



**Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.**

Mayor O’Cain called the Regular Council Meeting to order at 9:29 a.m. on January 17, 2023, in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park NC 28739 and electronically through Zoom platform.

The following attended in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park NC 28739:

- Mayor Carey O’Cain
- Mayor Pro Tempore A. Paul Hansen
- Commissioner George W. Banta
- Town Manager Alex Carmichael
- Town Clerk Tamara Amin
- Assistant to the Town Manager Jordan Jones
- Police Chief Bobbie Trotter
- Public Works Director Brandon Johnson
- Fire Chief Tim Garren
- John Crook- BOA Chair
- Gary Anderson- P&G Chair
- Tim Culberson- YAM Yoga Co-Owner

The following were absent:

- Commissioner Deb Bridges
- Commissioner Kristin Dunn
- Finance Officer Heather Smith

Mayor O’Cain opened the Regular Meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor O’Cain asked if there was any public comment; there was one.

Mr. Dhom sent in a public comment via email that was read out loud and put in the record by Town Clerk Tamara Amin.

- a. Dhom Public Comment Email - The aforesaid Public Comment Email is attached to and made part of these minutes as Appendix 1.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Banta moved to approve the agenda. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked about the accuracy of the tax information. Town Clerk Amin said the report is through December 31, 2022 and next month's meeting will have a higher collection rate because it will include the payments through January 31, 2023.

- b. December Monthly Report - The aforesaid report is attached to and made part of these minutes as Appendix 2.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

OLD BUSINESS

SIGNS UPDATE

Town Manager Alex Carmichael said at the December regular meeting the Council asked staff to make a few changes to the new corporate limit signs for Laurel Park. Staff met with Summit Marketing, which developed the proof that is presented to Council. Staff has asked Summit to send a proof with the sign on a post, but it has not been sent to the Town yet.

Council discussed the corporate limit signs and will delay the vote until the sign with the posts is presented to Council.

NEW BUSINESS

YAM YOGA DATES AT JUMP OFF ROCK

Mr. Tim Culberson from YAM Yoga said YAM would like to hold free yoga sessions again this year from April through October at Jump Off Rock on Mondays from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.

Council discussed yoga sessions and dates. Mr. Culberson understood the concern with traffic and will make sure traffic is controlled and speeding is addressed in every session.

Chief Trotter said a mid-shift Officer can be placed at Somersby to control the traffic.

Mayor O'Cain said Council likes to promote Health and Wellness but continues to get pushback from residents. Mayor O'Cain asked Mr. Culberson to please try and control it and if it gets out of hand Council will have to readdress it.

Mr. Culberson will suggest carpooling and letting participants know that any speeding or violations will cause Yoga to be discontinued.

Mayor O'Cain also stressed the fact that Jump Off Rock is a public park and is to be opened to all while the event is happening.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen moved to approve the free yoga sessions at Jump Off Rock from April through October on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion.

Commissioner Banta amended the motion to include the caveats and the right to rescind the approval. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The amended motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Culberson left the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

PARKS AND GREENWAYS 2023/2024 GOALS LIST

Mr. Gary Anderson, Chair of the Parks and Greenways Board said the Parks and Greenways Board would like to receive feedback from Council on goals for FY 2023-2024.

Council reviewed the goals and objectives of the Parks and Greenways Board.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked Mr. Anderson to:

- 1. Consider bike racks near the bridge in Laurel Green Park
- 2. Signs saying no bicycles inside Laurel Green Park in the walking paths.

Mr. Anderson said the bike racks are under item 8 Ecusta Trail and under the Bicycle committee item #14. Mr. Anderson hopes the County will coordinate with the surrounding towns and cities where bike racks and water fountains will be placed so they are not placed very close together.

Mayor O’Cain asked Mr. Anderson to be cautious of adding lots of plant buffers along Laurel Park Highway and the Laurel Green parking lot so that police can see in the park. He also suggested digging out lots of the soil in the first circle of Laurel Green because the soil was killing the trees. Mayor O’Cain asked Mr. Anderson to talk to Conserving Carolina about the wetlands area to create walking paths.

- c. P&G draft goals list - The aforesaid Public Comment Email is attached to and made part of these minutes as Appendix 3.

RTAC UPDATE

Town Manager Alex Carmichael provided a brief update from the Rail Trails Advisory Committee since Ms. McKinley could not attend. Mr. Carmichael said that 90% of the plans have been submitted. There was a concern about the narrowness of the path near the church, so now the path will be 12 feet instead of 14 feet as to not jeopardize the No Rise Certificate.

Town Manager Carmichael said a special meeting will be held on January 25 at 10 a.m., which he plans to attend. Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked what the items of discussion for the meeting were. Town Manager Carmichael will get that information and pass it along. Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked staff to get a formal agreement from the County. Town Manager Carmichael said he will meet with the County and get more information.

CONTRACT FOR LAUREL GREEN STREAM RESTORATION

Town Manager Alex Carmichael said a contract with Baker Grading and Landscaping, Inc. for the construction of the Laurel Green Stream restoration project has been presented to Council. Baker was the lowest priced responsible responsive bidder to the Town's request for proposals.

Council reviewed and discussed the contract for Laurel Green Stream restoration project.

Mayor O'Cain asked about an access road. Town Manager Carmichael said he will need to discuss. Mayor O'Cain asked staff to call for a pre-construction conference that he would like to attend.

Town Manger Carmichael pointed out the addendum for the Rhododendron Lake Nature Park work on page 9, the last line in the contract.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen moved to contract agreement with Baker Grading and Landscaping, Inc. for Laurel Green Stream restoration project. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Alex Carmichael said Mr. Steve Pettis looked at the trees at the new Town Hall site and determined that they are not the healthiest but are not in the worst condition. Mr. Pettis recommends removing them.

Commissioner Hansen moved to do landscaping to clean up the vines by next week. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The amended motion carried unanimously.

Council asked staff to send a notice to neighbors on the east side about encroachment.

Mayor O'Cain recommends being good neighbors and just getting proposals for demolition.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director Brandon Johnson said Public Works is still working on leaves. The department is three weeks ahead of last year on leaf pick up. Public Works is also working on potholes and collecting Christmas trees.

Mayor O'Cain asked Town Manager Carmichael for a status report on how the vine removal is going.

FIRE

Fire Chief Tim Garren said the department has been busy. The ISO rating was finished in November, and he hopes they will hear back soon.

POLICE

Chief Trotter said she is currently working on redoing the Emergency Plan. She has also not been in contact with DOT due to the holidays but will reach back out to them to get a status report. The department will be starting police community classes in March. They will take place in Town Hall the third Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

ADMINISTRATION

Town Clerk Amin reminded Council of the LGCCA meeting today at 3:00 p.m. The department is currently working on the budget. The budget retreat will be February 22 at 10:00 p.m. at Echo Mountain Inn. Town Clerk Amin also reminded Council of the Board Appreciation Dinner at the Hendersonville Country Club on February 10 at 6:00 p.m.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen – Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked Staff to include drainage ditches and culverts on the monthly report. How many the Town has done and how much money has been spent.

Commissioner Banta – Commissioner Banta said the Parks and Greenways Board is asking to add personnel to the Parks department.

Mayor O’Cain asked Public Works Director Brandon Johnson to look into some summer help under Mr. Bryan Hensley’s supervision.

Mayor O’Cain – Mayor O’Cain asked about the status of the Town Hall proposal. Town Manager Carmichael said the proposals are due Wednesday by 5:00 p.m. and will open them on Thursday.

Mayor O’Cain asked Council if there was any topics for the LGCCA meeting to be discussed. There were none presented.

Commissioner Bridges – Not present.

Commissioner Dunn – Not present.

ADJOURNMENT

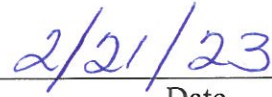
There being no further business, Commissioner Banta moved to adjourn at 10:24 a.m. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:



Tamara M. Amin, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk/ Deputy Tax Collector



J. Carey O' Cain, Mayor

Date

Appendix - 1

Tamara Amin

From: donotreply@form.govoffice.com
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2023 12:12 PM
To: Tamara Amin
Subject: Submit Public Comment (form) has been filled out on your site.

Be Advised: This email originated from outside of the Laurel Park network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Your Site has received new information through a form.

Form: Submit Public Comment

Site URL: www.laurelpark.org

Full Name: James H Dhom

Physical Address: 4150 Laurel Park Hwy

Comment or Question: Please consider the traffic impact on Laurel Park Hwy., and shortcuts, prior to approving the schedule for the YAM Yoga sessions for 2023. Also, consider the loss of use of Jump Off Rock for the many, many tax paying Laurel Park residents that do not attend the Yoga sessions. The weekly Yoga sessions are one of the two highest volume traffic events (the other being the free concerts) at Jump Off Rock when measured by volume over a time period. We have observed, not only the volume, but also speeding as some attendees arrive at the last minute and depart in a hurry. Please consider charging for the use of the park, as with other scheduled events, and/or limiting the number of sessions to one or two per month and/or providing an alternative venue. Thanks, Jim Dhom
Phone (Optional):

Email Address (Optional): jhdhom.jd@gmail.com How would you like to be contacted?:

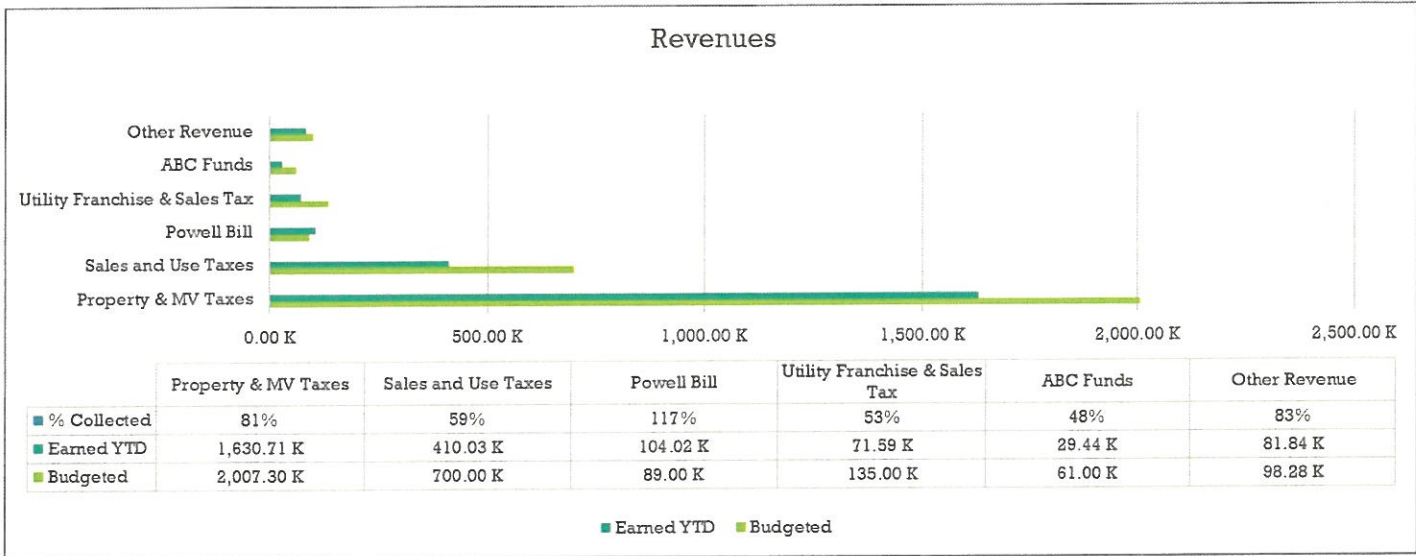
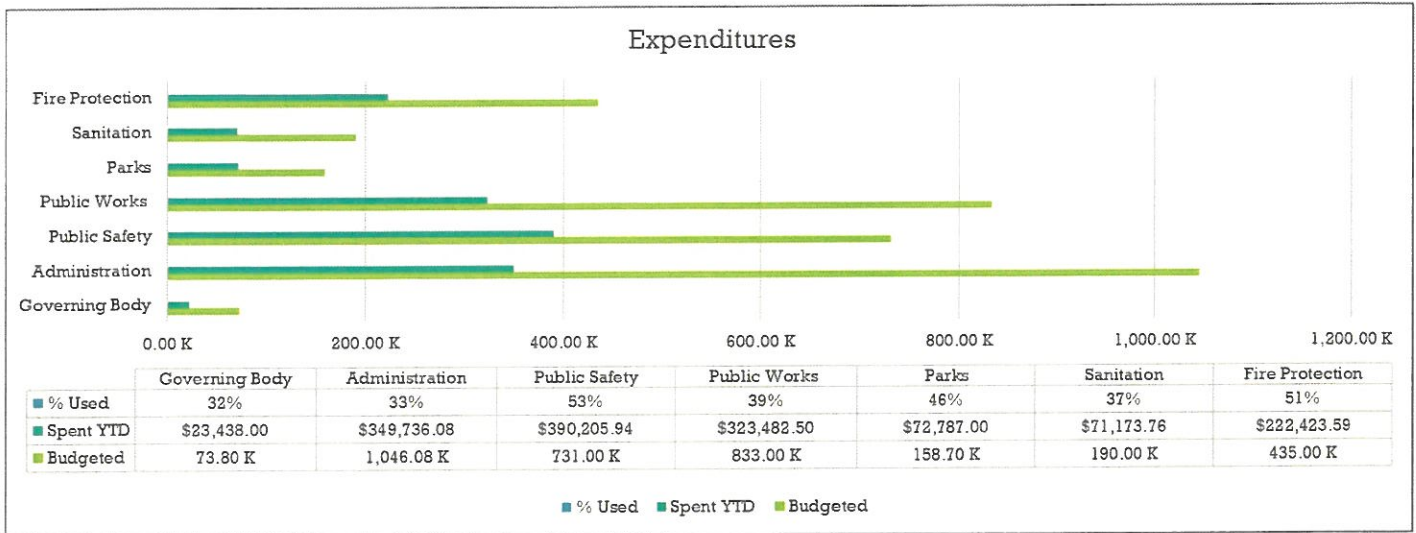
Email me

Do Not Click Reply - This e-mail has been generated from a super form.

Appendix 2



Quarterly Report (Oct, Nov, Dec)



Tax Collector's Report (December 31, 2022)-

For prior year taxes, a total of \$30,040.49 remains outstanding. The Town received \$473,311.00 from Henderson County for property taxes collected for August and a total of \$1,616,330.56 since the 2022 bills were mailed. The 2022 tax levy is \$1,867,476.57. The Town currently has a collection rate of 89.982%.

Outstanding Certificate of Occupancy Single Family Homes

PERMIT #	ADDRESS/LOT NO.	Owner/Builder	Status
2020-34	287 Alta Cir	Traci Clark	In Progress
2021-1	33 East Ramp	Michael Hux	In Progress
2021-7	91 Ransier Dr	Chris Nevel	Permit Issued
2021-13	9558565741	Sigfrid Della Valle	In Progress
2021-19	212 Beechwood	Jennifer Yost	Building Permit
2021-20	126 Elm Ln	Chris Brock	Building Permit+
2021-25	209 Sunny Ridge Rd.	Walter Baker	Building Permit
2021-40	276 Roberts Dr	Chris Miller	In Progress
2022-1	312 Daniel Dr	Chris St. Onge	In Progress
2022-7	211 Lady's Fern Trl	Chris Miller	In Progress
2022-23	74 Indian Woods Trl	Jon Skillman	In Progress

Department Updates

Planning and Zoning- Permits Issued by type for December 2022.

- **New Single-Family Homes – 0**
- **Deck – 0**
- **Signs -**
- **Additions/Remodel – 3**
- **Fence – 0**
- **Swimming Pool – 0**
- **Total – 3**

Appendix - 3

Town of Laurel Park

Parks and Greenways Board

2023-2024 Goals (Draft)

(January 11, 2023-June 30, 2024)

Gary Anderson – Chair	Judy Lyons – Vice Chair	Joe Robustelli – Secretary
Jenny Brown – Member	Todd Plessel - Member	Denise Layfield – Member
Terry Pierce – Member	George Banta – Town Council	Bryan Hensley –Parks Staff

1. Laurel Green Park Renovation (Layfield) (\$10,000)

- a) Coordinate landscape plan and installation of additional plantings at the entrance of Laurel Green Park to provide visual screen at parking lot, particularly the left entrance flank.
- b) Coordinate landscape plan and installation of two to three specimen trees in first circle of Laurel Green and eliminate remnants of dead trees there.
- c) Develop an inventory of maintenance needs at Little Laurel Green and investigate the possibility of a volunteer group helping with those needs and potentially adding new features to the park.
- d) Determine what alterations the stream restoration project will have on the entrance to Little Laurel Green and respond appropriately with additional plantings, if desired.
- e) Coordinate with stream restoration project.

2. Laurel Park Walking Paths (Brown & Plessel) (\$2000)

Continue the work of the Walking Trails Committee (a joint project of P&G and FLP). 2023 focus is on:

- a) Building out trails in Crystal Spring and Glenn Rock Spring parks
- b) Come up with a License Agreement that indemnifies private landowners who agree to grant a pedestrian trail license that town attorney and Town Council agree to
- c) Mapping:
 - i. Getting all our trails mapped
 - ii. Maps should be on the town's website and hard copies available at Town Hall
- d) Open more trails on private land via permission/license, e.g., Prior Preserve, connecting blue and yellow trails via Hansen land, Cascade Falls, Sabine- Orchard Circle. Main goal here is to connect blue, yellow, green and red trails

3. Landscape/Beautification Projects (Robustelli, Lyons, Pierce) (\$5,000)

- a) Continue to organize volunteer gardeners to maintain and improve public spaces in Laurel Park
- b) Maintain and improve all of our public area garden spaces
- c) Continue to organize and support the "Adopt-a-Garden" program with the Friends of Laurel Park which concentrates on our many pocket parks and other less formal areas in Laurel Park
- d) Establish a path thru Canal Park to move pedestrian traffic on the Blue Trail off Lake Drive
- e) Establish multiple pollinator gardens in Canal Park and consider adding pollinator housing
- f) Continue supporting the return of rhododendrons to Rhododendron Lake Nature Park

4. Glenn Rock Spring Park (Plessel, Anderson) (\$20,000*)

**has been contracted from previous budget cycle*

Oversee the contracted work of Southwinds Landscapes for the development of Glenn Rock Spring Park. This work is to include:

- a) An entrance ramp with handrail to access park from Echo Circle
- b) Steps cut into the rock outcropping, with safety rail
- c) Additional rock steps with safety rail to bring walkers safely down to the natural spring area
- d) Rebuilding the rock retention pond at the spring to create a small pond feature

5. Review Parks and make recommendations for Improvements/Amenities (All) (\$0)

Plan monthly visits to each park and greenway. Work closely with Bryan Hensley on maintenance and improvements. Support as needed.

6. Bee City USA (Layfield) (\$2,000)

- a) Establish a small committee to focus on maintaining Laurel Park's status as a Bee City
- b) Complete renewal application February 2023 and pay annual renewal fee
- c) Coordinate two public events that call attention to the importance of pollinator habitats. (Examples, beekeeper event/presentation and/or No Mow May public awareness)
- d) Be intentional about improving pollinator habitats when adding additional plants in all town parks
- e) Develop a guidance statement for an integrated pest management plan in specifically designated pollinator habitats in town parks (i.e. Fifth Avenue buffer in Laurel Green Park)
- f) Add educational signage in Laurel Green Park that coordinates with stream restoration project

7. Bluebird Box Maintenance (Pierce) (\$500)

Organize volunteers to maintain all bluebird boxes on town property. Coordinate with Commissioner Hansen, Mike Erwin and Joe Sander

8. Ecusta Trail & Henderson County Master Greenway Plan (Brown, Anderson, Pierce) (\$3,000)

Work on LP's interaction with Ecusta Trail with initial focus on the Laurel Green Park property closest to the Ecusta Trail. Create a stopping place for cycles/walkers with 2 picnic tables and a bike rack. Cost approx \$3000. Eventually add a bike tool station and water station (bottle filler/drink fountain/dog water) if these amenities are not going to be otherwise provided by The Ecusta Trail or nearby businesses.

9. Organize with FLP an Arbor Day Celebration each April (Anderson, Lyons & Robustelli) (\$500)

10. Be Alert to Opportunities for Property Acquisition for Parks/Trails (Brown, Layfield) (\$0..??)

Explore the possibility of creating a 20-acre nature preserve with trails from part of Woodlawn (historic property on Robinson Ln that is for sale), Prior Preserve and Quattlebaum flagpole property. Maybe a pipe dream; maybe not.

11. Volunteer Appreciation Picnic (Robustelli, Lyons, Anderson) (\$300)

Organize a cookout at Rhododendron Lake Nature Park to honor our many volunteers that help keep our mountain looking great!

12. Support Invasive Species Control/Removal Project (Brown) (\$0..?)

Work with town to remove invasive species on town properties and rights of way; conduct media/education campaign to encourage homeowners to remove vines; explore creating a volunteer group to help homeowners eradicate invasives.

13. Historical Marker Initiative (Pierce) (\$5,000)

Continue project w Commissioner Hansen and FLP

14. Bicycle Committee (Plessel) (\$1,000)

Work closely with Blue Ridge Cycling Club on developing and marking 3 safe bike routes in Laurel Park. Create brochures and maps for these routes, available to our residents. Purchase materials for properly marking these routes.

15. Laurel Park Newsletter (Pierce) (\$0)

Highlight to work of the Parks and Greenway Board with an article in the town's newsletter.

16. LP Centennial (Anderson) **(\$0)**
Attend the centennial planning meetings. Report to the Parks and Greenway Board with information pertinent to our group.

17. Support the Hwy 64 Roundabout Landscape Plans (Lyons) **(\$0)**

