

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • September 2020

A joint publication of the City of Vestavia Hills, Vestavia Hills City Schools & Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The events and dates listed below are subject to change. Please refer to the calendar on the City of Vestavia Hills website for the most up-to-date information.

September 2020

- 3 **Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 7 **Municipal Offices Closed** in observance of Labor Day*
- 10 **Planning and Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 12 **Helping Hands in the Hills Community Service Day**
- 12 **Helping Hand in the Hills Recycle Day**, City Hall, 9 a.m.
- 14 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 15 **Parks and Recreation Board**, Executive Conference Room, 7 a.m.
- 15 **Chamber Luncheon**, Zoom, 12 p.m.
- 17 **Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 21 **Council Work Session**, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 28 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber 6 p.m.
- 30 **Splash Pad Closes**

*No trash service. Collection will occur the day following your regular schedule.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley C. Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

In 1884, the first Monday in September was selected as the date to celebrate a “workingman’s holiday” to pay tribute to working men and women in our nation. This holiday came to be known as Labor Day. It is often referred to as the “unofficial end of summer,” as it typically marks the transition into a new school year and the beginning of fall sports seasons.

Historically, the wearing of white after Labor Day is considered a faux pas that dates back to the late Victorian era. The Emily Post Institute explains that white indicated you were still in vacation mode, so naturally when summer ended so did wearing white. (I remember my mother-in-law reminding my wife of that.)

I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer in spite of the coronavirus restrictions regarding masks, social distancing and public gatherings. This situation has been overwhelming to say the least. With that in mind, I would like to share some thoughts from John Maxwell, an American author, speaker and pastor who has written many books, primarily focusing on leadership. In a recent podcast he discussed the word “overcome.”

Overcome has two distinct meanings. First, you can be “overcome” from anxiety, fear and societal events (such as pandemics) that can overwhelm you. You might even question if it is futile to even try to correct the situation. The second meaning is when you “overcome”

– Mayor’s Message continued on page 2



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

As a student of history, I find it very interesting to read old news articles that shed light on issues of the day. As such, I was reading a March 18, 1963 article in the *Birmingham News*. The headline of the article read, “Vestavia Hills Mayor’s Job Carries Variety of Duties.” In the article, Mayor Robert Guillot was quoted, “When we took office it was our aim to provide the things needed in a fine residential community such as Vestavia Hills ... this included development of Wald Park where a swimming pool, two baseball diamonds and cleared play area will be available this summer.” He further elaborated that he was proud of the street resurfacing program and the addition of public safety personnel. A January 23, 1962 *Birmingham News* article quoted Park Board President Robert Thomas as saying, “The Park Board agreed to a proposal of City Council President

Dr. Edwin Speed to correct erosion on the field near the school.” It goes without saying, the more things change, the more they stay the same. The issues and goals of the early 1960’s remain the issues and goals currently.

That said, I think the enhancements to recreation, infrastructure and public safety – some of which will be partially complete this fall – will paint a different picture 60 years from now. While many of the issues appear to be the same, the approach to providing for our community is much more comprehensive. Whether it is the first use and provision of public Wi-Fi access at Wald Park and Cahaba Heights Park or the intentional diversity of playing surfaces amongst the different parks or the robust addition of stormwater management features, there are many multi-layered aspects of the current construction projects that we

– City Manager’s Report continued on page 2

BOARD OF EDUCATION



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Todd Freeman, Ed.D.,
Vestavia Hills City Schools Superintendent

You remember the story of the *RMS Titanic*.

Although built as a state-of-the-art vessel, it was inadequately equipped to deal with a catastrophic event. Obviously, the designers never envisioned an iceberg would cause one of the greatest disasters in maritime history. Their stoic belief that *Titanic* was unsinkable is a classic example of a psychological phenomenon called *groupthink*.

In his book *Originals*, Adam Grant gives several examples of the dangers of groupthink, ranging from political disasters to business collapses. He quotes Yale psychologist Irvin Janis who says it occurs when people “are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group” and their “strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action.” In other words, when a group of people become insulated from new or different ideas, it stifles their willingness to change or adapt.

John Kotter is well-known for his extensive research on organizations that are opposed to change. His New York Times bestselling fable, *Our Iceberg Is Melting*, is about a family of penguins who have lived on the same iceberg for many generations. Once they discover that their home is melting, the leadership council of penguins pushes the family to take action. As you might expect, the thought of living somewhere else scares many of the penguins. In the end, the family moves before the iceberg melts. The change was good and had a long-lasting impact for the penguins.

Icebergs come in all different sizes, and most of their mass cannot be seen above the water. Some icebergs might seem very small and even look like they can do no harm. This “*Titanic*” take on a situation fails to recognize potential problems and the need to change course. Other icebergs might seem picturesque and a stable place to live. This “penguin” perspective can lead to complacency and a false sense of security. Both are dangerous to moving an organization forward through uncharted waters.

A successful organization must have a strategic plan grounded in innovative thought, always searching for different and better ways of doing things. We must constantly embrace thinking that is different and uncomfortable. This keeps our focus on forward progress, refusing to accept anything less than exceptional while adjusting and changing course to confront the storm of a pandemic.

Vestavia Hills City Schools, like the rest of the world, has sought to move forward in a new normal. This school year will undoubtedly be filled with many opportunities for students, parents, and staff to adapt and grow. We will persevere, stay on course and be a better school system because of it.

Mayor's Message *continued from page 1*

the situation you are facing. Overcoming has two components: you must believe that you can overcome something, and you must take action to resolve the situation you are in. To overcome is to be resilient, and being resilient means having the courage to bounce back and take risks despite adversity and initial setbacks.

Presently our state and our nation are overcome with the virus that has now claimed more lives in the United States than anywhere else in the world. I continue to be optimistic that our country, state and city will bounce back.


We recently held a municipal election for Place 3 on the City Council. I look forward to working with the Council as we complete the many projects that we started and have overseen for the past several years.

Let's remember our teachers and students as they face the challenges of a very different kind of school year. I know that it has been a trying time for all, but we can overcome this.

City Manager's Report *continued from page 1*

call the Community Spaces Plan. While Mayor Guillot boasted of the positive changes, which were very nice for the time, I feel that our City leadership and residents can ably claim that things do get better over time. The investment to make our recreational, athletic and public infrastructure its best will be a source of pride for everyone, so that one studying history in the future will say, “Wow, those improvements stood the test of time.”

The fall of 2020 will mark the completion of many brick and mortar changes in the community, but from my perspective, it will also serve as the launch pad for many programmatic efforts to move beyond the status quo and present creative and new opportunities for those of all ages, abilities and interests. I hope you will embrace those opportunities as they present themselves. I am proud of our collective efforts as a community and wish you all the best as we move into the fall.



Jackie O'Neal
Est. 1948

**JACKIE O'NEAL
SCHOOL OF DANCE**

3336 Rocky Ridge Plaza
Vestavia Hills, AL 35243
205-822-6212
jackieonealschoolofdance.com

HERE TO HELP

We know that waste collection touches every residence in the City and, as of October 1, 2020, Amwaste will become the new garbage contractor for the City of Vestavia Hills. While the service provider will be changing, use of the Vestavia Hills Action Center to make waste-related requests and reports will remain unchanged. If you have a special need or experience any issue with your garbage and trash collection, please contact the City via the Action Center so that we may track the issue and ensure resolution. Behind the Action Center are real, live staff members who review the requests and take action to resolve issues. The City staff constantly works to become more responsive – measurably through the Action Center data – and to improve the Action Center as a tool.



VESTAVIA HILLS ACTION CENTER

There are many advantages to having an Action Center account:

- The contact information associated with your account allows the City and/or Amwaste to contact you if there is an interruption of service or an issue related to waste collection. When possible, Amwaste uses push notifications to alert registered customers of any issue affecting collection in their area.
- The service provider can be evaluated and held accountable by utilizing the reporting features built in to the Action Center.
- Staff and supervisors share the same information when resolving an issue.

If you experience difficulty using the Action Center, do not hesitate to contact us at 205.978.0100 or administration@vhal.org.

FOOD TRUCKS IN VESTAVIA HILLS



Want to bring a food truck to your neighborhood to break up the pandemic monotony? Great idea! Did you know that there is a City ordinance that specifies the requirements

for a food truck to operate in Vestavia Hills? These requirements are largely aimed at keeping us all safe – including permitting that confirms Health Department inspection/rating, along with subsequent safety inspection by the Vestavia Hills Fire Department to avoid the risk of fire, tank explosion, etc. These requirements also protect our local brick and mortar businesses who continue to invest in our city by being licensed, remitting taxes, paying rent, etc.

The City's food truck ordinance specifies a few parameters before a food truck can legally operate in Vestavia Hills, including:

- The owner must obtain a business license to operate as a food truck in the City of Vestavia Hills. Instructions and additional information is available at <https://vhal.org/departments/finance/business-licenses-sales-tax>.
- The food truck must obtain a free permit for operation in the City. The permit will be issued once the food truck passes VHPD inspection.

- Food trucks are not allowed in residential districts, unless the event is preapproved by City administration.

If you want to host a food truck at your next event, follow these simple steps:

- Ensure that the food truck/business is licensed and permitted by the City of Vestavia Hills and that the truck has been inspected for safety. Ask to see the licenses, don't just take their word for it.
- Once a time, date and location have been determined, visit the Action Center (at www.vhal.org) and enter the event information under "Block Parties, Food Trucks and Community Events" to obtain event approval. If a complaint is received by VHPD and you do not have a waiver from the City Manager, the event will be (unfortunately) shut down.
- Ensure that the food truck will not interfere with traffic or mail delivery, block residence driveways, etc.

For more information, including a current list of licensed and permitted food trucks, visit <https://vhal.org/departments/city-clerk/mobile-food-units>.

PARKS & RECREATION NEWS

SENIOR SERVICES

Vestavia Hills resident, Rudy Duda, was recently selected as an Outstanding Senior Citizen by United Way's Area Agency on Aging. Their congratulatory post described Mr. Duda as "continuously making his mark on the community through his kindness, generosity and willingness to step up and do what needs to be done. In addition to helping in numerous ways at the [New Merkel House] – including meal delivery during the pandemic – he looks after his neighbors, walks their dogs, helps in their yards and is always on call. He's also quick to help with civic projects and enjoys helping fellow veterans."



Thank you, Mr. Duda, for your service to the Vestavia Hills community!

HAPPENING AT THE RECREATION CENTER

Happy fall y'all! While this year has definitely been different and certainly challenging at times, it seems as if spring and summer flew by. A new school year has started, holidays are right around the corner and the Parks and Recreation staff are hard at work planning for fall.

As with everything these days, a few things at the Recreation Center will be different this year. Students from Vestavia Hills Elementary West will be using the gym during school hours, Monday through Friday. To accommodate the students, the "Open Play" gym schedule has been adjusted. We anticipate this schedule being in effect through October 23, 2020:


Monday & Wednesday: 7:00-8:00 a.m. & 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 7:00-8:00 a.m. & 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Don't have a Rec Center membership? No problem! Membership is FREE for Vestavia Hills residents. Bring your picture ID, along with two forms of proof of residency, to the Rec Center office (1973 Merryvale Road) to receive a membership badge.

For more information regarding membership, room rental, classes, etc., visit <https://vhal.org/departments/parks-recreation> or call 205.978.0166. We hope to see you soon!

Alabama Census 2020



BE COUNTED, VESTAVIA HILLS!

Responding to the census helps our community get the funding we need! Census data impacts our daily lives for years to come. **Lawmakers allocate more than \$675 billion in federal funding back to states and local communities each year based on census data** – funding for critical services and infrastructure in our community, including roads, schools, fire and police departments, businesses, hospitals and healthcare, senior centers, jobs and political representation. Census responses are safe and secure and cannot be used against you. For more information, visit www.census.gov.

Be counted, Vestavia Hills!



Thank You Vestavia For 75 Years!

www.americantermite.com

LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

CHILDREN & TWEENS

Birth-Grade 2 & Grades 3-5

TEENS

Grades 6-12

ADULTS

Ages 18+

MAKERSPACE

All ages, unless otherwise noted

TECHNOLOGY

Ages 18+

SEPTEMBER 2020

- 1 **Storytime Stars, 10:30am, YouTube**
Smash Bits!, 4pm, YouTube
Eighth of March Book Group: *Know My Name* by Chanel Miller, 6pm, Zoom
- 2 **Pick Up S.T.E.A.M!, YouTube**
Writing Group, 4pm, Zoom
- 3 **Read & Feed Book Group: *The Dinner* by Herman Koch, 6pm, Zoom**
- 4 **Ken Burns Film Series: *Jazz: The History of Jazz Music in America*, 12pm, Kanopy**
Open Gaming Goes Online, 4pm, Discord
- 8 **Storytime Stars, 10:30am, YouTube**
Teen Librarians Oreo Challenge, 4pm, YouTube
- 9 **12 Below, 2pm, YouTube**
Digital Breakout, 4pm, Zoom
- 10 **Tic-TECH-Toe: Design a T-shirt, 4pm, YouTube**
Tara's Creative Corner: Lyric Plates, 6pm, YouTube
- 11 **Ken Burns Film Series: *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, 12pm, Kanopy**
Open Gaming Goes Online, 4pm, Discord
- 15 **Storytime Stars, 10:30am, YouTube**
Kara Recommends ... *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, 3pm, YouTube
Doodles with Derek: Doodles on Demand 2, 4pm, YouTube
- 16 **Pick Up S.T.E.A.M!, YouTube**
Teen Scavenger Hunt, 4pm, Zoom
- 17 **Ken Burns Film Series: *The Shakers – Hands to Work, Hearts to God*, 12pm, Kanopy**
- 18 **Open Gaming Goes Online, 4pm, Discord**
- 22 **Storytime Stars, 10:30am, YouTube**
Hobbit Day Trivia, 3pm, Zoom
Podcast Academy Deep Dive: Software, 3:30pm, Zoom
Lauren's Book Buzz, 4pm, YouTube
- 23 **12 Below, 2pm, YouTube**
Art Group, 4pm, Zoom
- 24 **Ken Burns Film Series: *The Vietnam War*, 12pm, Kanopy**
Tech in Ten: Customize Gmail, 4pm, YouTube
- 25 **Podcast Academy Deep Dive: Software (recording), 3:30pm, YouTube**
Open Gaming Goes Online, 4pm, Discord
Library Libations: Harvest Punch, 6pm, YouTube
- 29 **Storytime Stars, 10:30am, YouTube**
Teardown Tuesday, 3:30pm, YouTube
- 30 **Pick Up S.T.E.A.M!, YouTube**



VESTAVIA HILLS
LIBRARY IN THE FOREST



Virtual Bookshelf

Visit <https://vestavialibrary.org/virtual-bookshelf>
to check out curated lists of recommendations
from your Library in the Forest librarians!

IT'S IN THE BAG!



It still feels like summer, but fall will be here before we know it! So, what should we do with all of the fallen leaves, pine straw and other small yard debris? If your answer is to blow it into

the street ... guess again! (If you have a yard service, be sure to remind them to not blow yard debris into the streets, ditches, etc.)

Leaf debris poses a serious hazard when it accumulates in storm drains and gutters. Storm drains are designed to allow water to quickly drain away after a heavy rainfall, but if they become blocked or clogged, serious flooding issues can result. We need to keep storm drains and gutters clear, and proper disposal of yard debris is a step in the right direction. How do we do it? There are a few ways:

- **Collect and store the leaves and grass clipping in bags to be collected on yard waste pickup day.** Proper disposal will keep our rivers clear and help prevent flooding.
- **Utilize the leaf litter and grass clippings as mulch** for flower beds, vegetable gardens or along fence lines to prevent weed growth.
- **Add the material to your compost.** Grinding the leaves with the lawnmower before adding to the compost will ensure that they release their nutrients and accelerate the composting process.
- **Allow grass clippings or ground leaves to dry and decompose in place.** They won't smother your grass; in fact, they will add nutrients and help retain soil moisture.

2020 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TRUSTEES

We would like to gratefully acknowledge our 2020 Chamber Trustees. These businesses support our Chamber and city at a high level of membership which enables us to support events and projects city-wide. Please let them know how much they are appreciated by visiting/using their products and services and thanking them for their support of Vestavia Hills.



VESTAVIA HILLS
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
A LIFE ABOVE

Alabama Power Company	Cellular Sales Authorized Agent of Verizon Wireless*	McDonald's*	Spectrum Reach
American Pest Control	Children's of Alabama	Method Mortgage	SpeedPro*
America's First Federal Credit Union*	Cooke, Cameron, Travis & Co.	Morgan Properties	SperryCGA – The Andrews Group
ARC Realty	Costco Wholesale	Newk's Eatery	Spire*
BB&T	Dog U*	OnTime Service*	Starnes Publishing – Vestavia Voice*
B.L. Harbert International	First US Bank	<i>Over the Mountain Journal</i>	Standard Air, Plumbing & Insulation*
Background IQ	Harbert Realty Services	Petro Facial Plastic Surgery & MedSpa	State Farm Insurance, John Henley*
BancorpSouth	Hollywood Pools	Progress Bank*	Summit Express Urgent Care*
Berk Cleveland Rathmell Wealth Strategies	IberiaBank	Rainbow Paint*	Truitt Insurance & Bonding*
<i>Birmingham Business Journal</i>	Jackson Howard & Whatley CPAs*	RealtySouth, Angela Stevens	Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church*
Frank S. Buck, P.C.	JBMC Media, LLC	Regions Bank*	Senator Jabo Waggoner
Butler Snow LLP	KPR – Vestavia City Center	RE/MAX Southern Homes, Becky Hicks	Williams Blackstock
Cahaba Benefits Group	Liberty Park Joint Venture*	Senator Dan Roberts	Yanosky Orthodontics
Representative Jim Carns	Mark W. Macoy, LLC	Sentry Heating, Air Conditioning, Plumbing & Electrical*	<i>*Chamber Champions</i>
Carr, Riggs & Ingram	McCallum Hoaglund & Irby, LLP	Southern States Bank	

HELPING HANDS IN THE HILLS RECYCLE DAY

September 12, 2020
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Vestavia Hills City Hall • 1032 Montgomery Highway



VESTAVIA HILLS
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
A LIFE ABOVE

The Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce Helping Hands in the Hills Recycle Day is planned for Saturday, September 12, 2020. Drop off will be in the parking lot at Vestavia Hills City Hall. Items will be collected from 9:00 a.m. until capacity is reached or until 1:00 p.m.

Items available to be collected include electronics and household hazardous waste. (Proof of Vestavia Hills residency is required for hazardous waste disposal.) Paper shredding services will also be available and Vestavia Hills police officers will be on-site to collect unneeded or expired medications for disposal. (Needles will NOT be accepted.)

Electronics are made with valuable reusable materials, including steel and precious metals that can be recovered, recycled and reused. **Electronic items to be accepted include:** PCs, including laptops; servers; cell phones and tablets; satellite and cable boxes; gaming systems and components; stereos and radios; switches and firewalls; printers and fax machines; VCRs and DVD players; remote controls; MP3 players; A/C adapters and other cables; LCD monitors; CRT monitors*; ink and toner cartridges; rechargeable batteries; hard drives, including external drives*; speakers; cameras; modems and routers; CD players; small kitchen appliances; consumer electronics; battery backups; keyboards and mice; stand-alone copiers*; and TVs*

*** Fee required for the disposal of these items:**

Hard drive and CRT monitors: \$10 each

Televisions: \$20 each

Not accepted: large appliances or wooden console TVs

Household hazardous waste items to be accepted include: paint; batteries (household and automotive); light bulbs; and pesticides.

Paint and pesticides MUST be in their original containers or they will NOT be accepted.

Proof of Vestavia Hills residency required for hazardous waste disposal.

Special thanks to:

PROTEC Recycling

Republic Services

Gone for Good (a program of United Ability)





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