

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-04

AN ORDINANCE BY THE CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES TO AMEND ARTICLE VI OF THE CITY CHARTER, REGARDING FINANCE, TO MODIFY THE TIMING AND DETAILS OF THE CITY MANAGER'S PROPOSED ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM; AND TO REPEAL CONFLICTING CHARTER PROVISIONS.

WHEREAS, the City Charter, Section 6.25, currently requires that the city manager's proposed operating budget be submitted to the Board at least 120 days prior to the end of the fiscal year and does not specify the level of detail that must be included in the proposed budget; and

WHEREAS, the City Charter, Section 6.29, currently requires that the city manager's proposed capital improvements program be submitted to the Board at least 120 days prior to the end of the fiscal year and does not require a written explanation of the proposal nor that the proposed funding sources for capital improvements be specified; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners finds that it is not necessary, nor conducive to good financial planning, to require that the proposed operating budget and capital improvements program be presented more than 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners desires to require that the proposed operating budget be presented at the line-item level and accompanied by a written explanation in order to better inform the Board and the public of the proposal; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners desires to require that the proposed capital improvements program identify funding sources and be accompanied by a written explanation in order to better inform the Board and the public of the proposal; and

WHEREAS, the City is authorized to amend its Charter by adopting an ordinance to such effect at two consecutive regular meetings pursuant to its home rule powers as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 36-35-3.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City of Avondale Estates as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 6.25 of the Charter of the City of Avondale Estates is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 6.25. Proposed operating budget.

Annually, on or before the first day of October, the city manager shall submit to the board of mayor and commissioners a proposed operating budget for the ensuing fiscal year. The proposed operating budget shall include line-item detail and shall be accompanied by a message from the city manager containing a statement of the general fiscal condition of the city, the important features of the proposed budget, explanations of any major changes recommended for the next fiscal year, a general summary of the budget, and such other comments and information as the city manager may deem pertinent. The proposed operating budget, the budget message, and all supporting documents shall be filed in the office of the city clerk, posted on the city’s website, and shall be open to public inspection.”

SECTION 2. Section 6.29 of the Charter of the City of Avondale Estates is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 6.29. Capital improvements program.

- (a) Annually, on or before the first day of October, the city manager shall submit to the board of mayor and commissioners a proposed capital improvements program containing the means of financing the improvements proposed for the ensuing fiscal year. The proposed capital improvements program shall be accompanied by a written statement explaining the need for the proposed capital improvements and their proposed funding sources. The proposed capital improvements program shall be filed with the city clerk, posted on the city’s website, and shall be open for public inspection.
- (b) After making any adjustments to the city manager’s proposal that it deems in the public interest, the board of mayor and commissioners shall adopt by ordinance the final capital improvements program for the ensuing fiscal year not later than December 31 of each year. No appropriation provided for in a prior year’s capital improvements program shall lapse until the purpose for which the appropriation was made shall have been accomplished or abandoned by ordinance; provided, however, that the city manager may

submit amendments to the capital improvements program at any time during the fiscal year, accompanied by recommendations. Any such amendments to the capital improvements program shall become effective only upon adoption by ordinance.

- (c) The board of mayor and commissioners shall not authorize an expenditure for the construction of any building, structure, work, or improvement unless the appropriations for such project is included in the adopted capital improvements program or added by amendment to meet a public emergency as provided in Section 2.23 of this charter."

SECTION 3. All charter provisions, ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

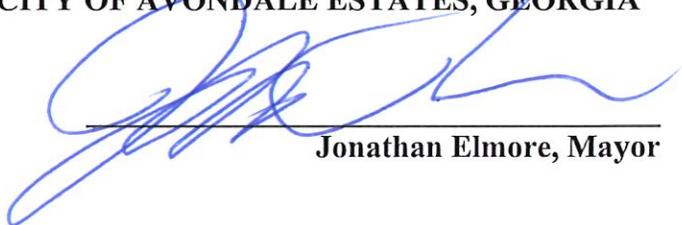
SECTION 4. This charter amendment shall become effective upon its final adoption by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners at the second of two consecutive regular meetings.

First Reading: JULY 9, 2025

FIRST APPROVED THIS 23 DAY OF JULY, 2025.

FINAL ADOPTION THIS 13 DAY OF AUGUST, 2025.

**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES, GEORGIA**


Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:


Karina Reyna, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Stephen G. Quinn, City Attorney



Eat, drink, and be educated at Vino Venue

BY KATHY MITCHELL
BUSINESS EDITOR

There's so much going on at Vino Venue that even the owner says she has trouble characterizing the business. "Yes, we're a wine shop where customers can taste and purchase a wide variety of wines that they might not find lots of other places, but we're also a full-service restaurant. We're now licensed to serve liquor, so we have a creative cocktail menu. We offer classes in cooking, wine appreciation, and other topics and have space available for private events," said owner **Emily Mendyka**.

The Dunwoody business has been around for 13 years, but when Mendyka bought it less than a year ago, she decided to "put some new energy into it with fun, creative events built around food and spirits. I want people who haven't been here in a while to come see all the fun things we have going on. We're the only place in Atlanta with so many things going on under one roof," she said.

"Vino Venue is still a great name," Mendyka continued. "We have a wonderful wine selection. We favor small family wineries. Prices range from value bottles to premium bottles, and customers can try any of the wines before they choose to purchase a full bottle."

She explained that Vino Venue has an automated system for which customers can purchase a refillable card and by inserting the card opt for a one-ounce taste, a half glass or a full glass of any of 32 wines. A wine club allows those who join the opportunity to try a variety of selections and be the first to sample new ones as they come in.

Those who want to learn more about wine can talk with Mendyka, who holds the certification Diploma in Wines from the Wine & Spirits Education Trust, or another certified staff member. The wine curious also can attend a class such as the Fundamentals of Wine beginners' class, next being

offered on Aug. 4.

"Come to terms with the world of wine in a special tasting that helps you understand wine and how it's made while learning about key varietals and regions so you can express yourself and truly enjoy what's in your glass," the class description states. The session also covers the lexicon of wine, food and wine pairing basics, buying, storing and serving tips.

Despite the emphasis on wine, food is not an afterthought at Vino Venue, according to Mendyka. "Our executive chef **Patric Good** is highly talented and he takes his work very seriously," she said. "My favorite is his tuna niçoise, and I've been told that our burgers are the best in the city."

Vino Venue recently started offering Sunday brunch, Mendyka said. "We call it 'brunchish,' because some of the menu items are offered just during brunch but items from our regular menu are available as well," she said of the noon until 5 p.m. event.

In addition to creating menu items, Good chooses dishes to be featured in Vino Venue's cooking classes,

Mendyka said. "Each class has a theme meal, which every student is involved in preparing," she explained, adding that at the end students consume the meal with wines selected to pair well with the theme foods. The theme for the Aug. 13 Culinary Boot Camp class, for example, will be the art of sushi making.

The online description of the class states, "Our most serious cooking class ever, Culinary Boot Camp combines the best elements of an expensive, time-consuming culinary degree into a two-and-a-half-hour immersion workshop...Your chef will guide you on a culinary journey like no other, sharing the secrets of the pros to help your enjoyment, passion, and love for cooking."

In addition to bringing wines from across the globe to patrons, Vino Venue also can help patrons go to where the wines are created through its unique wine tour travel service. The online description promises a one-of-a-kind experience saying, "You will enjoy the most exclusive wine tours imaginable that are not offered to the general public."



Emily Mendyka shows the automated system that allows patrons to choose a one-ounce sample, a half glass or a full glass of 32 different wines. Photo by Kathy Mitchell

City of Avondale Estates

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Mayor and Commissioners of the City of Avondale Estates, Georgia is considering an amendment to the Avondale Estates City Charter. The proposed amendment would amend the Charter to modify the timing and content of the city manager's proposed annual operating budget and proposed annual capital improvements program. The proposed operating budget and capital improvement program would be required to be published by October 1st, rather than 120 days before the end of the year, if the amendment is approved. The proposed amendment would also require the proposed operating budget to be at "line-level" detail and require the proposed capital improvements program to designate the source of funding for each project and include a written explanation of the proposed capital improvements plan. The Board is expected to consider this amendment for final adoption at its regular meeting to be held August 13, 2025. A copy of the proposed charter amendment ordinance is on file for public inspection in both the Avondale Estates City Clerk's Office and the DeKalb County Clerk of Superior Court's Office.



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Interim leader designated for DeKalb Public Health after former CEO moves

BY CHRISTINE FONVILLE
CHRISTINE@DEKALBCHAMP.COM

Dr. Lynn Paxton has been named as the interim district health director and CEO for DeKalb Public Health after Dr. Sandra Valenciano, who served in the role since 2021, was recently announced as the primary medical expert for Seattle and King County in Washington.

According to DeKalb Public Health's (DPH) website, Paxton is a retired United States Public Health Service captain and has had an extensive career with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "She is acknowledged as an international leader in HIV prevention and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)," stated officials who added, "Before joining the Public Health system in Georgia, Dr. Paxton most recently served as the Zika coordinator for the CDC's Center for Global Health."

She previously served as district health director for Fulton County from 2020 until taking over the role in DeKalb County in June.

Paxton earned her medical degree at the University of California San Francisco, her master of public health degree at the University of California Berkeley, and completed her undergraduate work at Princeton University.

In her role as interim district health director and CEO for DPH, Paxton oversees public health services for more than 760,000 residents of the county, where more than 130 languages are spoken, according to data on DPH's website.

According to Eric Nickens, manager of DPH's office of communications, since district health directors are employees of the Georgia Department of Public Health, Dr. Kathleen Toomey, the state health commissioner, will determine whether the interim district health director becomes permanent or what the timeline and process will be for selecting a permanent successor.

Valenciano, who is sched-

uled to begin her new role in Washington in August, was part of significant changes at DPH during her time as director and CEO, including the department's transition from DeKalb County Board of Health to DeKalb Public Health last year, which included launching a new website during the 100-year anniversary of the department.

At a celebration held at the DeKalb History Center last year to commemorate the centennial anniversary of DPH, Valenciano highlighted the department's accomplishments and discussed the future of the organization.

"Our past and our future is tied to equity, engagement and efficiency," said Valenciano. "Our goals include advancing service accessibility; investing in employee development and workplace retention; expanding multi-sector partnerships; and modernizing our operations and infrastructure."

Paxton echoed Valenciano's statement in her director's message on DPH's website, saying, in part, "Public Health plays a vital role in providing much needed services for our community while advancing health equity. In DeKalb County, we

are lucky to have one of the most diverse and growing communities in the state of Georgia. We are here to serve the DeKalb community."

DeKalb Public Health provides clinical services, community health programs, maternal and child health-care, vital records and more through more than 154,000 patient visits annually to DPH's five locations throughout DeKalb County, according to a DPH factsheet published in 2021.

For more information, visit dekalbpublichealth.com.



DeKalb Public Health has named Dr. Lynn Paxton as interim district health director and CEO. Photo by Georgia Department of Public Health

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NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER OF CITY OF STONECREST

The City of Stonecrest ("the City") is notifying the public that at two regular meetings on August 25, 2025 at 6:00 pm and September 22, at 6:00 pm, the City will consider and vote on whether to approve a proposed ordinance to amend certain provisions of a local act of the General Assembly (Ga. L. 2016, p. 3538, as amended) pursuant to the City's Home Rule authority under the Georgia Constitution. The Georgia Constitution empowers city governing authorities to amend or repeal local laws provided the local legislation does not address certain subject matters where home rule authority is preempted. A synopsis of the proposed ordinance is set forth below.

Title of Proposed Amendment:

An Amendment to the Charter of the City of Stonecrest Regarding Hiring and Reporting Requirements of the Internal Auditor

Synopsis of Proposed Amendment:

The City Council is considering amending Section 3.12 of the City Charter to enhance its ability to effectively audit city finances and ensure transparency and accountability. Currently, the Charter requires the appointment of an internal auditor to report on city expenditures at least quarterly, but mandates that the auditor must be a direct employee of the city. This restriction limits the Council's flexibility in selecting the most effective means to carry out its financial oversight duties. The proposed amendment would allow the Council to hire an employee or an independent third party as internal auditor. It would also revise the reporting requirement from quarterly to at least bi-annually, while maintaining the scope of audit findings to include assessments of compliance with the Charter, the city's budget, and applicable ordinances or policies. This change is authorized under the City's home rule powers, as granted by Georgia Code § 36-35-3, and is intended to strengthen fiscal oversight and improve transparency for residents.

Full Text of the Amendment:

Section 3.12 Internal Auditor-

"The city council shall appoint an internal auditor(s) to audit the financial records and expenditures of city funds and to report the results of such audits in writing to the city council at times and intervals set by the city council, but no less than bi-annually. Such audit reports shall, at a minimum, identify all city expenditures and other financial matters that the internal auditor either determines are not in compliance with or cannot conclusively be determined to be in compliance with:

- (1) The provisions of this Charter;
- (2) The applicable city budget; and
- (3) Applicable ordinances, resolutions, policies, or other actions duly adopted or approved under the provisions of this Charter.

The internal auditor may be a direct employee of the city or a contractor.

Public Viewing and Inspection of the Ordinance

A copy of the proposed ordinance is on file in the Office of the Clerk of the City of Stonecrest and the Office of the DeKalb County Clerk of Superior Court for the purpose of examination and inspection. The Clerk of the City of Stonecrest shall furnish anyone, upon written request, a copy of the ordinance containing the proposed amendment to SB 208. In addition, the ordinance and this synopsis are available for viewing on the City of Stonecrest website.

{LEGAL NOTICE PUBLICATION DATES: July 31, 2025; August 7, 2025 and August 14, 2025}

Summit for youth driving safety coming to Lithonia

BY CHRISTINE FONVILLE
CHRISTINE@DEKALBCHAMP.COM

A free event that will provide new and soon-to-be drivers with safety classes and insurance information, plus free food, activities and more will be hosted at the Redan Recreation Center by Solicitor-General **Donna Coleman-Stribling's** office.

Called the Youth Safe Driving Summit, the event will be held on Aug. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 1839 Phillips Road in Lithonia and is designed for participants aged 14 and older, according to a website for the event.

"The DeKalb County Solicitor-General's Office cordially invites teens and their families to attend the Youth Safe Driving Summit, an event focused on equipping youth with the knowledge to make safe and responsible decisions behind the wheel," states the website. "With the alarming rise in dangerous driving behaviors, such as illegal street racing and speeding in our community, this summit is a critical opportunity to address the risks that threaten young drivers and our roads."

According to data provided by the county's Solicitor-General's Office, which prosecutes traffic-related misdemeanors, DeKalb County had 36,022 crashes last year, accounting for about one in 10 accidents in Georgia.

Additional data shows that drivers ages 18 to 24 had 8,978 crash incident reports while males 18 to 20 years old accounted for 90 percent of the fatality crashes in their age demographic in 2024.

Speeding and distracted driving, defined as the practice of driving a motor vehicle while engaged in another activity such as using a mobile phone, account for many of these crashes, stated officials.

"Teenage drivers are at higher risk for crashing due to inexperience, speeding or distractions like texting,"

states the Solicitor-General's website. "Understanding Georgia's teen driving laws empowers responsible choices. Teens will learn how to stay safe on the road and avoid traffic violations at the Youth Safe Driving Summit."

Pre-registration for the event is required and can be completed at <https://dekalbsolicitorgeneral.com/youth-summit/>.

For more information about the Youth Safe Driving Summit, contact Deputy Chief **Shari Jones** at SaJones@DeKalbCountyGa.Gov.

TURTLE

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Visitors are urged, "Please never take a turtle from its home. It's best not to disturb wild animals, instead just observe and enjoy them in their habitats."

In Georgia, loggerhead sea turtles, prevalent in the state's coastal area, are the focus of special protection, the exhibit states, adding, "The Georgia Department of Natural Resources works closely with the Georgia Sea Turtle Cooperative to protect loggerheads in hopes of recovering their populations."

Beach visitors, lights from developments (sea turtles navigate by the moon) and commercial fishing have had adverse effects on sea turtles. As a result of conservation efforts, however, "annual nest counts in Georgia have increased an average of 3 percent each year for the past 10 years."

Turtles is being held over from its original closing date and will be at Fernbank Museum of Natural History through Sept. 7. Admission to the *Turtles* exhibit is included in tickets to Fernbank Museum. The museum is located at 767 Clifton Road, Atlanta NE. For more information, visit www.fernbankmuseum.org.

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