

The Town of Laurel Park

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK

A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR O'CAIN

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY IS THIS YEAR,
2025!!!

WE WISH EVERYONE A JOYOUS, HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR.
THIS WILL BE A SPECIAL YEAR!

2024 WAS CERTAINLY ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS. THE HISTORIC
FLOODS OF 1916 WERE SURPASSED BY THE FLOODS OF 2024. MANY
RESIDENTS WERE SEVERELY AFFECTED BUT FORTUNATELY NO ONE
IN TOWN LOST A LIFE. SO MANY OTHER COMMUNITIES CANNOT
MAKE THE SAME CLAIM. BLESS THEM ALL.

WE ARE GRATEFUL!

AFTER MULTIPLE MEETINGS WITH FEMA, THEY BEGAN INSPECTING OUR
AFFECTED AREAS DECEMBER 2ND. ANTICIPATING OUR CLAIM, OUR POLICE
DEPARTMENT BEGAN TAKING DRONE FOOTAGE OF AFFECTED AREAS
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE STORM. ENGINEERS, MAINTENANCE, STAFF,
POLICE AND COUNCIL SURVEYED EACH IMPACTED AREA. OUR TOWN
ENGINEER, WILL BUIE, BEGAN COMPILING A LIST OF EACH AFFECTED AREA
INCLUDING EXACT LONGITUDE AND LATITUDE FOR FEMA REVIEW. BECAUSE
OF THESE IMMEDIATE ACTIONS, LAUREL PARK WAS THE VERY FIRST
COMMUNITY TO APPLY FOR AND BEGIN THE REVIEW PROCESS. I MUST
REMIND YOU THAT MS. CARA REEVES ONLY JOINED US AS TOWN
MANAGER ON SEPTEMBER 1. WE OWE HUGE GRATITUDE TO CARA
AND HER WONDERFUL STAFF.

WE ALSO WISH TO THANK COMMISSIONER KRISTEN DUNN FOR HER
SERVICE. KRISTEN BROUGHT TO OUR COUNCIL A WELCOME
YOUNGER PERSPECTIVE. THANKFULLY KRISTEN HAS ALREADY
VOLUNTEERED TO BE ON OTHER COMMITTEES. HER INPUT IS
ALWAYS WELCOME. NOW, WE WELCOME TRAVIS BONNAMA, OUR
NEWLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE. TRAVIS HAS BEEN ATTENDING
COUNCIL MEETINGS REGULARLY FOR NEARLY THREE YEARS. HE
KNOWS OUR ISSUES. TRAVIS WILL ALSO BRING A WEALTH OF
COMPUTER KNOWLEDGE TO OUR BOARD.

THIS YEAR WILL PRESENT CHALLENGES AS WE NAVIGATE THE
STORM REPAIR PROCESS. WE WILL GET ASSISTANCE FROM THE
STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS JUST HOW MUCH AND
WHEN IS THE BIG QUESTION. WE ARE ALREADY MAKING EVERY
EFFORT TO RECEIVE GRANTS AND LOW INTEREST LOANS. FURTHER
UPDATE WILL BE SHARED ONCE FUNDING BECOMES AVAILABLE. IT
IS IMPORTANT THAT WE BUILD BACK BETTER; IN AN AESTHETIC
MANNER THAT WILL HELP MITIGATE FUTURE DISASTERS.



SAFETY FIRST!



VALLEY HILL FIRE & RESCUE WANTS YOU TO: PREPARE FOR COLDER WEATHER

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS, CONTACT VALLEY HILL FIRE RESCUE: FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY OFFICER CHRIS MCDOWELL 828-692-2581 EXT 105

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO BEGIN PREPARING FOR THE HEATING SEASON. USE THIS CHECKLIST OF SAFETY TIPS AND GET AHEAD OF THE WINTER FREEZE.

- THE FURNACE HAS BEEN INSPECTED AND SERVICED BY A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS.
- THE CHIMNEYS AND VENTS HAVE BEEN CLEANED AND INSPECTED BY A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL. CHECK FOR CREOSOTE BUILD-UP.
- THE WOOD FOR YOUR FIREPLACE OR WOOD STOVE IS DRY, SEASONED WOOD.
- THE FIREPLACE SCREEN IS METAL OR HEAT-TEMPERED GLASS, IN GOOD CONDITION AND SECURE IN ITS POSITION IN FRONT OF THE FIREPLACE.
- HAVE A COVERED METAL CONTAINER READY TO USE TO DISPOSE OF COOLED ASHES. (THE ASH CONTAINER SHOULD BE KEPT AT LEAST 10 FEET FROM THE HOME AND ANY NEARBY BUILDINGS, ON A NONCOMBUSTIBLE SURFACE.)
- TEST YOUR SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE WORKING.

FRAUD WARNING: STAY ALERT!

DURING DEVASTATING TIMES, WE BECOME MORE VULNERABLE TO FRAUD AND SCAMS. THE LAUREL PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT WANTS TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF AN INCREASE IN CREDIT CARD FRAUD.

HERE ARE IMPORTANT STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF:

1. MONITOR YOUR ACCOUNTS: REGULARLY CHECK YOUR BANK AND CREDIT CARD STATEMENTS FOR UNAUTHORIZED TRANSACTIONS.
2. BE CAUTIOUS ONLINE: AVOID SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION ON UNSECURED WEBSITES OR WITH UNKNOWN PARTIES.
3. REPORT IMMEDIATELY: IF YOU NOTICE ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY, CONTACT YOUR CREDIT CARD ISSUER RIGHT AWAY.
4. USE STRONG PASSWORDS: CREATE COMPLEX PASSWORDS AND CHANGE THEM REGULARLY.
5. ENABLE TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION: THIS ADDS AN EXTRA LAYER OF SECURITY TO YOUR ACCOUNTS.

STAY VIGILANT AND PROTECT YOUR FINANCIAL INFORMATION. YOUR AWARENESS CAN HELP PREVENT FRAUD! PLEASE CONTACT THE LPPD AT 828-697-3025 IF YOU BELIEVE ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY HAS TAKEN PLACE.



ATTENTION LAUREL PARK RESIDENTS!!!
REPORT STORM DEBRIS DAMAGE FOR PICK UP TO THE COUNTY BY SCANNING THE QR CODE BELOW

Report Storm Debris for Pickup

Have storm debris ready for curbside pickup? Let us know where.

Scan:

HENDERSON COUNTY

COMPLETING THE ABOVE SURVEY WILL HELP HENDERSON COUNTY DETERMINE WHERE STORM DEBRIS PICK UP IS NEEDED & HOW TO DELEGATE RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY!



FRIENDS OF LAUREL PARK

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL! THE FRIENDS OF LAUREL PARK ARE PLANNING THREE INDOOR WINTER CONCERTS IN 2025. IN JANUARY, ALTHOUGH DETAILS INCLUDING A DATE ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE, DISCUSSION IS UNDERWAY TO HAVE A SMALL STRING TRIO PLAY SOME CLASSICAL FAVORITES AT A NEW VENUE FOR US, LAUREL PARK'S OWN ECHO MOUNTAIN INN! THEN, IN MID FEBRUARY, WE ARE HAPPY THAT TWO OF OUR LOCAL MUSICIANS, JOHN PERKINS AND JOEL HELFAND WILL RETURN. ON MARCH 15, WE WELCOME KAPTAIN K AND CREW, ALSO LOCAL MUSICIANS WHO HAVE ENTERTAINED US PREVIOUSLY. ALL OF THESE CONCERTS WILL BE AT ECHO MOUNTAIN INN.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.FRIENDSOFLAURELPARK.ORG FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.



DEER CONCERNS IN LAUREL PARK



ON NOVEMBER 14, 2024, JUSTIN MCVEY FROM THE NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION WAS INVITED TO GIVE A PRESENTATION ON DEER ISSUES IN WESTERN NC COMMUNITIES AT TOWN HALL THAT ATTRACTED A VERY LARGE AUDIENCE. MANY LAUREL PARK RESIDENTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING POPULATION OF DEER, AND MR. MCVEY SHOWED HUNTER STATISTICS IN THE COUNTY OVER THE PAST DECADE CONFIRMING THE PERCEPTION. A DEER POPULATION THAT EXCEEDS ITS BIOLOGICAL CARRYING CAPACITY NOT ONLY PUTS HUMANS AT RISK OF VEHICLE COLLISIONS AND DISEASE, REDUCES FOREST HEALTH, BUT ALSO INFLECTS EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO GARDENS AND ORNAMENTAL PLANTINGS WHICH MANY RESIDENTS HAVE ALREADY WITNESSED.

FOR THESE REASONS, THE TOWN PLANS TO INITIATE POLICIES IN STAGES:

1. REDUCE SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING OF WILDLIFE. IT IS KNOWN THAT SEVERAL RESIDENTS PROVIDE FOOD (E.G. CORN) ON A REGULAR BASIS. WHILE IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT MANY LOVE TO SEE WILD ANIMALS, THIS RARELY HAS POSITIVE RESULTS. FIRST, IT RESULTS IN CONCENTRATING THE HERD, SECOND, IT ALTERS NORMAL MOVEMENTS OF NOT ONLY DEER, BUT BEARS, TURKEYS, RACCOONS, POSSUMS, THIRD, OFTEN DISEASES ARE TRANSMITTED UNDER CROWDED CONDITIONS. IN ADDITION, CORN IS NOT DIGESTED BY WHITE TAILED DEER! THEREFORE, THE TOWN IS CONSIDERING ESTABLISHING AN ORDINANCE AGAINST SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING AS PHASE 1.
2. PARTIAL CONTROL OF THE DEER HERD. IF THE DEER ISSUE SHOWS NO IMPROVEMENT OVER A FEW YEARS, MORE AGGRESSIVE MEASURES MAY BE USED AS PHASE 2, FOR EXAMPLE SELECTIVE SHOOTING OF DOES AT AREAS AWAY FROM HOUSES THAT ARE KNOWN TO BE CONGREGATION AREAS. THIS COULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY OUR POLICE OFFICERS. THIS MEASURE WOULD REQUIRE OBTAINING A VARIANCE OR CHANGE IN THE FIREARMS RESTRICTIONS UNDER THE UDO.

IN THE MEANTIME, RESIDENTS CAN HELP REDUCE SOME OF THE DEER IMPACTS BY AVOIDING PLANTINGS KNOWN TO BE EDIBLE TO DEER (E.G. HOSTAS), AND USING WIRE OR OTHER TYPES OF FENCING AROUND INDIVIDUAL TREES OR SHRUBS OR SMALL GARDEN PLOTS. IN SOME CASES, MOTION SENSITIVE SPRINKLERS WORK AS A DETERENT.

CHIEF BOBBIE TROTTER SERVES AS THE LEAD ON THIS ISSUE, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM RESIDENT ECOLOGIST DR. MICHAEL ERWIN

**LAUREL PARK ADVISORY
BOARDS OPPORTUNITIES**

THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK RECOGNIZES & CELEBRATES THE DIVERSITY OF OUR TOWN AND ENCOURAGES ALL INDIVIDUALS TO APPLY TO SERVE ON BOARD-APPOINTED COMMITTEES. THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR VACANCIES.

TO APPLY, PLEASE CONTACT THE TOWN (INFO@LAURELPARK.ORG) OR VISIT WWW.LAURELPARK.ORG/GOVERNMENT/ADVISORY-BOARDS



Christmas tree and bagged leaf pick-up is happening now! Please complete this form: <https://www.laurelpark.org/leaf-pickup>

**LAUREL PARK
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES**

- TOWN CLERK
- ASSISTANT TO THE TOWN MANAGER / ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
- POLICE OFFICER
- STREETS MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

TO APPLY, PLEASE GO TO WWW.LAURELPARK.ORG/DEPARTMENTS/EMPLOYMENT



Happy Holidays From the Staff



Jody Justice was recognized for 10 years of service!



Kristen Dunn was recognized for her service as a Town Council Member.



**We welcomed two new employees:
Cortney Kidd- Finance Officer
and
Laura Maddox- Public Works Crew Member.**



Also, Welcome to Travis Bonnema, the newly elected member of The Laurel Park Town Council.

Thank You for Your Service

CALENDAR

January 20

CLOSED

Town Hall Closed for Observation of MLK Jr. Day

February 17

CLOSED

Town Hall Closed for Presidents' Day

Public Meeting Schedule

(Please check back on our website for up-to-date meeting changes prior to attending)

Town Council Work Session

January 9 @ 9:30 am - Cancelled
February 13 @ 9:30 am

Town Council Regular Meeting

January 21 @ 9:30 am
February 18 @ 9:30 am

Planning Board

January 14 @ 3:00 pm
February 11 @ 3:00 pm

Board of Adjustment

January 16 @ 4 pm

Parks & Greenways Board

January 14 @ 9:30 am
February 11 @ 9:30 am

Invasive Species committee

January 8 @ CANCELLED
February 5 @ 10:00 am

Centennial Committee

January 13 @ 11:30 am
February 10 @ 11:30 am

Bee Committee

January 21 @ 4:30 pm
February 18 @ 4:30 pm

Bicycle Committee

January 13 @ 3:00 pm

Town Contact Information

Town Hall (828) 693-4840
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Mon - Fri

Police Non Emergency (828)692-9399

Valley Hill Fire (828) 692-2581

Town Manager: Cara R. Reeves

Town Clerk: Vacant

Police Chief: Bobbie Trotter

Public Works Director: Brandon Johnson



Mayor: J. Carey O'Cain

Mayor Pro-Tem: A. Paul Hansen

Commissioners:

George W. Banta

Travis Bonnema

Debra Hinson Bridges

