



NEWS FROM CITY HALL

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES · AVONDALE ESTATES, GEORGIA
NEWSLETTER 340

January - February 2024

A Fresh Start to 2024

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2023
REVIEW



15

BUSINESS
UPDATES



20

HOLIDAY
SPIRIT
AWARDS



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Board of Mayor & Commissioners

Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

Lionel Laratte, Commissioner

Graham Reiney, Commissioner

Lisa Shortell, Commissioner

Michael Smith, Commissioner

Administration

Patrick Bryant, City Manager

Shannon Powell, Assistant City Manager

Kayla Green, Finance Officer

Lori Leland, Planner and Permitting Coordinator

Brittany Marmol,
Director of Finance and Administrative Services

Tammy Martinez,
Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Kristen Moretz, Capital Projects, Construction and
Maintenance Director

Ellen Powell, Creative,
Marketing and Communications Director

Karina Reyna, City Clerk

Marcella Shaw, Clerk of Court

Police Department

Harry Hess, Chief of Police

Jerry "J.D." Branch, Deputy Chief

Public Works Department

Marcel Jackson, Public Works Director

Don Huff, Public Works Supervisor

Adrian Langston, Greenspace Manager

Cover Photo: Ellen Powell

Circle M Farm at the Avondale
Estates Farmers Market at the Town Green



Stay in Touch with the City of Avondale Estates

Stay connected with what's happening through the many communications channels used by the city.

Newsletter

To receive this bimonthly newsletter in the mail or electronically, please email communications@avondaleestates.org.

E-News

The city emails an electronic newsletter once a week and as needed for special announcements and alerts. To sign up, visit www.avondaleestates.org/e-news.html.



Website

www.avondaleestates.org



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The City Newsletter reserves the right to refuse unsolicited submissions and to edit all copy in regard to space appropriateness, and cost considerations. As a courtesy to the clubs and organizations that civically operate in the City, a brief notice of their activities may be included as space permits. The City Newsletter is not a forum for opinion pieces nor for political speech. The City reserves the right to reject any proposed advertisement of an offensive, religious, or political nature.

News from City Hall - Newsletter Disclaimer

Purpose

The City Newsletter was created for the purpose of providing a written medium for regularly sharing information from City Hall. It is a vehicle for the Board of Mayor and Commissioners and the City Manager to share information relevant to issues discussed, actions taken, and plans made by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners, to share newsworthy information about our residents and businesses, and to provide a calendar of scheduled City events.



From the City Manager



by Patrick Bryant
City Manager

Avondale Estates Adopts 2024 Budget

At its regular business meeting on December 13, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners adopted the administration’s recommended 2024 Proposed

Budget, including the General Fund, 2024-2025 Capital Program, Enterprise Funds, and Trust Funds. This budget continues a nine-year track record of a conservative spending plan that meets the operational needs of the city while lowering the millage rate without dipping into reserve funds for operations. Meanwhile, the city has continued to incrementally lower the millage rate to provide tax relief to property owners resulting in one of the lowest tax rates in DeKalb County.

Funding not only comes from property taxes but from other sources as well. The city brings in enterprise fund fees for sanitation and stormwater, and administrative fees for permits, fines, forfeitures, facility rentals and event sponsorships. The capital projects are also funded through state and federal grants and the Special Purpose Local Area Option Sale Tax (SPLOST).

These revenue streams enable the staff to operate a complex organization that provides services 24/7, maintains extensive infrastructure, provides ongoing community events and programs, and assists property owners in land development and building projects. The city strives to provide the highest level of customer service, transparency, and sound fiscal stewardship to deliver value to its citizens.

One of the ways the hard work of the city and the elected officials has been validated is the exceptional credit rating the city received from Moody’s and

Standard & Poor’s in support of the city’s anticipated \$8.4 million Urban Redevelopment Agency Revenue Bond. Both rating agencies cited the city’s strong economic outlook, sound budget management, and financial policies as reasons for the prestigious ratings. The rating is a testament to the hard work of our staff and elected leaders, who often must make tough decisions that are in the interest of the organization but may not be to the satisfaction of every resident, business or property owner.

Key takeaways in the 2024 Budget include:

- ▶ A tax cut for property owners.
- ▶ An increase in assessed commercial property taxes of \$4.7M, largely attributed to the new apartment buildings.
- ▶ Funds for workforce compensation adjustments to remain competitive in the local job market and cost of living increases.
- ▶ Assurance for the future health of the city’s unassigned fund balance.
- ▶ Full funding for the city’s ongoing Capital Program providing resources for major roadway, stormwater, and other critical infrastructure projects.
- ▶ \$1 million for high-priority paving and sidewalk repairs.
- ▶ Multiple stormwater projects at Washington and Pine, Kensington, Dunwick Drive, Wiltshire/Sussex, Wiltshire/Lake and Hess Drive.
- ▶ The complete street project on North Avondale and East College Avenue is one of the most significant catalytic projects funded in the coming year, which was first called for in the 2004 Downtown Master Plan.

I invite you to review the 2024 Adopted Budget on the city website. It and other financial documents can be found on the Finance webpage: <https://avondaleestates.org/2338/Finance>.



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2023 Accomplishments



Top 15 Best Family-friendly City in the Nation (Opendoor) for second year

Recognition

Urban Land Institute's Development of Excellence in the Public Realm for the Town Green

Defended Best Small Town Beer Scene in the Nation Title (USA Today Best10) for third year

Green Initiatives

39th Year as Tree City USA
13th Year with Tree City USA Growth Award

Revised Land Disturbance Regulations to address flooding and clean water

Recycled 8,795 pounds of electronics



Established Greenspace Advisory Committee

Held Earth Day Sustainability Fair and concert

Finance

Received exceptional credit rating: Aa1 from Moody's and AA+ from S&P

SPLOST II passed

Adopted Special Service District

Adopted new administrative fee structure



Moved business and alcohol licenses online

Community Engagement

Focused on informing and connecting with community

5 in-person conversations with City Manager and staff

Presentations on City Finance 101, Green Infrastructure and Solid Waste Assessment

Launched YouTube channel with BOMC meeting recordings, informational presentations and community highlights

Volunteer opportunities with tree plantings, North Woods rain garden plantings and special events



Hosted events where community could connect with elected officials including candidate meet and greet

Continue to increase reach of communication tools including electronic newsletter, print newsletter, website and social media channels

Events

Celebrating Diversity

- Juneteenth: education campaign, Storywalk® at the Town Green and talk with local author at The Book Bird
- Hispanic Heritage Month: concert with the C.O.T. Band, Storywalk® and outdoor exhibit of local Latinx artists with the Avondale Arts Alliance
- Second year hosting Atlanta Pride's Family Fun Day



15 Concerts & Festivals
35 Other Events

Adopted Special Event Ordinance

Avondale Estates Farmers Market moved to the Town Green

Economic Growth

Commercial Tax Base **+4.7M**

378+ Building Permits issued

+78 more building permits than 2022

22 Historic Preservation Certificates of Appropriateness issued

15 New businesses with 44+ new jobs



9 Rural Opportunity Zone applications

The Dale commercial development broke ground

Plans and Studies

COMPLETED

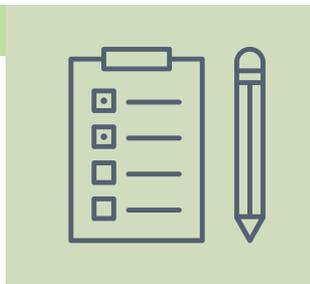
Stormwater Hydrology Model

Clarendon & Kensington Speed Study

Street Pavement Analysis

Street and Curb Repair Assessment

Look Book for development



UNDERWAY

Washington and Pine engineering and design survey

Laredo Dr. bike and pedestrian improvements

Dunwick Dr. Phase 2 drainage

Kensington Stormwater Engineering Plan

Police

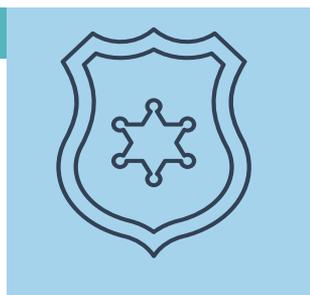
Started Community Police Review Panel

Implemented mentorship program

Contracted with Lexipol to revise operating policy manual

Launched wellness app for officers

Installed surveillance cameras at Town Green and City Hall



Established online training program and certifications tracking

Reserve Officer Program to start in 2024

Construction

COMPLETED

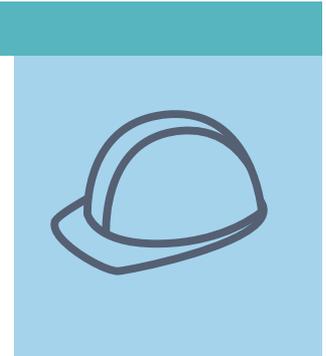
Dunwick Dr. Phase 1 drainage improvements

\$1M invested in priority street repaving, curb and sidewalk repairs

Lakeshore Drive Stormwater Pipe Repair

43 stormwater and street concerns addressed from form submissions

Streamlined inspection process for permits



SCHEDULED FOR 2024

N. Avondale/E. College Complete Street – 18 months of construction starting in first half of 2024

North Woods Phase Two underway – rain gardens and erosion control construction to complete first quarter 2024



Public Works

Hauled to Landfill

- 1,340.70 tons of garbage
- 615.48 tons of yard waste
- 159 special bulk pickups

Recycled

- 192.65 tons recycled
- 300+ Christmas trees recycled into mulch

Introduced yard waste zones and moved to curbside pickup to increase efficiency

Updated and streamlined online service request form and tracking

43 of 53 Greenspace work requests resolved

COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Let's decrease the tons hauled to the landfill in 2024

City Welcomes New Employees

The Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) confirmed the appointment of Karina Reyna as Avondale Estates' city clerk on Wednesday, Nov. 29. Her responsibilities include preparing for and managing the BOMC meetings, recording actions in public meetings following State law and parliamentary procedures, and posting meeting notices. She also serves as the Municipal Elections Superintendent and custodian of official city records and public documents.



Reyna started her public service career in the City of Doraville Parks and Recreation Department. In 2016, she moved into the role of deputy clerk where she handled

meeting management, open records requests and personnel matters. In 2021, she became assistant city clerk for the City of Sandy Springs, focusing on records management. Reyna is nearing the completion of the Georgia Clerks Education Institute Certificate Program through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia.

"Karina brings almost a decade's worth of clerk experience to the city, and we are excited to have her as a part of our team," said City Manager Patrick Bryant.

Deputy Chief Jerry "J.D." Branch was sworn into the Avondale Estates Police Department on Jan. 10 at the BOMC's regular meeting.



Branch has been in law enforcement for 20 years and began his career in 2003 at Clayton State University. In 2005, he joined the Lake City Police Department, obtained the rank of sergeant and worked as the Office of Professional Standards and Training commander.

"I am excited to welcome Deputy Chief Branch to the Avondale Estates Police Department. The wealth of experience he brings will be a real asset to the department as we continue focusing on training, community policing and building leaders in the force," said Chief Harry Hess. "I look forward to working hand in hand with Branch to build on the progress we have made in these areas. "

Branch is a state certification manager and assessor. He has instructor certifications in general instruction, firearms, use of force, speed detection and taser. He also has Peace Officer Standards and Training intermediate, advanced, supervision and management certifications, as well as the FBI-LEEDA Supervision Trilogy certifications.

Branch is responsible for directing and supervising department patrol operations and internal affairs and is the primary contact for all local, state and federal emergency action incidents.

Join a City Board or Commission

The city relies on talented residents to work on tasks assigned by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners, including providing educated counsel and advice, reviewing policy and making informed recommendations on topics important to the city.

Put your talents and expertise to work for the city by applying to one of these boards and commissions.

- ▶ Downtown Development Authority Board
- ▶ Ethics Board
- ▶ Historic Preservation Commission
- ▶ Planning, Architecture and Zoning Board
- ▶ Greenspace Advisory Committee

The deadline to apply to be on a city board or commission is Wednesday, Jan. 17 by 5 p.m.



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Friday, February 16 at 8 p.m.

EMORY UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

featuring Eighth Blackbird
Thursday, March 7 at 8 p.m.

TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET *Island Prayers*

Friday, March 22 at 8 p.m.

RANDALL GOOSBY, violin

Friday, April 5 at 8 p.m.

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Randall
Goosby
photo by Kasey Phipps



City's New Commissioners Sworn In

On January 10, re-elected Mayor Jonathan Elmore and the city's new commissioners Graham Reiney and Michael Smith were sworn in to serve four-year terms on the Board of Mayor and Commissioners.

- ▶ Mayor Elmore has been the city's mayor for nearly nine years and has focused on the sustainable growth of the city and making Avondale Estates an inclusive city.
- ▶ Commissioner Reiney worked as a reference librarian in public libraries and is a stay-at-home dad. Commissioner Reiney has seen the city grow and prosper into a vibrant and welcoming place to visit and live, and he enjoys participating in community traditions.
- ▶ Commissioner Smith graduated from the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. Commissioner Smith and his wife recently opened The Book Bird of Avondale Estates, a pop-up bookstore at the Banjo Lounge, and he values being part of the city's growth.

In addition to voting for candidates, DeKalb voters approved a pair of referendums in the November election – one providing tax relief for homeowners and another providing funding for the city's capital projects.

- ▶ Equalized Homestead Option Sales Tax (EHOST): A tax relief for homeowners that if approved, qualified DeKalb County homeowners will receive a credit that reduces or offsets property tax liability.
- ▶ Special Purpose Local Operation Sales Tax (SPLOTS II): A one-cent sales tax that provides funding exclusively for capital projects, such as roads, buildings, vehicles major equipment, and other long-term improvements.



Graham Reiney (left) and Michael Smith (below) were sworn in as commissioners on January 10.



SOLD and wrapped up for the holidays!



**Call 404-247-7002 - I would love to help you with your next home!
Coming soon: Historic Bungalow in Avondale Estates!**

Groundbreaking Celebrates Commercial Development at the Town Green

Thursday, Dec. 14 was a momentous day for Avondale Estates as city leaders, staff and development and construction partners put shovels into the dirt, breaking ground on The Dale, a 24,000-square-foot mixed-use commercial development at the Town Green.

After years in the works, this vibrant retail and restaurant row in the heart of Avondale Estates' downtown is closer to reality.

Mayor Jonathan Elmore, Avondale Estates Downtown Development Authority Chair Dave Deiters, Fabric Developers partner Jerry Miller and City Manager Patrick Bryant spoke to the crowd prior to the groundbreaking.

Thanks go out to the team who have worked with the Board of Mayor and Commissioners, the Avondale Estates Downtown Development Authority and city staff to make this development possible:

- ▶ Jerry Miller of Fabric Developers,
- ▶ Eric Weatherholtz and Quill Healey of Healey Weatherholtz Properties,
- ▶ SSOE Group,
- ▶ Long Engineering,
- ▶ OutSource Construction & Engineering, and
- ▶ Peter Constructive.

Once completed, The Dale will consist of:

- ▶ multiple restaurants,
- ▶ a rooftop bar and event space overlooking the park,
- ▶ retail opportunities fronting N. Avondale Road,
- ▶ second-floor space devoted to various tenants including co-working or office space, and
- ▶ public bathrooms.

Thanks to everyone who joined the city at the groundbreaking.

Watch the video of the groundbreaking event and speeches on *YouTube* @ *AvondaleEstatesTV*.



Commissioners joined DDA Chair Dave Deiters, Mayor Elmore, City Manager Patrick Bryant, Assistant City Manager Shannon Powell and development partners from Fabric Developers and Healey Weatherholtz Properties.



Pictured above: Downtown Development Authority Chair Dave Deiters chats with DDA board members Leigh Lynch and Walter Barineau. Below left: Mayor Jonathan Elmore prepares to break ground. Below right: Jerry Miller of Fabric Developers speaks to the crowd.



North Woods Project Progress Continues

On November 28, more than 30 residents including members of Gardeners for the Common Good bundled up to plant almost 100 native plants including wood oats, Winterthur Viburnum and a sycamore tree in the southernmost rain garden. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped plant and who participated in the webinars and discussions about green infrastructure. Follow the E-News for updates on future North Woods workdays.

As the landscaping continues over the next few months, residents may see coconut fiber matting covering the site keeping newly planted seeds in place over winter. The native riparian seeds used for the project require a period of prolonged, consistent cold to break dormancy. The cold seed stratification and scarification process utilizes the winter dormancy period and temperature cycles to encourage seed germination and promote growth. They will sprout in the warmer temperatures of April and May.

Early landscaping began in December, but due to construction delays, the project is set to be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

In addition to installing the three rain gardens, the second phase of the North Woods project includes an ADA-accessible slate nature trail running from Berkeley Road to the Boy Scout hunt.

Learn more about green infrastructure including rain gardens on the North Woods Project webpage and find links to the green infrastructure video and presentation pdf.



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News and Updates

Reminder: Remove the Lights and Decorations on the Trees in the Verge

Trees on the verge (the area between the road and sidewalk) are owned and maintained by the city. While decorating them with lights and ribbon is permitted and enjoyed during the holiday season, please remember to remove these decorations by Jan. 15. Lights and other decorations left on these trees after this time will be removed by Avondale Estates Public Works crews. Removed lights and other decorations will not be saved for retrieval.

City Hall Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day



On the 38th anniversary of the King holiday, the city honors the legacy of Dr. King and reflects upon what we can do individually and together to create a better community.

City Hall will be closed on this day of reflection, learning and service. No sanitation pick-up will occur on Monday, Jan. 15. Sanitation will be picked up for the entire city on Tuesday, Jan. 16.

Save the Date: Tree Planting with Trees Atlanta



Join the city and Trees Atlanta on Saturday, Jan. 20 from 9 a.m. – noon to plant 80 trees in the city. These trees will provide cleaner air, cool shade and habitat for wildlife. Planting tasks include digging holes with shovels/mattocks, untangling roots by hand, mulching, watering and cleaning up the area.

Volunteers must register with Trees Atlanta.

What to wear and bring:

- ▶ Work gloves
- ▶ Recommended clothing: Long pants are recommended for kneeling. All volunteers need closed-toed shoes or boots and clothes that can get dirty.
- ▶ Tools: Trees Atlanta provides necessary tools, but volunteers are welcome bring any of the following: shovels, hand trucks, mattocks and hand cultivators.
- ▶ Drinking water: Please bring drinking water in reusable containers. No one-time-use plastic bottles, please.
- ▶ Allergy medication: For those with life-threatening allergic reactions to insects, please come prepared with emergency medicine such as an auto-injector or oral medication. Please notify the coordinator in the case of an allergic attack.
- ▶ Additional suggested items: Sunscreen, bug spray and snacks (Trees Atlanta will not provide these items).
- ▶ Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Celebrate Georgia's Arbor Day Feb. 16

In collaboration with the Avondale Estates Garden Club, the city will plant an approved tree from the city's tree ordinance on the verge on Georgia's Arbor Day, the third Friday in February. Check the city's website and social media channels for details on the event. Winter is the perfect time to plant a tree in the yard – consider adding to the city's tree canopy.



From Trees to Mulch

Thanks to residents' support, 186 Christmas trees were turned into mulch through the Bring One for the Chipper program over the holidays. The mulch will be used throughout the city's green spaces. According to the Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation, over six million Christmas trees have been recycled and diverted from landfills in the past 33 years.



Grant Received to Improve Fletcher Park



The city received a grant from the State of Georgia Office of Planning and Budget to improve the playground equipment at Fletcher Park. The grant proposal drew from the recommendations provided by the Greenspace Ad Hoc Committee's 2018 report which included:

- ▶ Improving the connection between street segments and park visibility through vegetation management and invasives removal,
- ▶ Replacing playground equipment,
- ▶ Removing trees in the center of the greenspace to allow an open lawn space, and
- ▶ Providing gravel or an asphalt path with views into the bird sanctuary, including additional seating areas, enhancing plantings and connecting to S. Lakeshore Drive.

No plans have been developed yet. Landscape and playground equipment improvements are set to occur by 2026.

City Sanitation and Yard Waste Reminders

In 2023, the city made changes to improve the efficiency of the sanitation and yard waste services. The city appreciates the residents' help, flexibility and patience during this time of change. Follow the guidelines below to ensure sanitation and yard waste can be properly disposed of.

NEW YARD WASTE ZONES

The city implemented a new yard waste pickup schedule and divided the city into five zones. Signs are placed in zones the night before collection to help residents remember the new schedule. Collection zones can be found at the bottom of the Sanitation web page.

Tips for helping the team collect yard waste:

- ▶ Keep yard waste and leaf piles free of pet waste,
- ▶ Do not place yard waste in plastic bags,
- ▶ Ensure leaf piles only contain leaves (no bricks, wood or other debris that could damage leaf collection vehicles), and
- ▶ Keep cars off the streets on yard waste and leaf pickup days, if possible. Leaf piles and yard waste blocked by cars will not be picked up, and crews will not return later in the day.

CURBSIDE SANITATION GUIDELINES

Last October, the city moved to curbside sanitation services. Thanks to the help of residents in single-family homes for adapting to this change. Trash receptacles should be at the curb by no later than 7 a.m. on pickup day.

Residents who cannot perform this task may apply to maintain back door pickup by filling out the Special Assistance Request for Back Door Sanitation Pickup on the Sanitation website.

SPECIAL PICKUP REQUEST FOR BULKY ITEMS

Residents may request curbside collection of bulky items for a fee of \$50 up to the first ton and \$50 for each additional ton. Curbside collection of bulky items occurs on Wednesdays. To request a special pickup, fill out a Special Pickup Request form online and complete payments by noon on Tuesdays. Please note that items for special pickup are not picked up with normal sanitation pickup.

Examples of bulky items:

- ▶ furniture
- ▶ appliances
- ▶ wood pipes
- ▶ rugs
- ▶ ceiling fans, etc.

Building materials, stumps, dirt, rocks, concrete products, automobile bodies and parts including tires, paint, oil, other liquid and feces will not be picked up by the city.

Please review the city's sanitation web page for the residential sanitation schedule by street and full list of guidelines. avondaleestates.org/2346/Sanitation

BOMC Sets 2024 Holiday Calendar

HOLIDAY	DATE
New Year's	January 1, 2024
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 15, 2024
Presidents Day	February 19, 2024
Memorial Day	May 27, 2024
Juneteenth	June 19, 2024
Independence Day	July 4, 2024
Labor Day	September 2, 2024
Veterans Day	November 11, 2024
Thanksgiving	November 28 and 29, 2024
Christmas	December 24 and 25, 2024
Floating Holiday	

City Launches YouTube Channel



Subscribe to the city's YouTube channel and stay connected with the latest city info. View recordings of the Board and Mayor and Commissioners meetings, event highlights, presentations and content showcasing the Avondale Estates community.

<https://www.youtube.com/@AvondaleEstatesTV>



Sunday Mushroom Market

Featuring Mushroom Growers, Foragers & related Specialized Vendors

Taproom & Patio Open
Chefs & Live Music Start at Noon

July 9th
July 23rd
Aug 6th
Aug 20th
Sep 3rd
Sep 24th
Oct 15th
Oct 22nd
Nov 5th
Nov 19th
Dec 10th

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Business Updates

City Celebrates Velvet Hippo Opening

On December 7, city officials and staff welcomed The Velvet Hippo, a sandwich and cocktail shop located at 27 N. Avondale Rd., with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Run by husband and wife Aaron and Jamie Russell, the team behind Michelin Guide-recommended restaurant Poor Hendrix, the Velvet Hippo offers hot and cold sandwiches, soups, salads, cocktails, beer and wine which can be enjoyed on their patio or taken to go Thursday through Monday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.



Pictured at the ribbon-cutting (left to right): Assistant City Manager Shannon Powell, Chief Harry Hess, City Manager Patrick Bryant, Velvet Hippo owner Aaron Russell, Velvet Hippo owner Jamie Russell (with scissors), Commissioner Brian Fisher, DDA Chair Dave Deiters (with scissors), Mayor Jonathan Elmore (with scissors), Commissioner Lisa Shortell, Commissioner Dee Merriam, Commissioner Lionel Laratte

Fiber Parts Moves to Banjo Lounge



Fiber Parts has a new home at the Banjo Lounge at 32 N Avondale Road behind the City Dog Market.

Over Thanksgiving, this local yarn and textile art shop moved from the Twin Oaks shopping center into the Banjo Lounge alongside The Book Bird. “The larger space allows me to increase my class size and offer a community setting for fiber craft meetups,” said owner Jaime Rosegren. Fiber Parts holds free family craft nights the first Wednesday of the month from 5-7 p.m., and weekly knitting and crochet groups are already enjoying the space. Expect to see collaborative workshops with reading materials available from The Book Bird.



Farmers Market Bakery Coming to the Tudor Village



Long-time Avondale Estates Farmers Market participant Galette Bakery is moving into the space formerly occupied by My Fair Sweets in the Tudor Village. Founded in 2017 as an in-home cooking class provider, Galette pivoted into pastry production in 2019 and has been growing steadily since. Owners Ashley Thomas and Morgan Perkins plan to offer all their current hits – sourdough croissants, sweet and savory galettes, muffins, cookies and scones – while providing high-quality French American baked goods using locally sourced ingredients. They intend to add more savory options to the menu, including some light lunch options. Additional plans include starting limited bread production and increasing their patisserie selection. Finally, having a space to call their own will allow the two to return to their teaching roots – expect to see pastry classes offered in the future. The opening is scheduled for late summer 2024, but fans can still find them at the Avondale Estates Farmers Market when they return in February.

Restaurants Receive Local and National Recognition

The city boasts some of the best restaurants in the Atlanta area and it is no surprise they are getting recognition for their exceptional flavors and innovative dishes.

- ▶ Arepa Mia was among the ten restaurants to earn a Bib Gourmand Award for its big Venezuelan hospitality, good quality and good value cooking. The first-ever Michelin Guide Atlanta debuted on Tuesday, Oct. 26.
- ▶ Taylor'd Bar-B-Q's pulled pork, chicken wings, Brunswick stew and smokey, savory foods secured them a well-deserved spot in the Atlanta Magazine's Top Dozen Barbecue Spots.
- ▶ Leftie Lee's creative pastries, internationally influenced sandwiches and breakfast options secured them a spot as Atlanta Magazine's Best New Bakery of 2023.





Raise a Glass for Dry January

Participating in Dry January no longer means forgoing comradery at the city's breweries.

Little Cottage has added Atmosphere Brewing's Zero Alcohol Pilsner to the Faucets of Fatality as well as zero-proof Margaritas and Negroni to their mix. January is packed with food vendors and events.

The Lost Druid Brewery & Distillery introduced FAUX Non-Alcoholic Spirits in December. Almost all their taproom cocktails are available with their new Pearl (gin-inspired), Crystal (vodka-inspired), Cleo (rum-inspired), and Lexi (bourbon-inspired) libations.



Wild Heaven announced that Near Wild Heaven, their line of non-alcoholic beers named in full after the great R.E.M. song their company is named after, would be on draft starting January 5. Near Wild Heaven Non-Alcoholic IPA is made with Trident, Centennial and El Dorado hops for a modern feel with uplifting citrus and pine notes and a crisp, clean

finish. The brewery explained that innovation in brewer's yeast allowed them to make a non-alcoholic draft beer that tastes like beer. The brewery plans to make different Near Wild Heaven Non-Alcoholic beers like dark beer and lager soon.



Support Local Businesses Throughout the Year

The call often comes out to "shop local" during the holidays, but local businesses need support throughout the year. It's easy to get caught up in the convenience of online shopping and big box stores, but small businesses offer many benefits to the local community as well as their customers.

Investment in the Local Economy

Shopping and using local services keep money within the community rather than sending it to corporate headquarters. Studies have shown that for every \$100 spent at a local business, \$68 stays in the community, compared to only \$43 for non-local businesses. Studies also show that small businesses donate 250% more than large businesses to local nonprofits and community causes, creating a positive cycle of giving back to local charities, schools, youth organizations, first responders and service groups. Local businesses contribute to local taxes, often employ neighbors, and reinvest in their own operations – creating a cycle that benefits everyone.

Better Service and More Unique Offerings

Local businesses often pride themselves on offering high-quality, handmade, or one-of-a-kind products that you won't find elsewhere.

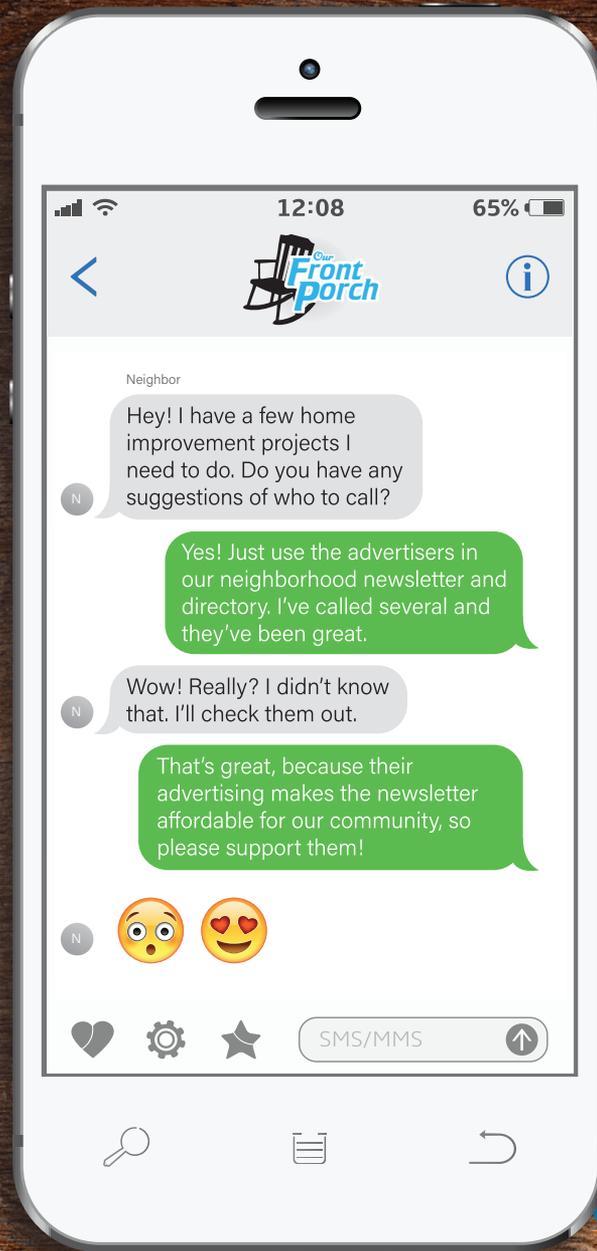
In many cases, these businesses have a specialized focus and have honed their craft to perfection. Local businesses often have owners or employees who are passionate about their products and services and can provide in-depth knowledge or advice.

Small, local businesses often prioritize customer service over profits or speed. They have a personal connection to the community and value building relationships with their customers. Customers may receive personalized recommendations or suggestions that cater to individual needs or preferences.

Environmental Benefits

Choosing to shop locally supports eco-friendly practices and can reduce transportation, packaging waste and energy consumption. Local businesses tend to have a smaller carbon footprint because they often source their products or materials from nearby areas. Instead of shipping products from around the world, they can rely on local resources and transportation, reducing their impact on the environment. Consumers can also reduce packaging waste inherent in on-demand, overnight shipping.

With over 200 of businesses in the city, consider local options when shopping for a product or service.



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MORE CONTENT,
DIGITAL EDITIONS
TOO!**

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January 2024

calendar of events



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

1

2

3

4

5

6

Happy New Year -
City Hall Closed

Bring One for
the Chipper
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Historic Preservation
Commission
6 p.m.

Downtown
Development
Authority Regular
Meeting
5:30 p.m.

Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Work Session
5:30 p.m.

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Martin Luther King Jr.
Day - City Hall Closed

Tree Planting with
Trees Atlanta

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Work Session
5:30 p.m.

28

29

30

31

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

February 2024

calendar of events



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

1

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3

Groundhog Day

4

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9

10

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Historic Preservation
Commission
6 p.m.

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Downtown
Development
Authority Regular
Meeting
5:30 p.m.

Valentine's Day
Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
and Work Session
5:30 p.m.

Arbor Day Tree
Planting

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Presidents Day - City
Hall Closed

25

26

27

28

29

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting and
Work Session
5:30 p.m.

Business Award

The most creative, original display of holiday cheer by a business.

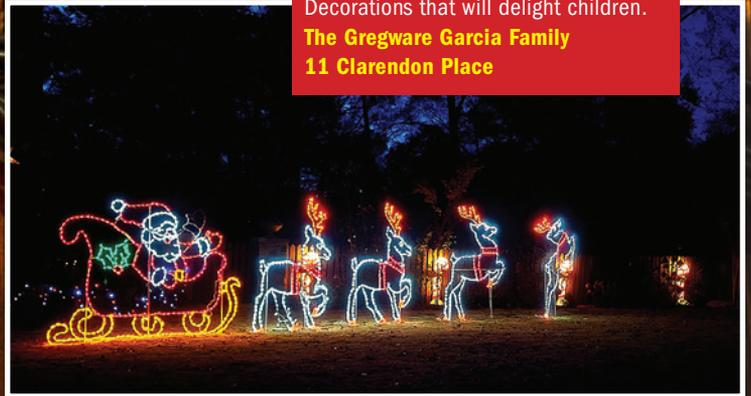
Eclectic Hair Studio
126 N. Avondale Road



Children's Appeal Award

Decorations that will delight children.

The Gregware Garcia Family
11 Clarendon Place



Avondale Elegance Award

Elegantly displayed decor in the yard and the home as seen from the street. Think Southern Living/Martha Stewart.

Leslie Adcock - 33 Kensington Road



Holiday Spirit Award
Winners Shine Bright

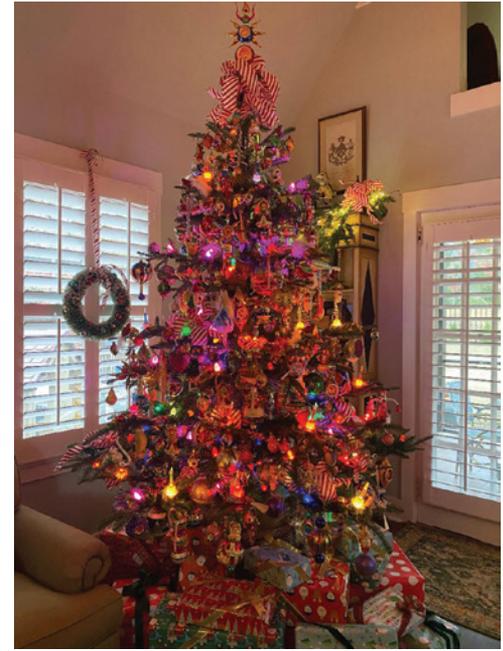
Congratulations to the winners of the 2023 Holiday Spirit Awards, and thanks to all who participated in the competition. It was another beautiful holiday season thanks to the community effort.

Sparkle & Pizazz Award

Homes with the most artistic use of lights and animation.

Wurtzelvania - 1078 Lakeshore Drive





Avondale Estates Shines for Tour of Homes

By Margaret Lunsford, Tour Co-chair

“Oh, the weather outside was frightful” and once again the homes were so delightful at the Avondale Estates Christmas Tour of Homes & Holiday Market. The tour had a variety of beautifully decorated homes representing the different styles of architecture in Avondale Estates.

Homeowners opened their renovated homes for public viewing, showcasing unique decorations and transformations. The houses featured various themes, from a Winter Wonderland with Swiss-inspired decorations to a Craftsman-style home displaying a 1930 Vintage Canvas art poster and an extensive collection of Folk Art and Christmas ornaments.

The dreary weather did not stop the shoppers from coming out to fulfill Christmas gift needs and personal indulgences. In addition to the Tour of Homes, the Holiday Market featured over 35 vendors. Amongst them were first-time vendors offering hand-made glass ornaments, hand-felted tote bags and gourmet chocolates. The tent annex included the much beloved Soup Cafe where shoppers could take a break with tomato and chicken gumbo soup. The gift basket raffle worth almost \$500 of vendor donations was won by Linda Corbett.

We could not have the tour without all our sponsors and Angels! A special thanks to all our them including:

PLATINUM-LEVEL SPONSORS:

- ▶ Jen Newman Homes
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- ▶ A.S Turner & Sons
- ▶ Kudzu Antiques
- ▶ Leigh Lynch-Homegrown Team
- ▶ Santo Cantina & Cochina
- ▶ Calle Latina
- ▶ BaddaBing

OUR COMMITTEE FOR ALL THEIR WORK IN PUTTING ON THE TOUR:

- ▶ Don Connelly
- ▶ Sally Walker
- ▶ Connie Bryans
- ▶ Christine McMahan
- ▶ Lynn Thompson
- ▶ Kathy Delaney
- ▶ Wanda Belline
- ▶ Faye Noble
- ▶ Jean Kingsbury
- ▶ Susan Stewart
- ▶ Paul Dorroh
- ▶ Oscar Ramos
- ▶ Molly Mobley

HOUSE CAPTAINS FOR RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS:

- ▶ Molly Mobley

- ▶ Kathy Delaney
- ▶ Bonnie Chafin
- ▶ Robin Hughes
- ▶ Jen Newman
- ▶ Jill Joyner
- ▶ Julie Fleming
- ▶ Adam Barton
- ▶ Scott Legg

‘SHUTTLE BUS GUYS’ FOR GUIDING OUR GUESTS ON THE TOUR BUSES:

- ▶ Ernie Ahlquist
- ▶ Bill Elek
- ▶ Louis Belline
- ▶ John Mizell

‘LUMINARIANS’ FOR PUTTING LUMINARIES AT ALL THE TOUR HOMES:

- ▶ Clark Lunsford
- ▶ Martha McDermott
- ▶ Peggy Howard
- ▶ Louis Belline
- ▶ Chris Kingsbury
- ▶ Madelyn Brundage
- ▶ David Jones

We also enjoyed musicians who performed at various homes including Peg Wyse, Ann Umbaugh, Linda Abrams, Patricia Calcagno, Emmy Glenn and Zachary Eldridge.

“It takes a village...or a small city!” Thank you, Avondale Estates, and until next year.



Lake House or Community Club?

Is it the Lake House at Avondale or is it the Avondale Community Club? Technically, it's both. The Lake House at Avondale (Lake House), located at 59 Lakeshore Dr., has been the Avondale Community Club's home for nearly 90 years.

Did you know the Lake House is not city property, nor does it receive public funding? The building and grounds are privately owned and maintained by the Avondale Community Club and managed by a volunteer board of directors chosen from the general membership. The Lake House is supported by and relies on member dues, yearly fundraisers, and rentals for meetings, events and celebrations to pay for the ongoing operating, maintenance and improvement costs.

The club's social calendar is centered on monthly neighborhood gatherings, such as casino nights, silent auctions, chili cook off, and dinners hosted by various members.

Want to become a club member? Visit www.avondalecommunity-club.org or find us on Facebook and Instagram.

DSA Presents Winter Dance Concert

The DeKalb School of the Arts will have its annual Winter Dance Concert on Friday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Choreography will be featured by Ballet Hispánico's Chris Bloom and Gabrielle Sprauve, West African Dance by Nadia Trotter featuring live drummers, a Chinese Dance suite by Kerry Lee, variations of Paquita, and a work by alumni Hannah Victoria Thomas.

It will be a fun and engaging evening for all!

Tickets can be purchased through www.bigtickets.com.

Avon Garden Club Going Strong at 70

What do tater tots, Corvettes and the Avon Garden Club have in common?

They all debuted in 1953.

Fast forward 70 years and the Avon Garden Club steadfastly endures (as do tater tots and Corvettes). In the early 1950s, the nation was experiencing an era of post-war optimism and prosperity. People were moving to suburbs such as Avondale Estates and were interested in beautifying their yards and communities.



In 1953, 14 charter members organized the Avon Garden Club to stimulate interest in home gardening and beautifying the community. Some of those charter members were Bessie Mae Williams, Elvita Day, Frieda Forkner, Evelyn Wood, Ruth Rogers and Elaine Winn.

The Avon Garden Club has been celebrating its 70th anniversary in imaginative and creative ways to honor the legacy left to us by the 14 original members.

The September 2023 meeting (the first of the season) featured:

- ▶ members dressed in an array of 50s styles including dresses, hats, gloves, pearls, cat eyeglasses, dungarees, leisure wear and beatnik garb,
- ▶ a humorous skit taking a nostalgic (and mostly imagined) look back on the founding of the club against the backdrop of actual local and national news of the time as reported by fictional anchor Ida Mae Cronkite and fictional correspondents Babs Walters, Polly Dean and Trudy Spock,
- ▶ a retro luncheon of chicken salad almandine, molded gelatin salad and strawberry shortcake while listening to a Tony Bennett vinyl album playing on the phonograph, and
- ▶ an opportunity for members to pose for pictures in a 50s dream kitchen.

The December holiday gathering included more celebratory fun:

- ▶ members decked out in their best 50s-style party clothes,
- ▶ decorations featuring shiny metallic trees and pastel and tropical colors,
- ▶ a vintage light green Plymouth in the Lakehouse parking lot,
- ▶ Perry Como crooning holiday tunes from vinyl albums spinning on the phonograph, and
- ▶ a trivia contest geared to 1953 events.

The Avon Garden Club is looking forward to continuing its 70th anniversary celebration in 2024.

Avondale Estates Garden Club Yard of the Month



November: 3135 Majestic Circle, the home of Kathleen Cavallaro

Avon Garden Club Garden of the Month



November: 2996 Majestic Circle., home of Jody and Sam Harris



December: 8 Dartmouth, home of Rob and Nicole Wicking



By popular demand - a new service from Our Front Porch to help protect and add value to our Neighborhood:

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★★★★★

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RYAN**

"When we finally found the house for us, after searching for 3 years for THE ONE, we knew Jen would kill us if we didn't buy this one! We knew that Jen KNEW that she had found our new home... and we LOVE it! Oh, and **Jen always held the light for us so we could stick our heads in creepy spaces!**

HASSE & REBECCA ★★★★★

Well, I'm just glad that Jen is on OUR side!
She gets it done.

★★★★★ **BEN & AIMEE**

Aimee: Jen's so friendly & outgoing, she has the right personality for real estate.

Ben: Yeah, but she'd do anything for her clients. She's from New Jersey so it fits."

Aimee: Oh, she's from Jersey?! Yeah, that sounds right.



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