



**Town Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
May 20, 2025, at 9:30 am**

Mayor O’Cain called the Regular Town Council Meeting to order at 9:30 am on May 20, 2025, in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park, NC 28739

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

- Mayor O’Cain
- Commissioner Banta
- Commissioner Bonnema
- Commissioner Bridges
- Town Clerk Banks
- Police Chief Trotter
- Fire Chief Garren
- Assistant to the Town Manager/Zoning Administrator Hollis
- Regional Planner Finkle
- Thomas Allen

The following were absent:

- Town Manager Reeves
- Public Works Director Johnson
- Parks Technician Hensley
- Finance Officer Kidd

Mayor O’Cain opened the Regular Meeting at 9:30 am and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment**

Mayor O’Cain asked if there were any public comments.

1. Thomas Allen of 114 Sunny Ridge Rd, Laurel Park, NC (Wildwood Heights Subdivision) He thanked Council for the update on properties. He is concerned about the entrance into his subdivision and the washout on Roland Drive and wanted to know if there was any idea when it would be repaired. Mayor O’Cain provided an explanation regarding FEMA. Commissioner Bonemma and Banta suggested providing contact information for State and Federal Representatives that citizens can contact and voice concerns regarding these issues. Mayor O’Cain said he would be in contact with Chuck Edwards office this week.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Mayor Carey O’Cain moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Banta made a motion and Commissioner Bonnema seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

### **Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Mayor O’Cain moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Bonnema made the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

### **Old Business**

There was none.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### A. Approval of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Items.

##### i. Final Vacancy

Regional Planner Finkle stated she went back and looked at the original organization of the roles. There is one vacant seat, and Ann Hartig has applied.

Mayor O’Cain called for a motion to approve her appointment.

Commissioner Banta made the motion and Commissioner Bonnema seconded the motion.

##### ii. Replacement of Ex-Officio Member

Regional Planner Finkle stated she has called out 3 Ex-Officio Members. 1 for Town Manager, 1 for Town Mayor and 1 for another Council Representative as Mayor Pro Tem Hansen was serving in that role. She stated that we need a replacement for Mayor Pro Tem Hansen and decide who will be the next Ex-Officio from this board. Mayor O’Cain appointed Commissioner Bridges. Both Commissioners Bonnema and Banta agreed.

##### iii. Recap of the May 6<sup>th</sup> Kickoff

Regional Planner Finkle felt it was a great kick-off meeting; good responses and every single person seated on the steering committee was able to attend except for Town Manager Reeves and Mayor Pro Tem Hansen but Commissioner Bridge was there to fill in.

##### iv. Review Existing Vision and Vision Direction

Regional Planner Finkle looked at what the vision had stated in the previous plan and where we could make some changes as well as the vision direction. Some of the new vision directions that came out of that plan were how infrastructure has changed in the last 10 years. We no longer have any control over the water system, and we are making it clear that Henderson County Health Department and Hendersonville Water Department manage it. We left the infrastructure but pulled out transportation as a stand-alone item and think that aligns with what The Town has been trying to do over the last 5 years. Pulling out was suggested. Mayor O’Cain noted that, after reviewing the section on

Transportation, there should be an added statement about the availability of local public transportation provided through Henderson County and the City of Hendersonville. He emphasized the importance of including a note that, upon request, the service can travel a certain distance up the mountain to accommodate public transit needs in the area.

#### Recovery Resiliency

Regional Planner Finkle said we do expect to highlight the storm and how it has impacted Laurel Park and what we are going to do about it now and moving forward. We are calling this out as a direction item. This will not be a stand-alone chapter in the plan. We think each of these sections will address how we are recovering and how we are going to be more resilient in the future.

#### B. Call for FY2025-26 Public Hearing

Mayor O’Cain moved to approve the FY2025-26 Public Hearing on June 12, 2025, at 9:30am at Town Hall. Commissioner Banta made a motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

#### C. Election of Mayor Pro Tem

##### i. Oath of Office for Mayor Pro Tem

It was proposed that Commissioner Banta be Mayor Pro Tem due to longevity. Mayor O’Cain called for a motion. Commissioner Bonnema made a motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. Commissioner Banta was sworn in as Mayor Pro Tem.

### **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

#### **PUBLIC WORKS**

Police Chief Trotter provided the update on Johnson’s behalf. He did receive the new barricades to help with the Hebron Road closing. They have recently had 4 down trees and are currently working on roadside mowing. Per Mayor O’Cain barricades need to be put out today.

#### **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Garren asked that Manager Reeves let him know before they put out the barricades because that is going to change their response routes. This will affect what area Station 3 normally covers and I will need to let staff know that Station 1 will be picking it up. I will need to send out that email to staff before it happens. Chief Garren said they have been busy. He and other Command Staff members are meeting tomorrow at 9am with the City of Hendersonville Water Department at Fleetwood. They are going to run a test on the test pump which allows them to see how it works from start to finish, ask questions, and understand the system.

## **POLICE**

Police Chief Trotter said last month she had approximately 13,000 events with 26 charges. We have really been hitting Hwy 64 which is a lot of speeding, and we have gotten some narcotics. We are going to be doing some extra narcotics training for all the officers. It is not just marijuana anymore; we are getting things like methamphetamine and a lot of pills. Commissioner Bridges asked what percentage has been Laurel Park residents. Police Chief Trotter replied saying most of the people they are stopping are not Laurel Park residents and as far as the speeding other than 2 or 3 people most have been nonresidents.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Assistant to The Town Manager/Zoning Administrator Hollis went over the zoning report and said in March there were 4 permits issued, and 2 permits issued in April. Hollis spoke with Dave Swindale last week regarding Ecusta Crossing. Mr. Swindale said they are waiting for materials for the pumphouse, and their vendors are running slow. The city and the Town approved them to start building once they receive the materials. Assistant to The Town Manager/Zoning Administrator Hollis advised the Town Council that he, Swindale, Swindale's partner, City of Hendersonville and Henderson County have zoom meetings regularly to discuss things and get updates.

## **MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Mayor O'Cain said we must advertise for Mayor Pro Tem Hansen's position. He has had 3 individuals contact him with interest. Town Clerk Banks advised that the application is currently on The Town website. Commissioner Banta gave an update on Hwy 64 saying they had a zoom meeting with NCDOT last week and they are well organized and there has been a complete change in personnel in NCDOT. Commissioner Banta said the majority is still in order and the plans are final. They have massive utilities to relocate, and they should start construction sometime at the end of this month. They will keep both lanes open and just make bypasses to the areas they are working on. They will start on the west side moving east. They have included all the lighting for the Fire Department, which was not in the initial bid that went to the contractor, which was for about \$28.5 million but the budgeted amount was \$32.5 million for the project. The landscape plan was not in the bid package, but NCDOT is working with Watermark. Commissioners Bridges said at the Planning Board meeting there was a good discussion about the vision plan and things. They would like to see some kind of educational workshop by Luke Costlow on permaculture/water retention, and I would like to see if we could help assist him. Commissioner Bridges said she brought in service leaflets from Commissioner Hansen's Funeral yesterday if anyone would like to look at those. Mayor O'Cain stated we have a Public Hearing at 1pm today but we are going to cancel the hearing, but we must formally meet to cancel because it was published in the newspaper. We will reconvene at 1pm.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was no further business. Mayor O’Cain moved to adjourn at 10:22 am. Commissioner Bridge made the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

ATTEST:

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J. Carey O’Cain  
Mayor

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Stephanie Banks  
Town Clerk/ Deputy Tax Collector

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Date