

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • August 2022

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



Jeff Downes,
City Manager
City of
Vestavia Hills

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

“Mr. Downes, the intersection of Highway 31 and I-65 is our gateway. The City should do something to make it better!”

“The City cares more about other areas of the City than the Highway 31 corridor!!”

“The City’s priorities should be adjusted to include the south end of Highway 31!!!”

These strong statements have been shared with me directly on many occasions and have resonated with me during my time as your City Manager. The reality of the matter is that the improvement of the Highway 31 corridor, including the southern end, has always been a top priority of our elected officials and, accordingly, the City staff. Various improvement strategies have been strongly expressed and evaluated based upon our governing body’s desire to be action-oriented toward positive improvement of problematic areas of Highway 31. Sometimes, private property owners’ agendas do not correspond to the vision of City leaders. Sometimes, the City’s efforts to act cannot be expressed publicly. Sometimes, success is just a matter of timing. Without hesitation, I can declare that our City Council has made it clear to me that aggressive action was needed to improve Highway 31 South. The first such action was to acquire on old hotel property in that area that had seen better days. With that direction, a team of staff and consultants began a more than two-year journey to deliver on the City Council’s desires. This resulted in the July 2022 purchase of the Days Inn property on Highway 31 for the purpose of demolition and redevelopment.

There are several concepts I would like to mention as this plan becomes a reality. First of all, your elected officials and City staff do listen and act deliberately when there is a community need. While the City is not always successful in solving every problem or issue, the hotel acquisition success is an example of a desire to consistently strive for improvement no matter the hurdles. Where there is a will, there is a way. Additionally, the City has adopted many different means to be actively transparent in its activities; however, it is impossible to publicly disclose all strategic efforts. Mayor Curry coined the phrase “creating momentum” as a descriptor of a series of positive actions begetting other positive actions within our city. And this is a great example! I am excited that we can deliver on this catalyst action to improve an important business and transportation corridor. This activity, though a long time coming, will yield many additional direct and indirect benefits to Vestavia Hills.

In the next several weeks, residents will be able to see the “old” get razed and new horizons become visible. This will take place through overt actions to explore redevelopment opportunities. It is also our intent to engage the public as the repurposing of this and other properties along Highway 31 comes into focus. Stay tuned, there are other great things on the way for our wonderful city, but for the moment, let’s all take a moment to celebrate another step of success as we journey toward making Vestavia Hills the best that it can be!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Events and dates subject to change. Please refer to the City of Vestavia Hills website for the most up-to-date event information.

August 2022

- 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 and Zoning Commission,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 15 Council Work Session,**
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 16 Parks and Recreation Board,**
Executive Conference Room,
5:30 p.m.
- 18 National Senior Citizens Day
Celebration Sock Hop,**
Civic Center, 4 p.m.
- 18 Board of Zoning Adjustment,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 22 City Council Meeting,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 23 Crimes Against the Elderly Seminar,**
VHUMC, 1:30 p.m.
- 27 Cahaba Heights Anniversary Celebration,**
The Heights Village, 6 p.m.



Ashley Curry,
Mayor
City of
Vestavia Hills

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I hope you were able to attend the recent "I Love America" celebration at Wald Park. This event was really spectacular and showcased our newly renovated park.

Thanks to the Chamber of Commerce for organizing the event and to the many City staff and volunteers that helped make this event possible.

For this month's newsletter, I am sitting in my office trying to figure out why any individual would walk into a social event at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and open fire on the participants. There is no explanation for such a senseless, cowardly act. I am reminded of the words of Thomas Paine when he said, "These are the times that try men's souls," as he was trying to encourage the citizens to organize and support the American revolution. We need to support our church friends at St. Stephen's, all of our residents affected by this horrific act, and the community at large. These truly are times that try men's souls.

In 1981 Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a book entitled, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. In his book Kushner addresses one of the principal questions of why these things happen. How do you explain the conundrum of why bad things happen to good people as was the case on June 16 at a potluck dinner? Kushner tells us that sometimes there is no reason. Some things are just circumstantial, and there is no point in looking for a reason for them. As in this case, there were no exceptions for good people – the parishioners at a church. This incident is so hard to understand and, while Kushner's words are true, they are not very comforting.

What is comforting is the outpouring of love from our Vestavia Hills residents and people throughout the metropolitan area and the entire state. The entrance to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church was covered with flowers and signs from citizens and friends. Additionally, I have received numerous emails, texts and calls from individuals offering their prayers for the affected families, as well as our entire city. A young lady in Homewood sent a note to me stating, "Please send my deepest gratitude to your first responders who put their lives on the line to protect and enforce justice." I share her sentiment and truly appreciate the dedication of our first responders. We are blessed to live in such a loving community.

As I drive around town, I have noticed several lemonade stands in the front yards of houses. I have a rule that I will always stop and support these entrepreneurs. I believe that there are valuable life lessons for these children. First and foremost, the children learn how to communicate with their customers. Within this communication is learning how to make a sale, how to make change and the value of good customer service. Secondly, after a few of these ventures, they learn that Mom provided all of the products and that in the real

world, they would need to deal with those expenses. They learn a valuable lesson about money management.

There are life lessons for adults as well. Is whatever errand you are on really more important than bringing some joy to the children involved? Isn't it great that the kids are outside learning these lessons rather than playing video games inside?

I hope you have had an enjoyable summer and remember to stop at the lemonade stand.

**CRIMES AGAINST
THE ELDERLY**
Informational Seminar

presented by
VESTAVIA HILLS
A LIFE ABOVE

The City of Vestavia Hills is hosting a FREE seminar to provide information on issues affecting senior citizens today – particularly financial crimes and elder abuse. Representatives from various agencies will be available to discretely discuss sensitive matters and provide direction and assistance for our senior residents and their caregivers.

All are welcome. Join us to learn more about protecting our aging residents from scams and abuse.

Location: Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church
2061 Kentucky Avenue, 35216

Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Time: 1:30-4:00 p.m.

Participating agencies include:

Vestavia Hills Police Department; Federal Bureau of Investigation, Birmingham Division; Alabama Department of Senior Services; Jefferson County Senior Services Division; Jefferson County District Attorney's Office; Elder Justice Center of Alabama; and United Way Area Agency on Aging

Sponsored by:



VESTAVIA HILLS





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

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

The beginning of a new school year is a time for celebration. We celebrate because our children will be learning and growing in a great school system. And that is possible because of the tradition of unparalleled support our schools receive from the community. This makes our mission of providing every student the opportunity

to learn without limits far more achievable.

There are many examples of how this level of support will benefit our children this year. More than 16% of our outstanding teachers are employed solely through local tax dollars. This means we are able to maintain smaller class sizes; provide art and music classes for all elementary students; and offer a robust number of advanced academic courses, fine arts and other engaging electives for secondary students. Our teachers also participate in many locally funded opportunities for professional growth that enhance the profound learning experiences we aspire to give our children.

Supporting our students in a safe and nurturing learning environment is a priority in VHCS. Each school has at least one school resource

officer, paid completely through local funds. We also have one school nurse for each campus, paid primarily by local funds. VHCS has more school counselors than state funding provides, including a social worker and extensive partnerships throughout the community. This team of skilled professionals provide support for our students as they confront the challenges life brings.

In summary, we are blessed to live in a community where investing in education is a top priority. With that investment comes expectations for excellence that VHCS embraces. I invite you to read our annual report on our website where you will find many examples of the transformational work that took place in our schools last year. These impressive outcomes are possible because the support is unparalleled. Thank you, Vestavia Hills!

We also recognize that pursuing excellence is a journey. In his book, *Fearless Success*, former Blue Angels pilot John Foley says, "The future favors the bold." He goes on to say that every person, organization or team always has room for getting better. It is that motivation which will elevate our school system to even greater heights. I look forward to sharing with you throughout the school year more about the bold vision we call "1Rebel 1Future."

TIME

TO RECONNECT WITH YOUR FAITH?



JOIN US TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE AND HELP CHANGE OUR COMMUNITY AND WORLD!
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**Michelle Hawkins,
President**

Vestavia Hills
Chamber of Commerce

CHAMBER NEWS

Hello to all friends and residents of Vestavia Hills! I am so excited to introduce myself as the new president of the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce!

Karen Odle's 20-year legacy as president of the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce will make for tough shoes to fill. But I

come with a servant's heart and am ready to promote our local businesses, grow connections, give back and encourage each friend, neighbor and citizen to reach out and get more connected within our community. We have reason to hold our heads high! Vestavia Hills offers a nationally recognized school system. We have outstanding and dedicated community and city leaders. We are proud of our Vestavia Hills Fire and Police departments, our local churches, new community spaces and the expansion of new developments and re-developments. Vestavia Hills truly is the best place to shop, dine, live, work and play!

Now on to a little business--

If you're doing a little summer cleaning and are looking to dispose of unwanted items, be sure to mark your calendars and participate in Shred & Recycle Day on September 10, 2022, from 8 a.m. to noon at the new Vestavia Hills Civic Center. You will be able to drop off unwanted electronics or household hazardous waste, shred those old bills and papers and even dispose of unwanted medications (no needles, please). For more information, visit vestaviahills.org or call the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce at 205.823.5011.

I hope everyone is enjoying these summer days! I am so proud to be here in Vestavia Hills and I look forward to meeting you within the community. Until then, keep cool, help others, and let's make our city a better place for everyone in "A Life Above."

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35th ANNIVERSARY

RECYCLING & HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

The City and Chamber of Commerce typically offer e-recycling and hazardous household waste events in September and May. But how do you dispose of chemicals or other reusable materials in-between those event dates? There are several options to help keep your home clear of the e-clutter and unwanted chemicals.

e-Recycling. Protec Recycling (205.549.2120; protecrecycling.com) partners with the City and Chamber to offer electronics recycling and data destruction services. Best Buy also offers a recycling program. Please note, some items are free to recycle, others may incur a fee. Some items are beyond the need to recycle. In that case, Amwaste collects most electronics with your household trash but will NOT collect televisions.

Batteries. Batteries+Bulbs accepts most batteries or bulbs. Additionally, Lowe's accepts rechargeable batteries, cell phones and unbroken CFL, LED and fluorescent bulbs. LED bulbs, along with regular alkaline batteries, may also be disposed of with your household waste.

Paint. Regardless of where paint is disposed of, paint must be dry before it can be accepted. Add kitty litter or sand to the paint, leave the lid open and allow ample time for the paint to dry, typically a week or more. It is very important that wet paint not be placed for pickup, as it can end up on the road, on driveways, etc.

Gas Cans. Empty gas cans will be collected with your household trash. Be sure to remove the lid/nozzle and place the items in your trash cart. Unemptied gas cans may be left open until the gas evaporates. Be sure the can is open in a well-ventilated area. If you are unsure about how to safely allow the gas to evaporate, contact VHFD at 205.978.0225.

Motor Oil. Businesses offering oil change services typically accept household amounts of used motor oil.

Chemicals & Fertilizers. Household amounts of residential chemicals – cleaning products, lawn fertilizer, etc. – can be safely disposed of in your household garbage. If you have several chemicals to dispose of, please stagger disposal and only put 2-3 in your trash cart per collection. If possible, place the container in a well-ventilated area and allow the chemical to evaporate prior to placing in your cart for collection.

For more detailed information on recycling or hazardous waste disposal, visit <http://bit.ly/VH-waste-collection>.

Shred & Recycle Day

September 10th, 2022 8AM to 12PM

New Vestavia Hills Civic Center
1090 Montgomery Highway 35216

Drop off your unwanted electronics, household hazardous waste, paper shredding, and medication (no needles)

Electronics Accepted

PCs & Laptops, servers, cell phones & tablets, satellite & cable boxes, gaming systems & components, stereos & radios, switches & firewalls, printers, fax machines, VCRs & DVD players, remote controls, MP3 players, A/C adapters & other cables, LCD monitors, CRT monitors*, ink & toner cartridges, rechargeable batteries, hard drives*, speakers, cameras, modems & routers, CD players, small kitchen appliances, consumer electronics, battery backups, keyboards & mice, stand alone copiers* and TVs*

*Disposal fee required: hard drive & CRT monitors: \$10 each, TVs: \$20 each

Not Accepted

Large appliances or wooden console TVs

Hazardous Waste Accepted

Paint, batteries (household & automotive), light bulbs, and pesticides. Paint and pesticides MUST be in their original containers or they will NOT be accepted. **Household amounts only, No contractors! Proof of Vestavia Hills Residency required for hazardous waste disposal.**

Special Thanks to: PROTEC Recycling, AmWaste, Gone for Good (a program of United Ability), and VHPD

For more information, visit vestaviiahills.org or call (205) 823-5011

LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

AUGUST

events

Children (Birth-Gr. 1) | **Tweens** (Gr. 2-6) | **Teens** (Gr. 6-12)
Adults (Ages 18+) | **Tech** (Ages 18+) | **Makerspace** (All ages, unless noted)

- 3 **Handmade with Holly: Cokes & Strokes**, 11am, Community Room
Online Safety, 4pm, Electronic Classroom
- 4 **Beginner Tai Chi**, 1pm, Community Room
Open Maker Lab, 2-6pm, Makerspace
Chess Club, 4pm, Historical Room
Read & Feed Book Group: "The School for Good Mothers,"
6pm, Community Room
- 5 **Open Gaming**, 4pm, Community Room
- 8 **Afternoon at the Movies: The Lost City**, 2pm, Community Room
- 9 **Windows 10**, 4pm, Electronic Classroom
Teardown Tuesday, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 10 **Writing Group**, 4pm, Historical Room
- 11 **Beginner Tai Chi**, 1pm, Community Room
Open Maker Lab, 2-6pm, Makerspace
- 12 **Open Gaming**, 4pm, Community Room
- 13 **Dungeons and Dragons One-Shot**, 2pm, Historical Room
- 15 **Intro to 3D Printing**, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 16 **Stained Mason Jars**, 4pm, Makerspace
- 17 **Art Group**, 4pm, Treehouse
- 18 **Facebook Security**, 10:30am, Electronic Classroom
Beginner Tai Chi, 1pm, Community Room
Open Maker Lab, 2-6pm, Makerspace
- 19 **Open Gaming**, 4pm, Community Room
Craft*Lab: Paper Art, 7pm, Community Room
- 22 **Advanced Excel: Pivot Tables & Dashboards**, 5pm, Electronic Classroom
- 23 **D&D Miniature Painting**, 4pm, Makerspace
Soldering 101, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 24 **Among Us**, 4pm, Discord
- 25 **Beginner Tai Chi**, 1pm, Community Room
Open Maker Lab, 2-6pm, Makerspace
- 26 **Super Smash Bros Tournament**, 4pm, Community Room
- 29 **Vinyl Cutting**, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 31 **Anime Club**, 4pm, Historical Room



Let's Write the Next Chapter!

Vestavia Hills Library Foundation

Help the Vestavia Hills Library Foundation "Write the Next Chapter" in the library's history! **The Foundation will be hosting an on-line fundraising September 19-23, 2022 and all proceeds benefit the Library in the Forest.**

More information coming soon! Be sure to follow the Foundation on social media at facebook.com/vhlibraryfoundation!

CAHABA HEIGHTS

TWENTY YEARS IN VESTAVIA HILLS

Join us to celebrate
20 Years of Cahaba Heights
Saying "YES!" to Vestavia Hills

Saturday, August 27, 2022 ~ 6-9pm
The Heights Village

Entertainment by the



CH Cahaba Heights
MA Merchants



SUMMER FUN IN VESTAVIA HILLS!

Active Adults August Activities (55+)

- Join us for **fun, fellowship, and lunch at New Merkel House** in Cahaba Heights every Monday-Friday. Lunch is served daily at 11:45am.
 - Monday: Stretching classes & table games, 10:30am
 - Tuesday: Tai Chi & table games, 12:30pm
 - Wednesday: Nutritional Education
 - Thursday: Tech Talk Thursday; chair yoga & table games, 12:30pm
 - Friday: Sing-along, bingo or other games
 - National Peach Day is August 19! Visit New Merkel House between 9-11am and try some delicious peaches. *Sponsored by Sincere Companion Services.*
- On Thursday, August 4, we will hit the road to visit the **Wind Creek Casino in Wetumpka, AL!** The bus will leave the VH Civic Center at 7:30am and is scheduled to return at 5pm. Reservations are required; call Melinda Burnett at 205.978.0166. Transportation is provided, but lunch is at your discretion.

- **Lunch Bunch** will be on Thursday, August 11, followed by a movie! We will visit Miss Myra's BBQ. Meet at Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex at 10:45am for free transportation. Lunch is at your discretion; reserve your spot by calling 205.978.0166!
- August 18 is our **National Senior Day Sock Hop!** Join us for an evening of fun with entertainment by the Kool Kats from 4-7pm at the Vestavia Hills Civic Center! Light snacks will be provided. Call 205.978.0166 to make your reservation today!

Congratulations, Melanie Perry!

Our very own Melanie Perry, activities coordinator at New Merkel House, was honored on July 21 as a **2022 Top 50 Over 50 award recipient**. Melanie is dedicated to "making a difference in the lives of seniors" and we could not be more proud. Congratulations, Melanie!



Ask a child what he dreams of doing in the future. His answer brings everything into focus for us.

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