

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • June/July 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.

June 2020

- 4 **Design Review Board,**
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 8 **City Council Meeting,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 9 **Chamber Luncheon,**
Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 11 **Planning & Zoning Commission,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 15 **Council Work Session,**
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 18 **Board of Zoning Adjustment,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 22 **City Council Meeting,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 30 **I Love America Night,**
Vestavia Hills High School, 6 p.m.

July 2020

- 2 **Design Review Board,**
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 3 **Municipal Offices Closed**
in observance of Independence Day
Trash Holiday – Trash will be collected the following day
- 9 **Planning & Zoning Commission,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 13 **City Council Meeting,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 16 **Board of Zoning Adjustment,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 20 **Council Work Session,**
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 21 **Parks & Recreation Board,**
Executive Conference Room, 7 a.m.
- 27 **City Council Meeting,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley C. Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

Several public health orders have passed since my last monthly submission. I want to commend our citizens for taking the “Stay at Home” Order seriously. Along with our sister cities, we have been able to slow the spread of the coronavirus throughout Alabama. As a result, the most recent “Safer at Home” Order issued by Governor Ivey has allowed most of our businesses to resume operations while following CDC guidelines for social distancing and customer limits. We are, slowly but surely, returning to some degree of normalcy. Now more than ever, we need to support our local businesses. They are the lifeblood of our city’s economy and their success is critical to getting our economy back on track.

The national news is inundated with negative reports about virus cases and related deaths which have fueled panic (as evidenced by the toilet paper frenzy at the onset of the quarantine). Despite increased negativity, it has been my experience that the very best elements of human nature often prevail and I would like to highlight a few of these positives:

Nationally, Publix, Piggly Wiggly, Dollar General and other retailers have announced that they will be devoting their opening hour of shopping time to elderly customers. Utility companies, landlords, automakers and internet providers are waiving a number of late fees and payments to ease the financial burden of the

– Mayor’s Message continued on page 3



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

I vividly remember the early years of my career in local government. The mid-1980’s were the precursor to the era of the personal computer and microwave ovens were very common. There were people who were calling some of us the “microwave generation.” We couldn’t be patient enough to await a good meal. We had to “nuke” it for immediate gratification. Ironic was the fact that, during this time, my employer had something called the “speed memo.” If we wanted quick reaction to a citizen complaint, we would type the memo on paper and have a runner come by twice a day to drive it, by car, to the department requiring action. Wow, our concept of “speed” has changed dramatically, hasn’t it?

Due to the advancement of technology, our access to information and need for immediate gratification has gone much beyond this

“microwave generation.” We all want things now, not yesterday. While the governmental services of today are much more efficient, the whole nature of government is very deliberate and oftentimes slow. This is particularly noticeable in delivery of capital projects. The larger the investment in taxpayer funds, the slower the approval process. This is designed to protect the integrity of the expenditure, as well as allow input into the validity of the project. The challenge is the new culture of getting things done NOW is juxtaposed against the need for careful stewardship of funds and consideration of unintended consequences. All the more, this makes the celebration of long awaited local government project completion even more gratifying than usual.

The summer of 2020 will be known, in history, as the gradual loosening of social distancing in the world, but in Vestavia Hills it can also

– City Manager’s Report continued on page 3



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

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

We can all agree that life is full of challenges and uncertainties. Spring 2020 was a season in which our lives and lifestyles were abruptly disrupted.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon writes that "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." Solomon's words have long been a source of strength for me, especially in times like we are experiencing. There is the certainty that seasons do change, which gives me confidence in the future.

While COVID-19 is a difficult challenge, it is also a great opportunity to design new and better ways of thinking and acting. Innovation is often birthed through major disruptions. Industries are adapting to producing different in-demand products, businesses are creatively providing services to customers, and medical science is moving at warp speed to find an answer to mitigate the spread of the virus. The challenges remain, but ingenuity pushes us forward.

Teachers in Vestavia Hills City Schools also adapted to a new way of providing opportunities for students to learn without limits. In a short time, our teachers made fantastic strides using technology in new ways to engage with their students. The key takeaway is that we can improve classroom instruction by integrating effective virtual learning experiences. With the courage to be creative, the possibilities are endless moving forward.

The COVID-19 disruption has given us the opportunity to make school in the future even better for our students. I am optimistic about having our students return to classrooms in August while also recognizing that there may be conditions we cannot control. Accordingly, we want to be prepared to deliver instruction in a seamless way, no matter the circumstance.

To complement the excellent classroom instruction from our teachers, VHCS will provide Chromebooks for every student in our system this fall. We are fortunate to already have the devices and the infrastructure to support it. Our plan will be informed by best practices; lessons learned this spring; feedback from parents and children; and a strategy for teaching and learning whether we have students in class or at home.

More than ever, I believe that face-to-face instruction from our teachers is the most effective way to provide quality education for our students. I am confident that creative uses of technology will elevate the learning experiences in our classrooms. I am also convinced that we must be flexible and adaptable to whatever circumstances may lie ahead.

This is a teachable moment in time that we can use to make our community a better place to live and learn. Our 50th year as a school system will be the best one yet!

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shutdown. School districts across the country are still opening their doors to serve meals for kids and families.

On the local level, the Leadership Vestavia Hills Hunger Awareness Group organized a food delivery program to provide meals for some 500 students that were receiving free or reduced lunches. In partnership with area restaurants, they raised funding to support the restaurants and provide packaged meals to the students. The Vestavia Hills Rotary Club recognized the efforts of our first responders by donating gift cards from area restaurants to our police and fire departments. Pastor Ron Higey with Birmingham International Church and one of the Vestavia Hills Chaplains, set up a food pantry to provide a box of groceries to those in need. It is refreshing to see our citizens, churches, businesses and civic clubs helping others in this time of uncertainty.

Last, but certainly not least, let's not forget all our first responders, health care workers and all that are on the front lines during this pandemic. My heartfelt thanks to all of you.

I will leave you with words from Queen Elizabeth spoken during a rare public address to the United Kingdom, "We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again."

be known as the long-awaited completion of multiple community-changing projects. We will see a beautiful park and athletic complex opened in Cahaba Heights this summer. This public investment will serve as a place to play, exercise your dogs and display your athletic skills in an incredible recreational complex. The summer will also mark the opening of an aquatics complex that will be second to none, along with completion of the first phase of the Wald Park project. With the delivery of these projects, our community will have close proximity to incredible outdoor venues. This summer will also mark the commencement of the widening of Crosshaven Drive and addition of sidewalks that have long been on the top of the list for many Vestavia Hills residents.

These projects have not been quick to deliver. It is just not in the cards for a government to move quick enough for the new "microwave generation." That being said, I still want to thank the consistent and deliberative governmental officials who push projects to their completion, and I want to compliment the many volunteers who have kept an eye on making the aforementioned projects remain a part of the priority list. However, most of all, I want us all to celebrate our successes when we make significant movement on community priorities, even when it seems like we are still using the old-fashioned "speed memo" to get them accomplished. I wish you all the best as we move through the summer.



Savor the Summer in Vestavia Hills with our Local Restaurants!

We'll be giving away prizes for 2 categories: **Quantity** (largest number of receipts collected) and **Quality** (highest amount spent). 1st place winners will receive \$300 cash; 2nd place winners will receive \$200 cash!

Savor the Summer begins May 21, 2020 and ends August 7, 2020.

Use your own envelope to save receipts or pick one up from the Chamber Office, City Hall or New Merkel House. Receipts in an envelope must be submitted to the Chamber of Commerce Office (1975 Merryvale Road) no later than **5pm CST on August 7**. Winners will be announced August 14 on the Chamber's Facebook page.

The following rules will apply:

- Open to both residents and non-residents
- Limit one entry per household
- Only one prize awarded per household
- Only original or printed copy receipts will be accepted
- Only one household receipt per restaurant per mealtime; multiple receipts from a restaurant are allowed for different dates/times. (Paying separately for each family member's breakfast at the same time on the same day will NOT be accepted. You may, however, submit a restaurant receipt for breakfast and another from the same restaurant for dinner on the same day.)



AQUATIC COMPLEX OPENING SOON!

It is almost time to emerge from hibernation and enjoy all that summer has to offer, including making great memories for years to come at the new Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex! Unprecedented rain totals, along with material delays due to COVID-19 shutdowns, have pushed back the opening of the complex, but crews are hard at work and construction is progressing rapidly. As of the print date of this issue, the complex is on track to open by the 4th of July. It will surely be worth the wait!

We hope you will enjoy the expanded pool options, including extended hours of operation, open leisure and lap swim options, swim lessons, water fitness activities and swim team (Vestavia Swim Association). Having two pools will allow for multiple programs to occur while still being able to offer leisure and lap swim – we hope you are as excited about this as we are!

Following Governor Ivey's amendment of the state Order to allow public pools to open, pool pass registration will open. Fee information and instructions will be shared online at <https://vhal.org/departments/parks-recreation> and on social media as soon as possible. For more information, contact Jeff Corley at jcorley@vhal.org or 205.978.0166.

We look forward to seeing you at the pool ... Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex ... very soon!

SENIOR SERVICES

We look forward to soon saying, "Welcome Back!" But for now, we are all in a holding pattern – ready to cautiously begin the next phase to get back to normal (whatever that may be), but still concerned for ourselves and our family and friends. Until we can safely be together again, please know and understand that you are NOT alone! Senior Services staff are here to help, to lend an ear, to provide needed assistance.

So many BIG things are happening this year! Most of the Community Spaces projects are wrapping up in the next few months and all of Vestavia Hills will be invited to enjoy the new Cahaba Heights Park, Wald Park and the much-anticipated Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex. All this, plus renovations to the new Community Building (formerly Golds Gym) will begin soon!

We are making preparations and eagerly anticipate safely reopening facilities to welcome you back – doing little things now that will make a big difference when you are able to return. We can't wait to see you!

VESTAVIA HILLS GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Registration for the fall volleyball league opens June 1, 2020 for 4th-8th grade girls. Registration will not be accepted after July 26 to allow for league practices to begin in early August.

For more information or to register, visit www.vhgvb.com.

Sponsorship opportunities are available with free registration for sponsors. For sponsorship details, email vestaviahillsgirlsvolleyball@gmail.com.

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CHAMBER NEWS

Karen J. Odle, Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce President

As I write this letter, it is the first week of May and in my almost 18 years at the Chamber, the last month and a half has been the most difficult of any time during my tenure. It has been heartbreaking to see so many of our businesses suffering as they have been closed for so many weeks. These businesses are slowly reopening, but I can't help but think about James 1:4 telling us "...let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"

Patience is a virtue and something I am not very good at practicing. The Bible verse referenced above is something I aspire to, but find

myself falling short quite often. With this being said, I do have faith in our local business owners. They are smart, creative and innovative, but we are going to have to do our part and support them when they reopen. Now, more than ever, we must "shop and eat local" for our businesses to remain viable and once again have a thriving business community in Vestavia Hills.

Please make a point to help our community. Our local businesses are the ones we go to when we need a donation, so let's be there for them. It is most assuredly time to practice what it means to live "A Life Above."



2020 PROJECT REQUEST

The Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce and City of Vestavia Hills are planning the 6th annual Helping Hands in the Hills, a day of service in the city to assist our residents (senior citizens, disabled, etc.) who need a helping hand with minor projects around their home. This fun community service day will be Saturday, September 12, 2020. To submit a project for consideration, complete the form below and submit it to the Chamber of Commerce at 1975 Merryvale Road, Vestavia Hills, AL 35216. For more information or to volunteer, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 205.823.5011 or email betsyw@vestavi hills.org.

DEADLINE FOR PROJECT REQUEST SUBMISSION: AUGUST 7, 2020

Your name* _____

Phone number* _____ E-mail* _____

Contact name* *(Name of person in need, if different from above)* _____

Project address* _____

Project description* _____

Number of hours required for 6-8 people to complete? _____

Homeowners must provide needed tools and supplies to complete project request, i.e. rakes, mower, trimmers, wheelbarrow, pine straw/mulch. Requests for pressure washing projects will NOT be considered.

Special instructions _____

**Required information*

LIBRARY IN THE FOREST



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Taneisha Y. Tucker, Director, Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest

"Change is inevitable. Growth is optional."

– John Maxwell

We had to change. On March 14, 2020, the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest closed its physical doors due to the threat of COVID-19. Two weeks later, the library opened its virtual doors to provide quality online programming along with repurposing library resources to support the healthcare community during the pandemic.

We are growing. Over the past few weeks, safety and service have been our focus. We are developing standardized sanitation and

distancing protocols for staff and patrons who wish to visit the library in the coming days. We are currently accepting library materials without fines and offering curbside service by appointment. Also, summer reading 2020 is underway. *Imagine Your Story* by registering online for programs, prizes, special events and more.

We are grateful. The staff and I truly miss our time with you, our valued patrons. You are like family and we sincerely appreciate your thoughtfulness and patience as we navigate these winds of change. Call 205.978.0155 or visit us at www.vestavialibrary.org for detailed information and online services. We hope to see you soon and wish you wellness and safety.

CHILDREN & TWEENS

Birth-Grade 2 & Grades 3-5

TEENS

Grades 6-12

ADULTS

Ages 18+

MAKERSPACE

All ages, unless otherwise noted

TECHNOLOGY

Ages 18+

June 2020

- 1 **Toddler-A-Go-Go, 10am**
Adult Summer Reading Registration Begins
- 2 **Digital Breakout!, 3:30pm**
Eighth of March Book Group, 6pm
- 3 **Story Friends: Unicorns, 10:30am**
Hansel & Gretel Love It or List It Competition, 2pm
Online Writing Group, 3:30pm
- 4 **Tech in Ten: Multitasking in Windows 10 (video), 4pm**
Read & Feed Book Group, 6pm
- 5 **Storytime with author Carmen Agra Deedy, 11am**
Kahoots Movie Trivia: A Dog's Courage, 2pm
Open Gaming Goes Online, 3:30pm
- 8 **Toddler-A-Go-Go, 10am**
Virtual Dad & Daughter Tea: Registration Opens
- 10 **Story Friends: Dragons, 10:30am**
Happily Never After, 2pm
Online Art Group, 3:30pm
- 11 **Tick TECH Toe: Create Your Own Digital Puzzle (video), 4pm**

- 12 **Storytime with author Carmen Agra Deedy, 11am**
Kahoots Movie Trivia: Swift, 2pm
Open Gaming Goes Online, 3:30pm
- 15 **Toddler-A-Go-Go, 10am**
Podcast Academy, 3:30pm
- 16 **Harry Potter Trivia Night, 3:30pm**
- 17 **Story Friends: Father's Day, 10:30am**
Disney & Fairytale Trivia, 2pm
Virtual Book Group, 3:30pm
- 18 **Tech in Ten: Facebook Security (video), 4pm**
- 19 **Storytime with author Carmen Agra Deedy, 11am**
Open Gaming Goes Online, 3:30pm
- 20 **Virtual Dad & Daughter Tea, 11am**
- 22 **Toddler-A-Go-Go, 10am**
- 24 **Story Friends: Fairies, 10:30am**
Fairy Tale Website Scavenger Hunt, 2pm
Online Anime Night, 3:30pm
- 25 **Tick TECH Toe: Travel Virtually with Google Earth (video), 4pm**

- 26 **Storytime with author Carmen Agra Deedy, 11am**
Kahoots Movie Trivia: The Care Bears Movie, 2pm
Open Gaming Goes Online, 3:30pm
- 29 **Toddler-A-Go-Go, 10am**
- Adult Summer Series**
Summer Sips Series: Make the Perfect Summer Cocktail/Mocktail
Tara's Creative Corner
Summer Documentaries Series: Curious By Nature
DIY Spa: Summer Self Care
Virtual Escape Room: The One Where They Get Stuck in the Library

ALL Library in the Forest summer programming will be ONLINE ONLY.

Full descriptions, including online location and registration, are available on the Library in the Forest event calendar at www.vestavialibrary.org.



CALLING ALL CANDIDATES

A municipal election for the purpose of electing a mayor and four (4) city councilors will be held August 25, 2020. Vestavia Hills elections are “at large,” meaning each councilor will run in a designated place.

If you are interested in running for municipal office in August, please contact City Clerk Rebecca Leavings at 205.978.0131 or rleavings@vhal.org to set an appointment to receive your Candidates Package or register online at <https://vhal.org/departments/city-clerk/municipal-elections/candidates-day> to download the Candidates Package from the City website.

IMPROVING RESPONSE TIMES



Response times for the Vestavia Hills Fire Department are measured from the time we receive the call from our dispatch center to the time we arrive on scene. One of our goals is to keep response times as low as possible, therefore mitigating the emergency as quickly and safely as possible. A few years ago, we began utilizing a software program that alerts each station of a call in their territory while the dispatch center is still gathering information. This allows us to get to our trucks quicker to lower our response times.

You, the public, can help us arrive to those emergencies quicker as well. Here are a few reminders for when you need help in an emergency:

- **DO** call 911 when there is an emergency.
- **DO** call Fire Administration at City Hall if you have a question that is not an emergency.
- **DO NOT** call the fire station directly. Personnel may be out on another emergency, and this will only delay back-up resources from responding to your emergency.
- **DO NOT** call Fire Administration at City Hall if there is an emergency – call 911.
- **DO NOT** post an emergency situation on any social media platform – call 911. We do not regularly monitor social media accounts and, as such, social media should never be used to report an emergency.

2020
I Love America
Night

At time of printing, scheduled for
Tuesday, June 30, 2020
6:00 pm
Vestavia Hills High School

Please check vestaviiahills.org
for latest schedule updates.

Presented by
Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce,
Vestavia Hills High School &
Vestavia Hills Parks & Recreation

Location change due to Wald Park Construction
No pets please.

8.15.2020
6PM-9PM @
The Arc THE GRAND BOHEMIAN
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