

The Town of Laurel Park

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Laurel Park will celebrate our 100th year of incorporation in 2025. Over a century ago W.A. Smith had a vision for Laurel Park Estates and eventually what would become the Town of Laurel Park. Your Town Council has been planning and considering our vision for the Town's next 100 years. We expect the Ecusta Trail through Laurel Park to be complete by our celebratory year 2025, as well as the improvements on Highway 64. Two years ago, your Town Council completed a new UDO (Unified Development Ordinance), in conjunction with the Town of Laurel Park Planning Board, to outline the vision of the Town's future. Included in our future, a new Town Hall was recommended.

For many years, Laurel Park conducted Town business from a store front on Main Street in Hendersonville until 1989, when Town Council selected a small house on the corner of White Pine Drive and Laurel Park Highway as the site for a new Town Hall. After minimal remodeling, including the conversion of the garage into a meeting room, Town business has been ongoing at this location for the last 33 years.

The Town has grown during the ensuing years with a 1990 population of 1,322 residents, increasing to a 2000 Census count of 2,233 residents. Not only has the number of inhabitants increased, but so has the total land area. Developments such as Laurel Park Place, Somersby Park, Shaws Creek, Ecusta Crossing, Sunshine Village and numerous single-family houses have been added to the mix. Also, the Council made the decision to form a Council/Manager government structure where there is a full-time manager and staff running the day-to-day operations of the Town. Laurel Park now has a 24/7 police force and a Public Works staff to take care of the roads and parks. In other words, the needs of the Town have outgrown the capacity of the current Town Hall to adequately handle them.

We have struggled with circulation limitations such as security of the building, inadequate offices for Town business, limited meeting capacity for the Council, Committees, and the residents of Laurel Park, and the lack of public restrooms. Police needs such as offices, secure storage of firearms and ammunition, lockers, and police evidence capacity (which is required by law) are currently not being met.

Continued

After several attempts we have finally acquired 3 acres of property on Highway 64 (1512 Brevard Highway). Soon we will send our Request for Qualifications to interested architects and following interviews, we will ask our chosen architect to follow the UDO and make a statement indicative of what our new Town Hall should look like, thus, setting an example for other developments to follow.

Much like individual homeowners, you and your families may outgrow your current home and that is exactly what has happened to us. Once we engage our architect, we will evaluate our space needs for now, and for decades to follow. The architect will subsequently make size recommendations, followed by the design phases: schematic, preliminary design development, and working drawings. Input from Town residents will be welcomed.

Just like a homeowner, our Town will mortgage this project through the low interest rates available to Municipalities. If the architect suggests a 5,000 sq. ft. facility, we should expect a construction contract of approximately \$1,500,000 for our new Town Hall home.

Your Council will strive to keep Town residents aware of progress and solicit your input.

Most sincerely,

Your Town Council



At the May 12, 2022 Work Session meeting, The Centennial Committee's recommendation for the Town of Laurel Park's Centennial Logo was approved unanimously by Town Council.

Residents will start seeing this logo all over Town to help promote the Town's Centennial in 2025. More information on donations, sponsorships, and events will be coming in future newsletters.

Commissioner's Corner

By: George W. Banta, Commissioner

Over the past two weeks, the rain gauge at my house has recorded over ten inches of rain. In our "Small Town on a Mountain", all of this precipitation has to go somewhere. Stormwater management is a significant issue being addressed by the Town with respect to new home construction sites and roadside improvements.

The Town has allocated a little over \$1,000,000 for road resurfacing this fiscal year. Prior to repaving, many of these roads will require improvements to the ditch-banks and shoulders to manage stormwater runoff more effectively. More than 70 culverts will also require liners or replacement to better manage stormwater. In addition to the \$1,000,000 coming from the General Fund for paving, \$742,000 will be allocated to stormwater management along our roadsides. This funding comes from the Town's share of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Our Public Works department will do some of this work while the larger projects will be done by outside contractors.

Town staff and consultants are working on changes to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to better address regulations for stormwater management during the construction phase of residential homes being built on steep and very steep slopes. If there is building on lots that have the potential for excessive runoff and erosion, a stormwater management plan may well be a requirement prior to construction.

Currently, you may see a lot of white squares and rectangles painted on local town roads. Our Public Works department is in the process of identifying potholes and other small areas in need of repair. Over the next several weeks, Public Works will be out making these road improvements. Remember, you can also go to the Laurel Park website and report a pothole, should one develop.

As a member of the Henderson County Transportation Advisory Committee and Metropolitan Planning Organization, I am happy to report that our Hwy 64 Improvement Plan remains on schedule. NCDOT is currently in the property acquisition phase of the project, with construction to start in early 2024. The Hwy 64 Improvement Project will better define the Laurel Park business district and enhance the flow of traffic in the area. Town staff meet on a regular basis with NCDOT to stay current on the project.

Lastly, the Town has become aware of the traffic concerns on Laurel Park Hwy. Our traffic counter at Jump-Off Rock indicates about 25,000 vehicles have visited the site thus far this year, making it one of the most popular venues in the county. The majority of traffic appears to be from tourists and visitors coming from outside of Laurel Park. In an effort to slow traffic, we have asked LPPD to show a stronger presence along Laurel Park Hwy. Increased fees for non-resident wedding events have substantially reduced these activities. Friends of Laurel Park have conducted vehicle counts and interviews at their music and yoga events at Jump Off Rock and their data indicates that most attendees are local residents. Traffic for these events account for less than 2% of the overall vehicle numbers recorded. Local residents have indicated their continued support of the music and yoga events at Jump Off Rock.

Welcome Jordan Jones

Please join us in welcoming our new Assistant to the Town Manager, Jordan Jones. Mr. Jones began working for the Town in June of 2022. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and a Master of Public Affairs from Western Carolina University. The Assistant to the Town Manager serves as an integral part of the executive management team responsible for providing leadership support for the Town Manager by performing complex administrative tasks, zoning administration, project oversight, and management analysis.

Tax Bill Information

2022 tax bills have been mailed. If you have not received your bill, please call Henderson County Tax Office. You may need to update the mailing address. Property owners have until January 5, 2023 to pay without penalty. The 2022 tax rate for Laurel Park remains the same, at \$0.435 per \$100 valuation.

Reminder - all payments must be sent directly to Henderson County

Leaf Collection

OCTOBER 12 Begin Placing Leaves

DECEMBER 4 Last Day to Place

Place Leaves Beginning October 12

Pickup Runs October 24 through December 4.

Leaf collection begins October 24th. Loose leaves may be piled on the right-of-way beginning October 12th. Please make sure piles are free of limbs, rocks, and other objects that may injure employees and damage equipment. New leaf piles may not be placed out after December 4th.

Leaf collection is a very slow and labor-intensive process, and the schedule is affected by weather and other Town activities. There are over 33 miles of roads to clear, by either blowing the leaves where possible & vacuuming up where necessary.

Thank you in advance for your patience!

Bagged leaves are collected first, so if you want your leaves picked up ASAP, simply bag and fill out the form on our website at www.laurelpark.org for collection within 3 business days.

Brush Collection

SEPTEMBER 24 Begin Placing Brush

OCTOBER 10 Last Day to Place

Place Brush Between September 24-October 10! Pickup Begins October 11

Beginning the week of October 11th, Public Works will begin collecting brush. Every effort is made to collect brush quickly, but it is a process that takes approximately one (1) month to complete throughout Town.

Important Reminders

- Brush cannot be picked up if it is not by the roadside. It must not protrude into the roadway or obstruct traffic in any manner. Place piles parallel to the road.
- Limbs and branches cannot be more than 3" in diameter. Larger limbs will not be collected.
- The Town will not collect brush that results from major landscaping or land-clearing operations.
- Brush placed at any time other than the designated fall and spring collection will not be picked up, and the resident will be notified of the violation. **Brush placed after October 10th will not be picked up.**
- Brush & loose-leaf piles cannot be mixed. If a leaf pile contains brush, it will not be picked up.

Plastic bags don't go in your regular recycling bin. *Garbage companies don't want them!*

Grocery stores and Walmart have bins at the entrances for your various plastic bags.

What kind of bags to recycle?

- Grocery/Shopping Bags
- The Bag your Newspaper comes in
- Fruit and Veggie Bags
- Cereal Bags
- Bread Bags
- Plastic Wrap on Paper Towels and Toilet Paper
- Amazon Envelopes (paper labels cut off)



*Just make sure you shake the crumbs out and that the bag is clean and dry.
For more information, go to <https://abagslife.com>*

Many thanks to Mr. Stephen DiGiacomo for refurbishing this park bench at Jump Off Rock.



Mr. DiGiacomo, an avid woodcrafter, frequently drives down to Jump Off Rock from his home in Arden to relax in the park and take in the scenic views. As a token of his fondness and appreciation for the park, he contributed his time and talent, as well as the cost of refurbishing supplies and materials, so that the bench will continue to be a special place to sit and take in the surrounding beauty.

Positions Available

Be part of an amazing team

The Town of Laurel Park is accepting applications for a General Maintenance position in the Public Works Department and a Full-Time Police Officer.

The Town offers a highly competitive benefits package: NC Retirement, 401(k), medical, dental and vision insurance, paid vacation, holidays, family leave and sick leave.

For more information, please visit www.laurelpark.org

Friends of Laurel Park

The Friends of Laurel Park (FLP) have enjoyed a busy summer, with our first (and popular) historical bus tours in July and a successful concert at Jump Off Rock on August 10. Two more JOR concerts are scheduled for September 10, and a final one in October 8. Yam Yoga continues at JOR on Monday nights with free classes at 6 pm. The Board welcomed a new member, Beth Bonome, a recent resident in Fleetwood Estates. A Fall Foliage family event is being planned for November 5 in one of the town parks.

Neighborhood footpaths (aka "trails") planning continues in conjunction with the Parks & Greenways committee, with work on the Crystal Springs complex resuming this fall. The Board is considering winter events, such as another CPR refresher class, but we are open to suggestions.

For information, check our website at: www.friendsoflaurelpark.org.



Be BearWise
AT HOME

Six At-Home BearWise Basics



Never Feed or Approach Bears

Intentionally feeding bears or allowing them to find anything that smells or tastes like food teaches bears to approach homes and people looking for more. Bears will defend themselves if a person gets too close, so don't risk your safety and theirs!



Secure Food, Garbage and Recycling

Food and food odors attract bears, so don't reward them with easily available food, liquids or garbage.



Remove Bird Feeders When Bears Are Active

Birdseed and grains have lots of calories, so they're very attractive to bears. Removing feeders is the best way to avoid creating conflicts with bears.



Never Leave Pet Food Outdoors

Feed pets indoors when possible. If you must feed pets outside, feed in single portions and remove food and bowls after feeding. Store pet food where bears can't see or smell it.



Clean & Store Grills

Clean grills after each use and make sure that all grease, fat and food particles are removed. Store clean grills and smokers in a secure area that keeps bears out.



Alert Neighbors to Bear Activity

See bears in the area or evidence of bear activity? Tell your neighbors and share information on how to avoid bear conflicts. Bears have adapted to living near people; now it's up to us to adapt to living near bears.

Black bear is a species; common colors include black, brown and cinnamon.

Learn More:
BearWise.org

Helping People Live Responsibly with Black Bears

BearWise® CREATED BY BEAR BIOLOGISTS, SUPPORTED BY STATE WILDLIFE AGENCIES



© 2022

Trunk *or* Treat



**THE LAUREL PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT WILL BE
HOSTING THEIR FIRST TRUNK OR TREAT**

**Join us for family fun at Laurel Green Park
on Oct. 28th from 5-7pm.
NO RAIN DATE!**

**Parking for the event will be located across the street at
First Congregational Church
1735 5th Ave W
Laurel Park, NC 28739**

**If you would like to be part of the event by decorating a car,
handing out candy or making a donation:**

Email Officer Moore: amoore@laurelpark.org by October 1st

Parks and Greenways Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer work has continued over the summer, albeit at a slower pace due to hot weather and a lot of rain. However, we are gearing up for the fall and continue to seek volunteers to help in our efforts.

We expect to begin planting the pollinator garden in Canal Park.

Plans are underway for the transformation of Laurel Green.

Bluebird box monitoring throughout our community is nearing the end, and we will be checking and cleaning the boxes for next year.

Trails and pathways volunteers will continue their work.

The Invasive Plants Workshop, moderated by Steve Pettis, horticultural agent with NC Cooperative Extension, held the end of August was overflowing with attendance and filled with good information. Residents learned to identify invasive plants, including shrubs and trees. Although residents learned how to take care of their own properties, we hope our Town will move forward regarding town-owned properties and rights-of-way. More than two years ago the Town contracted for a study of Non-Native Invasive Plant Management, with emphasis on English ivy, which is killing many of our trees. The study was completed July 24, 2020. We would like recommendations in this report to move forward, implementing practices to begin managing invasives.

Residents, let us hear from you!

Join one of our Boards

The Town of Laurel Park recognizes and celebrates the diversity of Laurel Park, and encourages all individuals to apply to serve on Board-appointed committees. The Town of Laurel Park is accepting applications for the following vacancies:

- (2) Board of Adjustment members
- (2) Planning Board members
- (1) ETJ Planning Board member
- (3) Parks and Greenways members
- (1) ABC Board member

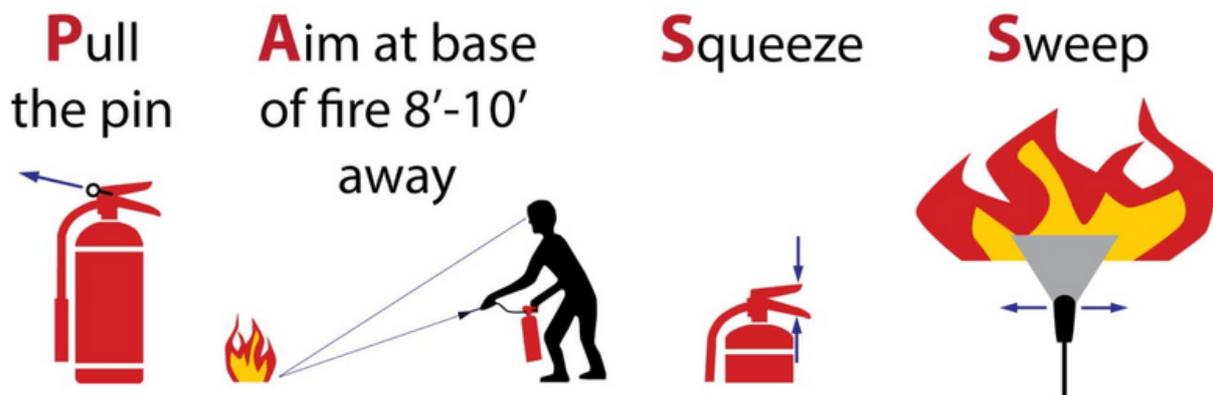
To apply please contact Town Clerk Tamara Amin at tamin@laurelpark.org or visit www.laurelpark.org

**Please note: Trash pickup is on Friday
the week of Labor Day**

Using A Fire Extinguisher

A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives. Before attempting to fight a small fire be sure everyone is out of the building. It is important to **CALL 911 First**. If the fire starts to spread or threatens your escape path, get out immediately!

- **Read the instructions** that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out.
- Use a portable fire extinguisher **when the fire is confined to a small area** and is not growing, such as a wastebasket.
- To operate a fire extinguisher - remember the word **PASS**:



1. **Pull the pin.** Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and release the locking mechanism.
2. **Aim low.** Point the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire.
3. **Squeeze** the handle.
4. **Sweep** the nozzle from side-to-side.



To learn more about fire extinguishers contact

Fire and Life Safety Officer

Chris McDowell 828-692-2581 ext 105

CALENDAR

September 5

September 8 No Trash

September 24

October 10

October 11

October 24

October 28

Town Hall Offices Closed - Labor Day

****Trash pickup on Friday, Sept 9th****

Begin placing brush out for fall collection

Last day to place brush

Begin placing leaves - brush pickup begins

Leaf pickup begins

Trunk or Treat

Public Meeting Schedule

Town Council Regular Meeting

September 20 @ 9:30 am

October 18 @ 9:30 am

Town Council Work Session

September 15 @ 9:30 am

October 13 @ 9:30 am

Bicycle Advisory Committee

September 12 @ 3:00 pm

October 10 @ 3:00 pm

Centennial Committee

September 12 @ 11:30 am

October 10 @ 11:30 am

Parks & Greenways Board

Special Meeting September 9 4:00 pm @ Laurel Green

September 13 @ 9:30 am

October 11 @ 9:30 am

Parks & Greenways Site Meeting

September 22 @ 4 pm - location TBD

October 27 @ 4 pm - location TBD

Planning Board

September 13 cancelled

October 12 @ 3:00 pm

ABC Board - at the ABC Store

September 27 @ 8:30 am

October 25 @ 8:30 am

Board of Adjustment

September - Cancelled

Special Meeting - TBD

Town Contact Information

Town Hall 693-4840

9:00 am – 5:00 pm Mon - Fri

Police Office 692-9399

(non-emergency)

Police Non-Emergency 697-3025

Valley Hill Fire 692-2581

Manager: Alex Carmichael

Town Clerk: Tamara Amin

Finance Officer: Heather Smith

Assistant to the Manager: Jordan Jones

Police Chief: Bobbie Trotter

Public Works Director: Brandon Johnson



Mayor: J. Carey O’Cain

Mayor Pro-Tem: A. Paul Hansen

Commissioners:

George W. Banta

Kristin Dunn

Debra Hinson Bridges