehousing at Briggs & Stratton.

"The locations in Germantown and Auburn will provide a North American enterprise distribution footprint that supports our strategy and customers with optimal inventory and order delivery while managing space and capital investment."

Growth plans

Briggs & Stratton's decision to add the Alabama distribution hub comes less than one year after the Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based company launched a major expansion at its Auburn manufacturing facility.

In October 2017, the company announced a \$12 million project to begin production of Vanguard commercial V-twin engines in Auburn, eventually creating 50 jobs. The new warehouse will be used to store these engines, along with



other products, for final shipment.

"I'm encouraged to see Briggs & Stratton expand again in Alabama because I know that means that they are finding all the ingredients they need for success right here in our state," Governor Kay Ivey said. "This represents a powerful endorsement from a leading manufacturer and shows once again that we are open for business."

Greg Canfield, secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce, said the addition of the distribution hub reflects the high level of confidence Briggs & Stratton has in its Auburn operation and the workforce there.

"Supporting world-class companies like Briggs & Stratton that are looking to grow in Alabama is a high priority for the state's economic development team," Secretary Canfield said. "They've been a great corporate citizen in Auburn for many years, and we look forward to seeing them continue to grow in the state."

'Exciting time'

Briggs & Stratton, which began operations in Auburn in 1995, is one of the city's largest industrial employers, with more than 430 workers. Its existing manufacturing facility primarily produces twin-cylinder engines for lawn-mowing equipment.

"Auburn is happy with the continued commitment of Briggs & Stratton to our community," Mayor Bill Ham said.

Dave Rodgers, senior vice president and president — engines and power at Briggs & Stratton, said the decision to open the new distribution hubs aligns with the company's commitment to invest in being a "partner of choice" in the communities where it operates.

"We're already enhancing two of our existing plants in Auburn, Alabama, and Statesboro, Georgia, to bring production of our commercial Vanguard V-Twin engines back to the U.S., and we're continuously investing in our research and development efforts to create products that help make work easier and lives better—it's an exciting time to be at Briggs & Stratton," he said.

Briggs & Stratton is the world's largest producer of gasoline engines for outdoor power equipment.

Board Vacancies

Two vacancies on the Building Board of Adjustments and three vacancies on the Tree Commission will be announced at the Sept. 18 Auburn City Council meeting and will be filled at the Oct. 16 meeting.

Visit auburnalabama.org/boards for more information about volunteering for one of our boards and commissions.



