

The Town of Laurel Park

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK



LAUREL PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT TO HOST COMMUNITY CLASSES

The Laurel Park Police Department will begin hosting educational classes for the public. We would like to help our community be prepared and know what to do when incidents occur. These classes are open to the public and will be hosted in the Meeting Room at Laurel Park Town Hall, located at 441 White Pine Drive.

The classes will begin at **6:30 PM on the Third Thursday of every month, March through August.**

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March 16th - Town Staff Meet and Greet: Come meet those that serve our town. Guests from Administrative staff, the Police Department, Public Works, Friends of Laurel Park and Valley Hill Fire Department will be there.
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April 20th - Policing 101: Covers what the Laurel Park Police Department provides for the citizens of Laurel Park and our responsibility to the town.
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May 18th - Crime Reporting: Covers topics of what is crime, when to report it, how to report it, who to report it to, and information needed for general crimes.
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June 15th - Crime Prevention: Covers common methods of crime prevention both for homeowners, business owners, and what the police can do to help.
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July 20th - Fraud and Scam Detection: Covers how to detect a fraud or scam and how to protect oneself from being a victim.
- 
August 17th - Personal safety: Covers techniques on how to be aware of one's surroundings and what to do in the event of emergencies.

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



HELP SAVE OUR LAUREL PARK FORESTS FROM INVASIVE VINES

Invasive vines kill trees and continue to encroach on our forest. Please help eradicate vines such as English Ivy and Oriental Bittersweet.

Two ways you can help:

- Cut and treat vines that may grow on your property. Click [here](#) for detailed instructions on how to eradicate and prevent growth or go to <https://www.wikihow.com/Kill-English-Ivy>.
- Contribute to the removal of vines on public property. The Town has received a \$20,000 matching grant to cut and treat vines on public property.

Help us meet this match!

Call 828-693-4840 to find out how to donate



Photo - Carey O'Cain

UPDATE

Commissioner's Corner

Hwy 64 (Brevard Rd) Improvements

By: Commissioner George Banta

More than 10 years ago, the Town of Laurel Park requested that the County and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations add the section of Hwy 64 (Brevard Road) through Laurel Park to the State Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for much needed road improvements. After several years of competing with other projects, the Brevard Road improvements were added to the list and in February, 2015, Project U-5783 was approved.

For those not familiar with the area, the Brevard Rd. project starts on the east end, at the intersection of Hwy. 64 and Blythe St. and continues westerly for a little more than a mile to the intersection of White Pine Dr. The Town has invested a great deal of time in studying the Hwy 64 corridor and how to best balance the business, medical, and residential interests along the corridor, as well as the commuting public. It is clear that improvements to Brevard Rd. are long overdue. Current traffic conditions make it extremely difficult for drivers to make a left turn when entering Brevard Road or when turning left, across on-coming traffic. Parking for businesses located close to the highway is limited and dangerous to access. Pedestrian activity is restricted and risky at best.

Currently, NCDOT is working on the final design details for the project, and contractors for DOT are in the process of completing Right of Way acquisition. Once the Right of Way acquisitions are finalized, the relocation of all major utilities will take place. It is anticipated that road construction will start sometime in mid-2024.

The Brevard Rd. improvements will enhance the attractiveness of our business district by adding sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and green space. The commercial business district is our "downtown" and these road improvements will increase the viability of existing and new businesses by making this an attractive place to locate for years to come.

To that end, the Town has hired a design firm to assist with the planning and landscape design. A map of the project is available on Laurelpark.org. Brevard Rd./HWY 64 Improvements tab.

**UPDATE**

Ecusta Trail Construction

By: Commissioner George Banta

Along with the road improvements planned for Hwy 64, significant progress is also being made with the development of the Ecusta Trail. The Ecusta Trail, when complete, will be a 19.4 mile multi-use, paved greenway along the dormant railway corridor between Hendersonville and Brevard. This "linear park" meanders through small communities, fields and forests providing an excellent opportunity to get outside and walk or bike. Within Laurel Park, the Ecusta Trail follows our Town limits from Laurel Green Park out to Ecusta Crossing on Hwy 64.

Most of the financing for the Ecusta Trail has been accomplished through NCDOT grants, which cover 80% of the purchase and construction costs. The remaining 20% of the cost has been raised through private donations and other grant opportunities. A public fundraising campaign is expected to start in early 2023 to generate the necessary finances for trail amenities (trail heads, parking, bathrooms, etc.). Construction of the Ecusta Trail is projected to start in Hendersonville sometime in the spring or summer of 2023 and move west to the county line and then onward to Brevard.

With the completion of these projects, residence will experience improved traffic patterns and greater accessibility to the shops and restaurants in our Laurel Park business district. Don't want to drive? The ability to walk or bike to these establishments will also be possible.

Our Unique UDO

By: Commissioner Debra Bridges

Laurel Park's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is a one-of-a-kind, 400+ page legal document representing administrative authority in matters of land use and development as well as other necessary municipal controls granted by NC General Statute § 160D-103. UDOs allow NC towns and cities to legislate and enforce their own policies with respect to overall unique and identifying qualities and characteristics. For example, the UDO of a coastal town would differ quite a bit from locations in the foothills or mountains; urban or metropolitan areas might have more restrictions about setbacks than rural ones; or, commercial or industrial development might be prohibited in areas of agricultural importance.

Some of the regulations in Laurel Park's UDO are more rigorous than State (and even County) requirements. This is primarily due to our town's distinct topography and the significant number of steep and very steep slopes. Water flow patterns, average volume and velocity of run-off, and the hydrology of watersheds combined with the numerous sloped areas and a considerable number of creeks and streams necessitates a very complicated scientific equation in terms of stormwater management and erosion sedimentation control. Applying State and/or County variables and formulas in that equation does not result in an acceptable or effective long-term solution. Fortunately, NC Statutes permit municipalities like Laurel Park to establish higher standards, regulations, and requirements; and, legally, the more stringent regulations prevail.

A unified development ordinance (UDO) may also incorporate a community's "collective consciousness" to existing and future land use and development ordinances. This is frequently true, particularly when those regulations have the potential to impact certain "quality of life" identities and common denominators of the town residents' values and interests. In Laurel Park, some of these concerns include:

- The health and preservation of environmental integrity, the surrounding ecosystem, and clean natural resources.
- Inclusive and sustainable urban green spaces and initiatives.
- The protection of wildlife, birds, and indigenous species such as native plants.
- The preservation of significant historical properties and other features such as waterways, springs, waterfalls, rock formations, and other natural phenomena.
- Availability and access to outdoor activities such as walking trails, hiking, biking, parks, and playgrounds.
- Inclusivity and diversity.
- Accommodations for handicapped accessibility.
- Secure and peaceful enjoyment of individual homes and respect for private property.

After three years of diligent study and work, Laurel Park's current UDO was adopted in June 2021 and became effective the following August. It is a remarkable document that has been referred to as "one of the most forward-looking, advanced development regulations" for a community of its size by NC code experts.* The 400+ pages of content may not be everyone's "night-table read", but it is certainly worthy of attention and respect. I encourage you to explore these pages and be mindful of them as a source of guidance and security when considering the future of our unique "Town on the mountain."

You can download Laurel Park's UDO [here](#) on the town's website. Or, if you prefer, you can view a brief [video](#) overview.

* Lurah Lowery. Online news article:

<https://www.blueridgenow.com/story/news/2021/06/15/laurel-park-unanimously-approves-unified-ordinance-land-development/7699746002/>

Spring Brush Collection

PLACE BRUSH BY MARCH 13-28, PICKUP
BEGINS MARCH 29

Beginning the week of March 29th, Public Works will collect brush placed by the roadside for the spring brush collection service. **Brush placed after March 29th will not be collected.** Every effort is made to collect brush quickly, but the process takes approximately one month to complete.

- 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.
- Limbs and branches should not be more than 3 in. diameter. Larger limbs will not be collected.
- *The Town will not collect brush from a major landscape or clearing operation*
- 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

Bagged leaves are collected first. Please use paper bags and submit your request through the Town website or call Town Hall for collection within 3 business days.

Christmas Tree Collection

The Town will collect Christmas trees placed by the roadside. All trees must be placed out by **January 15th** to be picked up by Public Works. Any trees placed after January 15th will be the resident's responsibility to remove.



Congratulations!

Assistant Police Chief Michael Capps becomes Certified EMT

Recently the Laurel Park PD put out the call for a member of the force to volunteer to become certified as an EMT, and Assistant Chief Capps stepped forward.

Assistant Chief Capps attended several weeks of intense classes at Blue Ridge Community College. He was tired and cranky at times, but successfully completed his exams in November and is now back to his old self.

Assistant Chief Capps will now be qualified to assist in medical emergency situations where he can arrive at the scene before medical personnel are able get there.



Tax Reminder

Reminder: Taxes become delinquent on Jan. 5
Both Laurel Park and
County taxes are paid to
Henderson County. For
questions call
828-697-5595

Coffee with a Cop

Photos from our successful December 20th Coffee with a Cop event at Dixie Diner



Let's talk Trash

It is being reported to Town Hall that residents are placing trash and recycle bags in the same bins. This causes collection issues for the workers on the route, resulting in missed pickups and mixing of trash with recycling.

- Please place your trash and recycle in separate containers. **Clearly mark the recycle container.**
- To cut down on rodents and wildlife breaking into plastic bags, Waste Pro has requested that **all plastic bags be placed into garbage bins**
- Please do not place loose bags out in the **Fleetwood** area.

It is not Waste Pro's responsibility to clean up trash that animals have gotten into.

- **PLACE TRASH OUT BY 7:30 AM! They may come sooner than your usual pickup time, so be prepared and have it out.**

We also have reports from the Waste Pro workers that they see people putting their trash out AFTER 7:30, as the truck drives away. *This is not "missed" trash* and should not be reported as such. The workers know when they return to a residence who did not have their trash out in time and they will be told to not pick it up and to report it to Town Hall. They cannot be expected to return to addresses that do not comply with the 7:30 am cutoff time.

Valley Hill Fire & Rescue: Portable Generator Safety Tips

Portable generators are useful when temporary or remote electric power is needed, but they also can be hazardous. The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock, fire, and burns.

Here are some safety tips to keep in mind when using a generator:

- Never use a generator inside homes, garages, crawl spaces, sheds, or similar areas.
- Follow the instructions that come with your generator.
- Position the generator far away from windows, doors, vents, crawl spaces and locate it in an area where adequate ventilation is available.
- Never add fuel while the generator is running or hot.
- Many generator parts are hot enough to burn you, avoid coming into contact.
- Do not connect your generator directly to your home's wiring or into a regular household outlet.
- Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy-duty outdoor-rated cords that are adequate for the appliance load.
- Do not use extension cords with exposed wires or worn shielding.
- It is recommended to install a battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm.



For any questions or additional information contact Fire and Life Safety Officer Chris McDowell at 828-692-2581 ext 105

Goldilocks left her Christmas treats on the porch and the bears got them



Over the holidays, we got a call or two about Papa Bear apparently delaying his hibernation so that he could enjoy your holidays, helping himself to boxes of food that had been delivered to the front porches of homes where no one was home.

If you receive packages of food at your home, please retrieve them from your front porch as soon as possible. Better yet, send it to your office if possible.

The police don't want to come face-to-face with a bear anymore than you do!

BE BEAR AWARE

-  Keep organics in a secure bin. Store in an enclosed and secure area until collection day. Keep garbage bin free of organics.
-  Do not leave garbage out overnight. Bring your bins back from the curbs after collection and rinse periodically.
-  Clean your grill after each use.
-  Manage fruit trees by picking ripe fruit.
-  Keep pet food indoors.
-  Birdfeeders can attract bears



CALENDAR

- January 2  New Years Day - Town Offices Closed
- January 15  Last day to place Christmas trees out
- January 16  Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Town Offices closed
- March 8  Mulch Sale
- March 13  Begin Placing brush out for Spring collection
- March 28  Last day to place brush out for Spring collection
- March 29  Spring brush pickup begins

Public Meeting Schedule

Town Council Regular Meeting

January 17 @ 9:30 am
February 21 @ 9:30 am

Town Council Work Session

January 12 @ 9:30 am
February 16 @ 9:30 am

Parks & Greenways Board

January 10 @ 9:30 am
February 14 @ 9:30 am

Parks & Greenways Site Meeting

January 26 @ 4 pm
February 23 @ 4 pm

Planning Board

January 10 @ 3:00 pm
February 14 @ 3:00 pm

Board of Adjustment

January 12 @ 4:00 pm

ABC Board - at the ABC Store

January 24 @ 8:30 am
February 28 @ 8:30 am

Centennial Committee

January 9 @ 11:30 am
February 13 @ 11:30 am

Bicycle Advisory Committee

January 9 @ 3:00 pm
February 13 @ 3:00 pm

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: Heather Smith, CLGFO
Public Works Director: Brandon Johnson
Asst. to the Manager: Jordan Jones
Town Clerk: Tamara Amin