

# Open Line

## A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

June 2018

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City of Auburn

### Why 75 Feet? A history of height in downtown Auburn

On Tuesday, April 3, the Auburn City council approved an increase in the height limit of buildings in the College Edge Overlay District (CEOD), which covers the core of downtown Auburn. Formerly, the building height limit within the CEOD was 65 feet, a reduction from the 75-foot limit recommended as part of the Downtown Master Plan. The most recent amendment restored the 75-foot limit.

#### A history of study

Three different City initiatives in the last 12 years have taken an in-depth look at the City of Auburn's zoning regulations downtown. The first major review began in 2006, with the formation of the Urban Core Task Force, led by former Auburn Mayor Jan Dempsey.

The mission of the task force was to evaluate laws and policies to formulate a community vision for the Urban Core. The group vetted building height and found the existing 60-foot height limit could not accommodate non-residential uses within a typical five-story building.

The reason? Non-residential uses required greater floor-to-ceiling heights than residential uses, which typically require 12-feet per floor. Offices usually have 14-foot ceilings, and commercial or retail spaces usually have 16-foot ceilings. The task force proposed increasing the building height to 66 feet in the Urban Core and CEOD to allow a typical five-story mixed-use building to have a commercial ground floor, offices on the second floor and up to three residential floors. The Auburn City Council adopted these recommendations in 2007.

In 2009, the Auburn Chamber of Commerce Commercial Business Focus Group filed a report with Auburn Mayor Bill Ham Jr. identifying challenges and obstacles to development in the Urban Core, including the changes adopted in 2007. In response, Mayor Ham appointed a Downtown Study Committee consisting of Council and Planning Commission members. The committee reviewed the Chamber report and made recommendations intended to help downtown Auburn thrive.

The committee ultimately held 13 meetings with input from stakeholders including downtown business and property owners, Auburn University, the Chamber of Commerce and the former chair of the Urban Core Task Force. The Downtown Study Committee recommended raising the maximum building height in the Urban Core and CEOD from 66 to 75 feet, and the Council adopted the recommendation in 2010.

#### A history of planning

In 2013, the City of Auburn initiated the Downtown Master Plan process. The City sought input from stakeholders and residents through public workshops, surveys, a steering committee of local business owners and community leaders, stakeholder interviews, an open



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house and public hearings. After extensive study and public input over an almost three-year period, the Downtown Master Plan recommended that the maximum building height remain at 75 feet to “preserve and expand the existing charm and sense of scale of the City’s historic core as a shopping, dining and entertainment district.”

### **A history of reconsideration**

The Auburn City Council adopted the Downtown Master Plan in 2015. During the March 2016 adoption hearing for the zoning regulations needed to implement the plan, the Council reduced the maximum building height in the CEOD to 65 feet, less than what was recommended by any of the three previous initiatives.

But the height discussion would arise again, most recently during a joint meeting with the Council and Planning Commission in November 2017. In response, City staff prepared a recommendation for the Planning Commission to consider in March 2018.

The staff recommended to the Planning Commission that the height should be restored to 75 feet as recommended by the Downtown Study Committee in 2010 and the Downtown Master Plan in 2015. After years of both public input and professional study and analysis, 75 feet represents the optimal height to both “preserve and expand” downtown, allowing for a dynamic mix of uses, rather than just residential.

The Planning Commission agreed with the staff recommendation. The City Council considered the issue at their March 20 and April

3, 2018, meetings, culminating in a vote to restore the height limit to 75 feet.

### **A history of input**

In listening to citizen input on both sides of the height discussion over the years, it became evident to Mayor Ham that concern about the aesthetics of downtown buildings was at the forefront in discussions about building height.

“For the past several months, there has been considerable discussion within the Auburn community concerning new developments in downtown Auburn,” Mayor Ham said at the April 3 City Council meeting. “After listening carefully and considering this matter over an extended time, I’ve come to the conclusion that—and I’ve heard from a lot of you—that maybe the height is not the biggest issue. Maybe it’s about design of the buildings even more so than the height.”

Mayor Ham subsequently proposed the creation of a Downtown Design Review Committee to review proposed developments in the Urban Core and the CEOD. While Alabama law does not permit such a board to make legally binding architectural requirements, this committee would help provide guidance to developers through recommendations and potentially as part of development agreements with the City.

The Council established the committee at its April 17 meeting and appointed architects Dan Bennett and David Hinson and resident Anna Solomon to serve as its first members. Two City employees appointed by the City Manager will also serve on the committee.

## **Alison Frazier appointed as Engineering Services Department director**



It began as a child’s fascination with the composition and construction of things. Years later, Alison Frazier’s bent toward figuring out how things are put together has manifested itself in more than 20 years’ worth of solutions to Auburn’s infrastructure and transportation needs.

Frazier, a 21-year City of Auburn engineer, is the City of Auburn’s new Engineering Services Department director. Formerly a division of the Public Works Department, the Engineering Services Department provides

engineering and project management services for construction and improvements to Auburn’s roads, sidewalks, drainage structures and bridges. The department also coordinates the plans review process for engineering and utility construction proposed by the local development community.

Frazier received a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Auburn University in 1995 and went on to work with the Alabama Department of Transportation. She started at the City as a project manager in the former Engineering Department in 1997. A year and a half later, Engineering merged with Public Works, where Frazier served as an acting assistant city engineer and storm water engineer. She settled into her position as engineering division manager in 2000, which she held through January 2018. She is a Certified Floodplain Manager and became a Professional Engineer in 2008.

Over the years, many of the projects that stand out to Frazier are improvements that made transportation safer and more efficient near schools, including improvements to the intersection of Dean Road and Samford Avenue (2006) and the North College Street Sidewalk Project (2013). Seeing the direct impact projects have on the area is one of the highlights of her job.

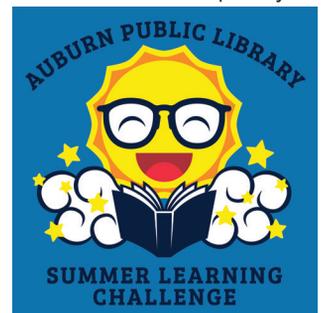
“It’s pretty overwhelming, even after doing this for 20 years,” Frazier said. “Every time I ride down North College Street, somebody’s walking or jogging or on a bike—every single time. It’s good to do something that’s meaningful and helps people’s quality of life.”

One of the department’s main tasks moving forward will be to tackle the challenge of “keeping up,” Frazier said. As infill continues and less developable property is available, Frazier is looking at projects like an “outer loop” that would route traffic and connect areas on the edge of Auburn. A Comprehensive Traffic Study is underway that will help produce initiatives like signal timing and coordination and improvements to traffic congestion in Northwest Auburn.

Frazier asks her staff to go that extra mile in providing excellent services to Auburn’s citizens, and she is looking forward to giving them the support needed to excel. She asks residents to be patient as the new department settles into its new roles and processes and to provide constructive feedback. She and her staff are always available to address concerns or to answer questions.

## **Summer Learning Challenge**

Remember to sign-up for the Summer Learning Challenge on May 31! Reading all summer is important to maintain and improve your literacy skills before school begins in the fall. Stop by the library on May 31 to play games, grab some popcorn and register to take the Summer Learning Challenge. The challenge is simple—just set a goal, and read all summer. If you read for 18 hours or just 20 minutes a day, you will earn a Summer Learning Challenge T-shirt!



## Regulations for Political, Campaign Signs

As the 2018 municipal and state elections draw near, remember that the City of Auburn's municipal code regulates all signage within Auburn City limits to help ensure the proper placement of signs throughout the City. Residents and businesses can help keep Auburn beautiful by following these rules:

- Only put out political signs within 30 days prior to the election date and remove them by the seventh day after the election. If there is a run-off election, the run-off candidates' signs may remain out until the seventh day after the run-off election.
- Political signs cannot be more than 32 square feet.
- Don't place signs on City of Auburn property or Auburn City Schools property, including rights-of-ways, utility poles, benches, public parks, etc. Signs may not be placed outside the boundaries of a business or individual's property line.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that volunteers and sign contractors who distribute and erect political signs during an election do so in compliance with City Code. For more info, contact the Inspection Services Department at (334) 501-3170 or [webcodes@auburnalabama.org](mailto:webcodes@auburnalabama.org).

## Website Feature: Downtown Auburn parking app

Downtown Auburn is alive with things to do and see, but finding an empty parking spot can be a challenge. The City of Auburn's website is here to help. As part of growing "smart city" infrastructure, downtown parking lots have built-in intelligence, or technology installed in each lot that keeps track of occupied and available parking spaces.

While this data helps us better understand downtown parking needs, we also want you to be able to take advantage of it. We mixed the information from our smart parking lots with the City's extensive mapping system and made it available to you via the Downtown Parking Application, which can be found at [auburnalabama.org/maps](http://auburnalabama.org/maps) on any internet-connected device. The application shows you each lot's capacity and the exact parking spaces that are available or already taken in real time. Use it to find your parking space, and enjoy downtown!



## SummerNight Downtown Art Walk

The SummerNight Downtown Art Walk, hosted by the Auburn Arts Association, City of Auburn, Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities and Auburn Downtown Merchants Association, will be held June 8 from 6-10 p.m. in downtown Auburn.

The festivities will begin with a standing line party and parade at 5 p.m. starting at the Center for Arts and Humanities at 101 Debardeleben St. This fun night will feature works from local artists, live musical entertainment and children's activities.



Culinary enthusiasts are also encouraged to submit their best blueberry dish for the Blueberry Bash culinary contest!

Downtown merchants and restaurants will remain open after regular business hours.

SummerNight is FREE to the public and is a rain or shine event.

For applications or more info, visit [auburnsummernight.org](http://auburnsummernight.org) or call (334) 501-2936.

## Budget work sessions, readings scheduled for summer

Work has begun to assess and allocate funding for the next two years through the FY 2019-2020 Biennial Budget. The City will hold work sessions and readings during the planning process, and the budget will go to the Council for review before FY 2019 begins on Oct. 1.

The following meetings are scheduled for June and July:

- June 27 – Work session
- July 10 – First reading of the budget ordinance
- July 24 – Second reading of the budget ordinance (only if necessary)

Keep an eye on [AuburnAlabama.org](http://AuburnAlabama.org) for meeting times and locations.

# JUNE upCOMING EVENTS

Due to space considerations, we are unable to publicize events that are not directly affiliated with a City department.

<p>View our online edition of Open Line at <a href="http://auburnalabama.org/openline">auburnalabama.org/openline</a></p>	<p><b>City Meeting Schedule</b> <a href="http://auburnalabama.org">auburnalabama.org</a> (334) 501-7260</p> <p><b>Auburn Public Library</b> <a href="http://auburnalabama.org/library">auburnalabama.org/library</a> (334) 501-3198</p> <p><b>Parks and Recreation</b> <a href="http://auburnalabama.org/parks">auburnalabama.org/parks</a> (334) 501-2930</p>	 <p>City of Auburn</p>			<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Tree Commission 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Active Auburn Swim-A-Thon 7:30-9:30 a.m.</p> <p>STEM Storytime 10 a.m.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Young Writer's Club 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Cemeteries Advisory Board 4 p.m.</p> <p>Auditions for AACT's "Silent Sky"</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Baby Time 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>50+ Bingo 10:30 a.m. at Harris Center</p> <p>Parks &amp; Recreation Advisory Board 11:45 a.m.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole 6:55 p.m.</p> <p>City Council 7 p.m.</p> <p>A-Z Animals</p> <p>Auditions for AACT's "Silent Sky"</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Toddler Storytime 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m.</p> <p>Auburn Public Library Studio 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Board of Zoning Adjustment 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Preschool Storytime 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m.</p> <p>Hometown Heroes 2 p.m.</p> <p>Gamer's Society 4 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>SummerNight Downtown Art Walk Starting Line Party &amp; Parade 5 p.m. at Pebble Hill</p> <p>SummerNight Downtown Art Walk 6-10 p.m. at Downtown Auburn</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>STEM Storytime 10 a.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>Young Writer's Club 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Baby Time 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Dr. Magical Balloons</p> <p>Greenspace Advisory Board Noon</p> <p>Historic Preservation Commission 4 p.m.</p> <p>Board of Education 6 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Toddler Time 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Auburn Public Library Studio 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Letters to Dad 2:30 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>Preschool Storytime 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Hometown Heroes 2 p.m.</p> <p>Gamer's Society 4 p.m.</p> <p>Planning Commission 5 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>STEM Storytime 10 a.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>
<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>Young Writer's Club 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>Auburn Pollinator Week</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>Baby Time 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>50+ Bingo 10:30 a.m. at Harris Center</p> <p>Library Board 4 p.m.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole 6:55 p.m.</p> <p>City Council 7 p.m.</p> <p>Southeastern Raptor Center</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Toddler Time 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Auburn Public Library Studio 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>Auburn Pollinator Week</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>Preschool Storytime 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Hometown Heroes 2 p.m.</p> <p>Gamer's Society 4 p.m.</p> <p>Water Works Board 4 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>Auburn Pollinator Week</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Bee Auburn 6-9 p.m. at Gay Street Parking Lot</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>Auburn Pollinator Week</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>STEM Storytime 10 a.m.</p> <p>Day in Clay @ Dean Road Ceramics Studio</p>
<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>Young Writer's Club 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>D.A.R.E. Camp</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>Baby Time 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Bubble and Squeak</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>D.A.R.E. Camp</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>Toddler Time 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Auburn Public Library Studio 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Budget Work Session</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>D.A.R.E. Camp</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>Preschool Storytime 9:30 A.M., 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M.</p> <p>Hometown Heroes 2 p.m.</p> <p>Gamer's Society 4 p.m.</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>D.A.R.E. Camp</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>Friday Night Splash 6-8 p.m. @ Sanford Pool</p> <p>Summer Therapeutic Camp</p> <p>D.A.R.E. Camp</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>STEM Storytime 10 a.m.</p>

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