



LAUREL PARK, NC STATE OF THE TOWN

MAYORAL ADDRESS

FROM
MAYOR CAREY O'CAIN

POSITIVE PROGRESS

I must admit that we live in a Special place.... thanks to the vision of W. A. Smith over 100 years ago. These Precious assets that we inherited are being preserved by this Council, as have previous Councils. We could choose to minimize the needs for improvements, but we have chosen to continue to emphasize how great Our town is.... Just as W. A. Smith would have wanted.

ROADS, ROADS, ROADS!

Over five years ago your Council dedicated an additional 3 cents of our tax rate to road improvements. After consulting with our civil engineer, we have determined that it is necessary to increase this commitment in order to get ahead of the road deterioration curve. Last year we budgeted 1 million dollars to road improvements. This year we have committed an additional \$700,000 to roads. By bundling these commitments, we were able to acquire more competitive bids. Fortunately, prices of oil have also lowered over last year's prices. We received bids in June with the expectation of completing this work before winter. *You will see an impact.*

For the foreseeable future, we anticipate spending between \$400,000 and \$600,000 annually on road improvements. With this dedication, our consultants believe that our Town will be ahead of road deterioration by 2029. Bicyclist and motorist will recognize the differences soon.

STORM WATER AND EDGE-OF-ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIR

Thanks to a Grant of over \$700,000, we are able to improve our storm drainage and edge-of-roadway. This work was contracted in May, work commenced in June and will be complete this fall. This work MUST precede the paving work.

STREAM RESTORATION AT LAUREL GREEN

Laurel Green Park closed in May and will reopen later this summer. Work on this park mitigates further erosion and allows for proper handling of potential flood waters while maintaining an inviting and friendly play area for children. We owe a tremendous thank you to our Representative and now state Senator Tim Moffitt for his help in procuring grants to cover the majority of these costs.

Continued on next page

INVASIVE VINES

As you drive the main roads in Town, please observe the results of our efforts to remove invasive vines within the easement. Thanks to a generous gift, we are making vast improvements to the future protection of our beautiful forest. Please follow this example on your own property and protect your trees. Should you need guidance please call Town Hall.

PARKS AND GREENWAYS

Our Parks and Greenways committee is fabulous. They have helped improve Laurel Green, Rhododendron Lake Nature Park, Glenrock Spring, Jump Off Rock, trails, pollinator gardens and Town Hall. They have designed, planned and planted with volunteers. They have supervised many Eagle Scout projects, all for the benefit of Laurel Park. Please thank any of the many volunteers every chance you have.

FRIENDS OF LAUREL PARK

FLP helps make our Town special with organizing events including concerts, yoga, special events and roadway cleanup events. This group is a non-profit that operates independently from our Town, and we are very appreciative of their contributions over the years. Please support this amazing group of volunteers.

FIRE PROTECTION

Our fire department, Valley Hill Fire Protection, maintains the best rates and the best service within Henderson County. They recently achieved an excellent ISO rating of 2 which means lower insurance rates for our property owners. We are so lucky to have their protection.

HIGHWAY 64 IMPROVEMENTS

This time next year expect construction to have commenced on Highway 64. DOT is currently in the land acquisition phase. Council has been setting aside funds to support landscaping, sidewalks and visually enhancements that DOT excludes.

TOWN HALL

Plans for a new Town Hall are currently on hold.

DEVELOPMENTS

Several developments are proceeding. Ecusta Crossing near Hawthorn Hills is underway with eight duplexes nearing the finish stage. Laurel Heights Retirement Center, a 133-unit facility at Highway 64 and Glasgow, expects to commence in 2024. The Coates Plant closed January 1st. Soil testing is underway and there are several interested parties, so expect an announcement soon!

PROPERTY TAX RE-EVALUATIONS

The County Tax Assessor's office re-evaluates property values every 5 years. Laurel Parks property values have increased substantially. The Median house listing price in Laurel Park is about \$450,000. The tax value is usually less than the listing price. Our new tax rate is 39.5 cents. Thus, the average tax bill based upon the average listing value would be \$1,778 annually. Considering the services that Laurel Park provides residents (trash, brush pickup, police, roads, snow removal, parks maintenance), I'm happy to contribute. If I lived within the City of Hendersonville, I would pay a rate of .49 cents. I'll happily pay the lower rate and live in this Wonderful Town.

Respectfully,

Carey O'Cain

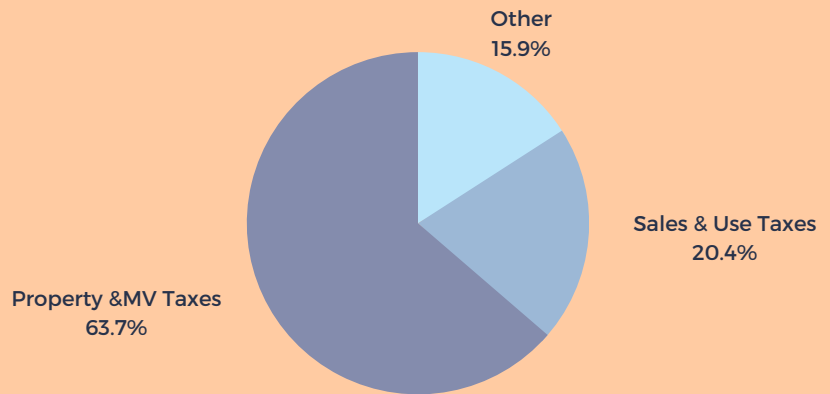
Carey O'Cain, Mayor

Budget Summary

TOWN OF LAUREL PARK, NC

REVENUE

Most of the Town's revenue is collected from property taxes and taxes on motor vehicles, and sales taxes.



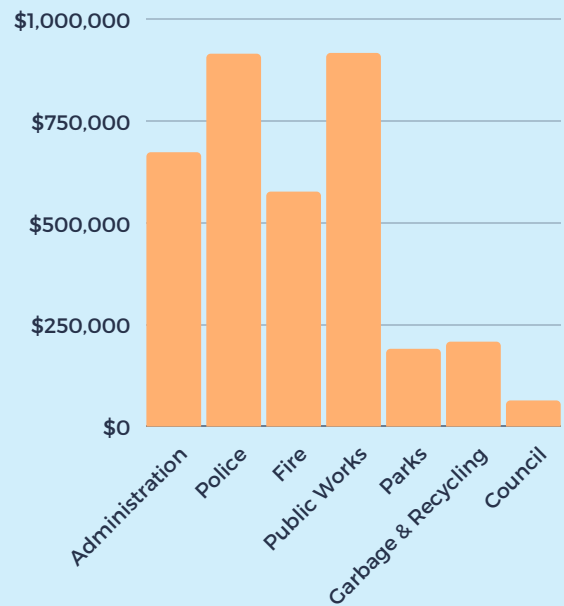
\$0.395

per \$100 of assessed value for a budgeted levy of \$2,571,870

STORMWATER \$73,000 BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

The monthly stormwater fee collected goes toward infrastructure improvement, street and gutter cleaning, and maintains the Town's stormwater permit with the State of North Carolina

EXPENDITURES



HIGHWAY 64 - \$30,000

ROADS & POWELL BILL - \$1,672,720

WHEN DOES THE FISCAL YEAR BEGIN AND END?

Under NC law, our budget year begins on July 1 of this year and ends on June 30 of the following year.

FISCAL YEAR 2024

\$4,153,921

TOTAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET



Friends of Laurel Park

The Friends wish to give hearty thanks to all our loyal donors and sponsors. As of June 12, we have had contributions from 12 local sponsors and 119 donors, and we acknowledge them at our public events.

The Friends of Laurel Park have scheduled a very full agenda for 2023. In February, we began with our first winter indoor concert featuring Laurel Park musicians John Perkins and Joel Helfand. The free music series continued with Jump Off Rock concerts in April, May, and June, with a record crowd at the June event with the Asheville Jazz Orchestra.

Coming up on September 16, Two Step Too will return to Jump Off Rock, and our final concert will again feature Autumnwud on October 6. Details to follow.

In addition to music, we included a workshop in March led by Will Coffee on vine control on our Laurel Park trees, a continuing threat to the health of our forests. The town supports two part-time men to work on town-owned roadsides to control English ivy, wisteria, kudzu, and nonnative grape.

On July 25th, the FLP has invited Chris McDowell from the Valley Hill Fire and Rescue station on Stepp Drive to give a remedial class on CPR for interested residents. It will run from 3 to 5 pm. You never know when you might be called upon to save someone's life!

The second annual "Historical Tour of Laurel Park" will take place on Saturday, August 19 with bus tours operating at 9 and 11 AM, led by local historian Knox Crowell. Look for more details later, but space may be limited.

The FLP members work in cooperation with the town's Parks and Greenway (P&G) committee on the maintenance and improvement of walking footpaths throughout the town. Also, the P&G committee is seeking volunteers for footpath work as it arises.

Planning has been underway for a year already for the 2025 Centennial Celebration of the Town. Board member Jim Wilson has been a major player in developing ideas and exploring funding options for a variety of events, ranging from music to historic home tours to a gala event, and more.

In addition, Board members plan nature walks, assist in the Town's Trunk or Treat event, and hope to include a recycling education meeting later in the year.

If residents have good ideas for future FLP activities, let us know. We are eager to hear from you. The website is: www.friendsoflaurelpark.org

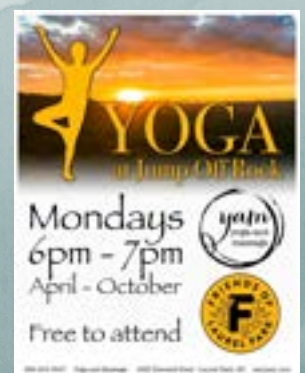
Event Dates

July 25: CPR Class

August 19: Historical Tour

September 16: Concert (Two Step Too)

October 6: Final Concert (Autumnwud)



A Letter from Your Neighbor

I was born in Hendersonville and grew up in Laurel Park. I left home 47 years ago for college and to begin a career and work life. After retiring in 2020, it has been a joy to return to Laurel Park. Much has changed through those many years and most of that change has been very good, making Henderson County an even better place to live for those raising families, retiring, or just getting started in life. I am grateful for the significant contributions made to my hometown by the many new residents who have come to Hendersonville, and for the overall good stewardship provided by elected officials and all those working to move the community forward.

One change that is unwelcome however, is the spread and proliferation of vines and other invasive plant species that pose a real threat to the natural beauty and environmental vitality of our region, and specifically to the mountain forest that is Laurel Park. The little block where I grew up has been devoured by bamboo and ivy hanging from almost every tree. I am aware that some people are of the opinion that ivy climbing tree trunks or hanging from branches is attractive, but vines harm trees by competing with them for nutrients from the soil, providing sanctuary for tree harming insects, obscuring the natural beauty of a tree trunk, enveloping the canopy and killing the tree. Weakened trees fall, with the risk of personal injury, property damage and the disruption of key services.

Trees contribute much to the environmental quality of Laurel Park by adding to the character of the town and enhancing the quality of life on the mountain. Trees are critical to slope stability, create wildlife habitat, adding to the aesthetic of the community, and preserving and increasing property value!

The Town leadership is aware of this real, evolving threat and has offered several seminars on dealing with invasive species. A concerned resident has made a generous financial gift to underwrite the clearing of town property and rights-of-way of tree-climbing vines. As most of our trees are on private property, Laurel Park will still be awash with trees that are at risk from ivy and other tree climbing vines. Preserving and saving our Laurel Park forest is absolutely and totally dependent upon the initiative and action of individual property owners.

Please consider joining Town leadership, volunteers and individual property owners who love and value our Laurel Park forest and are taking action with some degree of urgency to check and contain the threat that tree climbing vines pose to all of our trees.

Robert Fain

Don't like reading the newsletter on your computer? We always have printed copies available at Town Hall, even when we're not here. Just check the brick wall outside the front door. Feel free to pick one up for yourself or a neighbor who may not be computer savvy!

PARKS & GREENWAYS



The Laurel Park Bee City Committee needs YOU!

Our team of volunteers is organized and looking for people to join the efforts. We meet on the third Thursday of every month at 4:30 PM. Contact John Monroe for more information: jkmonroe@bix-man.com



Help Us De-Vine Laurel Park



Invasive plant species are threatening to destroy our beautiful tree canopy. The Parks & Greenways Board is working closely with a newly formed Citizen Committee to recognize the efforts of residents who have taken on management of invasives on their own properties. Educating others on the importance of identifying and removing these plants is of utmost importance for all Laurel Park property owners. We hope you will join us in preserving our trees. Contact Robert Fain at robertfain1196@gmail.com for more information.

Check out the newly planted pollinator garden at Canal Park on Lake Avenue!

Residents dug up and donated plants from their own yards to begin the transformation of this historical pocket park. Plans include a walking path with additional pollinator species. This is part of a collaborative effort by residents, Town employees and the Parks and Greenways Board to beautify and enrich our parks.



Bird Boxes



Birds are actively nesting and raising their young in the bird boxes throughout Laurel Park. Each box has an assigned volunteer who monitors and reports on bird box happenings. While we understand the desire to take a peek inside or help by cleaning out boxes, too many interruptions are counterproductive to the program.

PLEASE WATCH AND ENJOY THE BOXES FROM A DISTANCE AND REFRAIN FROM OPENING THE BOXES.



As an official Bee City USA, Laurel Park has committed to conserving native pollinators.

Among our many goals are creating and enhancing pollinator habitats, reducing the use of pesticides, and hosting pollinator awareness events. We will be hosting a showing of the film **My Garden of a Thousand Bees** at Town Hall, date TBD. Check our Facebook page and website for an update. This 53 minute nature documentary astonishes and delights with footage of the daily lives of different species of bees. You will experience the beauty and diversity of native bees and learn how to support these important local pollinators.

ACETAMIPRID * CLOTHIANIDIN * DINOTEFURAN * IMIDACLOPRID * THIAMETHOXAM

These chemicals are killing the bees. If you see any of these ingredients listed on products in your home or local garden center, please do not use them. Bees are "canaries in the coal mine", warning us of an imminent and frightening threat to our food!



TRASH TALK

- Please be courteous of others when walking your dogs. The Town provides dog waste bags throughout the parks and receptacles for disposal. Please use them.
- Do not throw pet waste in the mulch as people walk in those areas and kids play there, too!
- We are seeing handfuls of unused dog waste bags in the trash. Please stop the waste!! If you accidentally grab too many, just stuff the extra bags back into the dispenser or leave them where they can be used by the next person. ***No need to throw them away.***



When is trash collection delayed?

We get numerous phone calls around national holidays to ask about trash collection delays and people ask why we didn't inform them about it.

We use every resource at our disposal to inform you!

OUR WEBSITE: CHECK OUR WEBSITE WWW.LAURELPARK.ORG. IT WILL BE ON THE HOME PAGE IF THERE IS A DELAY.

FACEBOOK: JUST GO TO OUR FB PAGE AND IT'S POSTED RIGHT THERE.

READ THE NEWSLETTER: IT IS MENTIONED TWICE IN THE NEWSLETTERS THAT ARE PUBLISHED PRIOR TO THE HOLIDAY - ONCE IN ITS OWN NOTICE AND AGAIN IN THE FINAL CALENDAR ON THE BACK PAGE. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS OR SET A REMINDER FOR YOURSELF ON YOUR PHONE.

BLACKBOARD CONNECT: WE SEND OUT NOTIFICATIONS THE WEEK OF THE DELAY. CHOOSE TO RECEIVE A TEXT NOTIFICATION, AN EMAIL OR AN AUTOMATED PHONE CALL. TEXT IS PREFERABLE SINCE MANY PEOPLE DO NOT ACCEPT "UNKNOWN" PHONE CALLS AND THE EMAILS COULD END UP IN YOUR "JUNK" BOX.

*****WE DO NOT SEND OUT NOTIFICATIONS WHEN THERE IS REGULAR TRASH SERVICE - ONLY WHEN THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS*****

***** NOTE THAT IF YOU OPT OUT OF BLACKBOARD NOTIFICATIONS, YOU OPT OUT OF ALL TYPES. WE CAN'T CONTROL THE NATURE OF NOTIFICATIONS THAT YOU RECEIVE - IT'S EITHER ALL OR NOTHING. *****

TRASH WILL BE DELAYED 5 MORE TIMES THIS YEAR AND WILL BE PICKED UP ON FRIDAY INSTEAD OF THURSDAY OF THAT WEEK:

**JULY 4TH WEEK - PICKUP WILL BE FRIDAY, JULY 7TH
LABOR DAY WEEK - PICKUP WILL BE FRIDAY, SEPT 8TH
THANKSGIVING WEEK - PICKUP WILL BE FRIDAY, NOV 24TH
CHRISTMAS WEEK - PICKUP WILL BE FRIDAY, DEC 29TH
NEW YEAR'S WEEK - PICKUP WILL BE FRIDAY, JAN 5TH (2024)**

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE ABOVE RESOURCES BEFORE CALLING TO ASK WHEN TRASH WILL BE PICKED UP

Laurel Park Police Department

Don't forget about the two remaining Community Safety Classes, hosted by our Police Department



July 20th - Fraud and Scam Detection: This will cover how to detect a fraud or scam and how to protect yourself from being a victim.



August 17th - Personal Safety: This covers techniques on how to be aware of one's surroundings and what to do in the event of emergencies

For more information or to sign up for a class, please contact Officer Adam Moore at amoore@laurelpark.org or by calling the police department at (828)692-9399

BASIC SUMMER HEAT SAFETY TIPS

Valley Hill Fire & Rescue encourages everyone to follow these basic heat safety tips in order to avoid the dangers of heat exposure this summer.









- During the hottest hours of the day, stay inside. If possible, stay inside an air-conditioned building.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration can occur if you do not drink enough water.
- Avoid drinking alcohol and beverages that contain caffeine.
- Keep blinds and curtains closed from morning until the late afternoon to block extra direct heat from sun light.
- Seek medical care right away if you become nauseous, start vomiting or experience cramps.
- Use a fan. Don't place the fan directly in front of a window because it may push hot air in. Try placing the fan so that it blows in the room and out the window instead.
- **Never leave a person or a pet in a car in hot conditions.** People and pets can succumb to heat exposure, which could lead to heat stroke or even death. Cars can become overheated quickly. **It's never safe.**

If you have any questions, contact Fire and Life Safety Officer Chris McDowell
828-692-2581 Ext 105



CALENDAR

- July 2  Fireworks at Hendersonville CC starting at 9:15
- July 4 Independence Day Holiday - Town Office Closed
Trash Service Delayed Until Friday, July 7
- July 11  Styrofoam Accepted at Convenience Center (2nd Tuesday of each month)
- July 20  PD Class "Fraud & Scam Detection" in Town Hall Meeting Room
- August 8  Styrofoam Accepted at Convenience Center (2nd Tuesday of each month)
- August 17  PD Class "Personal Safety" in Town Hall Meeting Room
- September 4  Labor Day Holiday - Town Office Closed
Trash Service Delayed Until Friday, September 8

Public Meeting Schedule

Town Council Work Session

July 13 @ 9:30 am
August 10 @ 9:30 am

Town Council Regular Meeting

July 18 @ 9:30 am
August 15 @ 9:30 am

Parks & Greenways Board

July 11 @ 9:30 am
August 8 @ 9:30 am

Parks & Greenways Site Meeting

July 27 @ 4:00 pm
August 24 @ 4:00 pm

Planning Board

July 11 @ 3:00 pm
August 8 @ 3:00 pm

Board of Adjustment

July 13 @ 4:00 pm TBD

ABC Board - at the ABC Store

July 25 @ 8:30 am
August 22 @ 8:30 am

Centennial Committee

July 10 @ 11:30 am
August 7 @ 11:30 am

Bicycle Advisory Committee

July 10 @ 3:00 pm
August 7 @ 3:00 pm

Bee Committee

July 18 @ 4:30 pm
August 15 @ 4:30 pm

Invasive Species Committee

July 5 @ 10:00 am
August 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**

Mayor: J. Carey O’Cain

Mayor Pro Tem: Paul Hansen

Commissioners:

George W. Banta

Kristin Dunn

Deborah Hinson Bridges

Town Manager: Alex Carmichael

Police Chief: Bobbie Trotter

Finance Director: Position Open

Public Works Director: Brandon Johnson

Asst. to the Manager: Jordan Jones

Town Clerk: Tamara Amin