

THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK

Official Newsletter

www.laurelpark.org

An Update From the Mayor

The last eight months have been extremely frustrating for your Town Council and Staff as we are trying to recover from Hurricane Helene. Our frustrations stem from dealing with federal and state governments. Allow me to provide a couple of examples.

WHITE PINE DRIVE IN FRONT OF TOWN HALL

The culvert under White Pine washed away and was destroyed. This is one of the few roads in Town owned by NCDOT. Therefore, it is their responsibility to repair this road. Within two weeks after the storm, NCDOT temporarily repaired the culvert and backfilled the roadway. They did not compact the backfill or install headwalls to divert water into the culvert. When Town officials asked NCDOT, we were advised that they would be back after the other emergency repairs in Western North Carolina were addressed which might be two years. While our Town could backfill these holes, we will not be reimbursed for any work that we do on NCDOT roads.

EDGE OF ROADWAY ON LAUREL PARK HIGHWAY NEAR RANSIER

The storm created very deep edges on many of our roadways which threaten the integrity of our recently paved roads; not to mention the safety of drivers and their vehicles. Whereas our Town Council and Staff deem this an emergency, FEMA and the NC Emergency Management Department (NCEM) do not and will not approve funding for these repairs. Because of this, reimbursement for these repairs was denied.

PROCEDURES FOR DEBRIS REMOVAL

We all want to see our neighborhoods cleaned up as soon as possible. To receive 100% reimbursement, we must follow the FEMA and NCEM guidelines. The prescribed sequence of events is:

1. Open roadways for emergency vehicles, even if only one lane.
2. Open roadways for traffic, hopefully two lanes.
3. Removal of green debris on Right of Way.
4. Removal of debris on private property.
5. Removal of storm debris from destroyed property.

Continued on Page 2

Henderson County has removed over 500,000 cubic yards of green debris to date. They are only 35% complete and anticipate that they will not be complete until this time next year. At that time, we could expect storm debris removal to conclude.

FUNDING

Laurel Park was the first community in all Western North Carolina to meet with FEMA and NCEM. We anticipate our costs for permanent repairs to exceed \$10 million dollars. The only funding available now is a zero percent loan which we received on March 13th. The State sent us \$1.5 million dollars. At this point, we welcome any type of cash flow. Without outside funding, the Town's recovery will be extremely slow and limited.

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE PROPERTY

Damage occurred to public and private property. Immediately after the storm, our police department, staff, and engineers began surveying, mapping, and photographing areas affected including many private properties. With this information we were prepared to meet with FEMA and NCEM in November. At that time, we were told that our public assistance request could not include private property emergency repairs. In February we were informed that private roads and bridges may be included. At the deadline for application, March 12th, the inclusion of private roads and bridges was still not clarified and has not been approved yet. We met the public infrastructure reporting deadline of March 12th.

WHERE WE ARE NOW AND WHAT TO EXPECT

The \$10 million dollar problem is huge especially considering our annual operating budget is approximately \$4.5 million dollars. We must abide by FEMA and NCEM regulations or we will jeopardize our funding request. We only have a loan at this point. We are hopeful that the loan will turn into a grant, but we are not in control of that. As much as we want to return to normal, we must be careful and patient. Let us be thankful that no lives were lost unlike so many communities in the region. Laurel Park was certainly devastated by Hurricane Helene but not to the extent Hickory Nut Gorge, Bat Cave, Lake Lure, Marshall, Hot Springs, and Swannanoa were.

Disasters like this are new to us but not to FEMA. Your Town Council is making prudent decisions. Our budget reserve is currently \$3 million dollars. Aside from Hurricane Helene's impact and anticipated repairs, the Town of Laurel Park is in a great position. We urge all residents to please be patient as we unravel this difficult dilemma to repair our beautiful Town.

TO END ON A POSITIVE NOTE

We are in our Centennial year; 100 years since our incorporation. Many events are planned to celebrate this wonderful milestone. Please join us for our historic tours, scavenger hunt, July 5th picnic and other activities. Please stop by town hall or visit our website for further information.

Thank you!
Carey O'Cain

Town Contact Information

Town Hall (828) 693-4840
9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday
Police Non Emergency (828) 692-9399
Valley Hill Fire (828) 692-2581



Mayor: J. Carey O'Cain

Commissioners:

George W. Banta
Travis Bonnema
Debra H. Bridges

Town Manager: Cara R. Reeves

Assistant to the Town Manager/
Zoning Administrator: Aaron J. Hollis

Town Clerk: Stephanie Banks

Finance Officer: Cortney Kidd

Police Chief: Bobbie Trotter

Public Works: Brandon Johnson

Welcome to the Team!



Aaron Hollis
Assistant to the Town Manager /
Zoning Administrator



Employment Opportunities

Police Officer
Streets Maintenance Technician

For an application, please visit our
website: www.laurelpark.org

The Town offers a highly competitive
benefits package:

- NC Retirement
- 401(K)
- Medical, Dental & Vision Insurance
- Paid Vacation & 12 Paid Holidays
- Paid Family Leave & Paid Sick Leave

Paul Hansen, pillar of Laurel Park, has died

By Bill Moss, published April 25, 2025



LAUREL PARK — Longtime Laurel Park residents, especially those active in civic affairs and interested in the colorful history of the Town on a Mountain, on Friday were mourning the loss of Paul Hansen.



Hansen died early Friday morning at a Greenville hospital, where he was being treated in intensive care, having suffered from a heart condition for a long period.

"He's probably one of the most important people to come through Laurel Park ever, since (town founder) W.A. Smith," Mayor Carey O'Cain said.

Virginia Gambill, a friend and admirer of Hansen, shared the news this way: "The pillar of Laurel Park, Paul Hansen, has died. Those of us in Laurel Park who loved and respected the

the life and work of Paul are deeply saddened at the news."

Ironically, Hansen's death came exactly a month before the formal kickoff of a yearlong celebration of the centennial of the town he loved.

Hansen was a member of the Laurel Park Civic Association Board for 10 years and served several terms as president, chaired the Laurel Park Planning Board for four of the nine years he served on it, and was also an original member of the Laurel Park Parks & Greenways Board.

After he was appointed to fill a council vacancy, he was elected to the council in 2013, 2017 and 2021.

When he filed for re-election in July 2021, Hansen cited roads, growth management, the improvement of U.S. 64 at Laurel Park's eastern gateway and planning for the town's centennial in 2025 as priorities. "We have 13 historical markers and we have 14 more to do and the council hopes to have it done by the centennial," he said.

A homeowner in Laurel Park since 1980, Hansen had been a regular visitor to Henderson County for decades before that. He graduated from Clemson University with a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering and was retired after 31 years in the international aerospace industry.

Further information on services and coverage of Hansen's contributions to the town, both as a longtime council member and devoted chronicler of town history, will be forthcoming.

Hwy 64 (Brevard Road) Improvements Update

from Commissioner George Banta

For more than a decade after the Town's initial request, construction is now starting on the Hwy 64 improvement plan. The County and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations added this section of Hwy 64 (Brevard Road) through Laurel Park to the State Transportation Improvement Plan for much needed road improvements several years ago. After competing with a number of other projects and numerous delays, Project U-5783 was finally approved.

For those residents not acquainted with the area, the Brevard Road project starts on the east, 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. This project involves a number of jurisdictions; City of Hendersonville, Hendersonville ETJ, Town of Laurel Park, and Henderson County. The major portions of the project reside within the limits of Hendersonville and Laurel Park.

Since Laurel Park's initial request, the Brevard Road project has become an integral part of the Town's planning process. The Town has invested considerable 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.

The Brevard Road improvement project features a 2-lane road with roundabouts at White Pine Drive, Daniel Drive, Pisgah Drive, and Glasgow Lane. These improvements will enhance accessibility to our business district by adding sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and green space. The commercial business district is our "downtown" and these improvements will increase the viability of existing and new businesses by making this an attractive place to locate for years to come. Roundabouts serve as traffic calming devices, improving both automobile and pedestrian safety. With the Hwy 64 improvements, users of the nearly complete Ecusta Trail will find a new and enhanced opportunity to visit local business and restaurants in the area.

Currently, NCDOT has completed the right of way acquisitions and demolished encroaching structures. Contractors have already removed trees and other obstructions along the roadway. Relocation of utilities has just now started. Bids for the construction phase of the project were let in July 2024 and successfully awarded to Tennoca Construction Company, Candler, NC in the amount of \$28,223,125. The cost of this road project will be paid for by NCDOT with an estimated completion date of November 2028.

Concurrent with the NCDOT activities, the Town has worked with consultants to design landscape, utilities and lighting for the project. The staff of Laurel Park regularly meets with NCDOT to coordinate plans and activities in an effort to minimize the inconvenience of this road construction project. As construction activities intensify and detours and delays are anticipated, the Town will keep its residents informed. You can always check the Laurel Park website for additional information and updates regarding the Hwy 64 (Brevard Road) project.



Friends of Laurel Park

The Friends of Laurel Park plans several activities in coordination with the Town's Centennial celebration this year. On May 10th, the same day as the annual Half Marathon at Jump Off Rock, the Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet will perform in Laurel Green Park from 5pm to 7pm. This will be their first appearance in Laurel Park. On June 7th (rain date June 8th), the band, Asheville Junction will also make its first appearance in Laurel Park at Jump Off Rock from 5pm to 7pm. Food trucks will be available at both concerts.

Yam Yoga will continue its free sessions in the first week of May on Monday evenings at Jump Off Rock. Stay tuned for more entertainment and events this summer.

Visit our website: www.friendsoflaurelpark.org.



As part of our 2025 Centennial celebrations, the Centennial committee has developed a historical scavenger hunt. The Scavenger Hunt booklet is available at the Town Hall office and contains all the directions for you to successfully finish the hunt. Pick one up and begin searching for the answers on the town's twenty-two historical markers near the roadways throughout our mountain.

A beautiful commemorative Centennial coin medallion will be awarded to every family that completes the booklet. If you can manipulate the answers in a math formula provided, you have a chance of winning some nice gift cards from Laurel Park area businesses as well.

Although the scavenger hunt can be attempted throughout the year, prizes will first be awarded at our Centennial picnic on July 5th at Laurel Green Park.

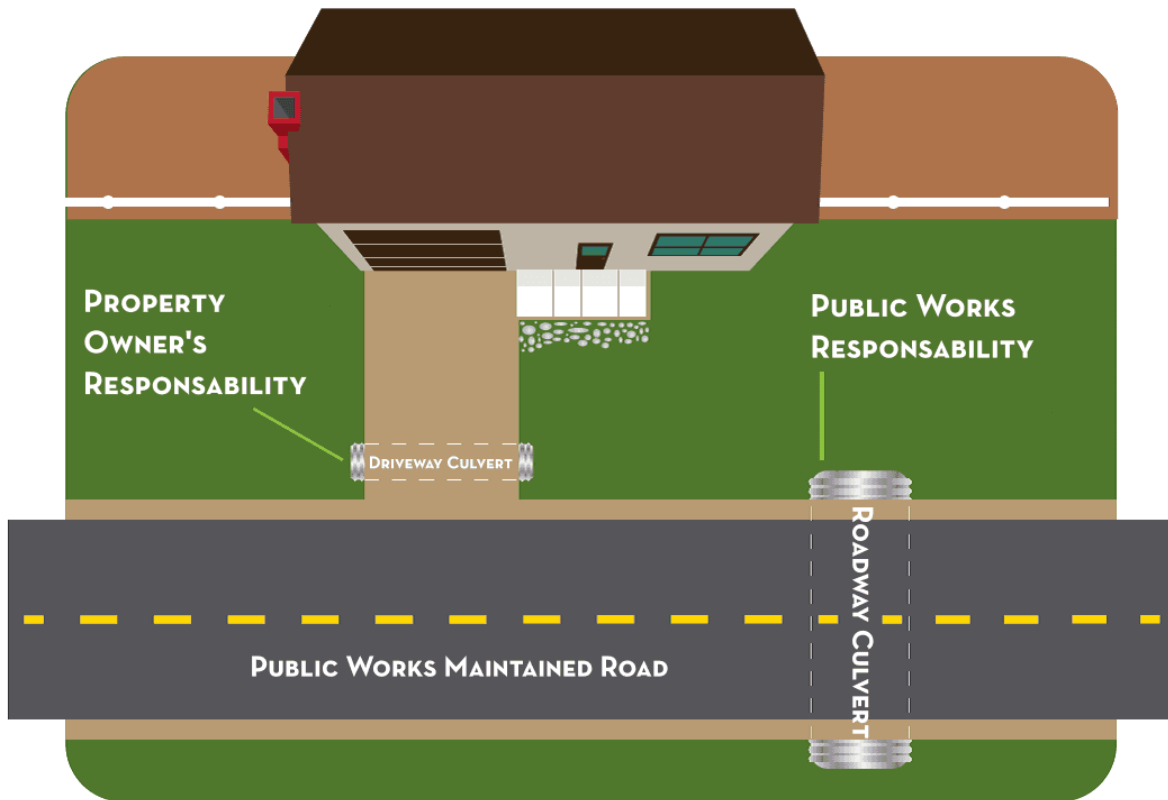
Centennial Events

Ongoing	Scavenger Hunt Contest A fun game with all the Laurel Park Historical Markers. This event will go on throughout the year. Pick up your booklet with instructions at the Town Hall office. Prizes will be awarded at the Centennial Picnic on July 5th.
May 10th	Concert Featuring Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet Sponsored by Friends of Laurel Park. Held at Laurel Green Park from 5pm to 7pm.
May 22nd	Centennial Dinner Held at the Hendersonville Country Club from 6pm to 9pm. Reservations required due to limited seating. Historical Presentation. Learn the history of early Laurel Park to include an aerial movie about Laurel Park and the surrounding area in the 1920's. <i>No charge to Laurel Park residents.</i>
June 7th	Concert Featuring Asheville Junction Sponsored by Friends of Laurel Park. Held at Jump Off Rock from 5pm to 7pm.
July 5th	Centennial Celebration Picnic Held at Laurel Green Park from 2:30pm to 6pm. Join us for BBQ, music, games and lots of fun for the entire family! <i>No charge to Laurel Park residents.</i>
August 9th	Historical Tours Tours provided by the Trolley Company and will start at the first Congregational Church parking lot. Sponsored by Friends of Laurel Park. Tour times: 8:30am, 10:30am, and 12:30pm. <i>Reservations required.</i>
August 16th	Historical Tours Tours provided by the Trolley Company and will start at the first Congregational Church parking lot. Sponsored by Friends of Laurel Park. Tour times: 8:30am, 10:30am, and 12:30pm. <i>Reservations required.</i>
September 16th	Concert Featuring Showboat Band Sponsored by Friends of Laurel Park. Held at Jump Off Rock from 5pm to 7pm.
October 4th	Concert Featuring Autumnwud Sponsored by Friends of Laurel Park. Held at Jump Off Rock from 5pm to 7pm.
October 25th	Trunk and Treat for Halloween Sponsored by the Laurel Park Police Department. Held at Laurel Green Park from 5pm to 7pm.

Public Works

Driveway Culvert Maintenance

There are two main types of culverts; roadway and driveway. The type of culvert determines who is responsible for all maintenance and repairs.



Roadway Culvert

Pipe placed under a roadway to carry drainage or a stream. These are the responsibility of Public Works. If the road is private then the culvert is the responsibility of the road owner (i.e.: Homeowner's Association, etc.).

Driveway Culvert

Pipe placed under a driveway to carry drainage or a stream. These are the responsibility of the property owner.

Properties with roadside swales often have driveway culverts which are pipes that convey stormwater under your driveway apron within the right-of-way.

It is recommended that homeowners inspect and clean their driveway culverts quarterly. It is also advisable to check your pipe prior to big storms and anytime you witness standing water in the swale, or the pipe is 20% or more full.

Maintaining your driveway culvert will extend the life of the pipe and ensure that stormwater can properly travel through the drainage system and avoid issues with standing water and urban flooding.

National Public Works Week - May 18 to May 24

Public works professionals are ever present, working in the background to advance quality of life for all.

The “People, Purpose, Presence” theme highlights how public works make communities safer, more vibrant, and a better place to live. Whether responding to electricity outages, providing regular waste pickup, or making roads and sidewalks passable after a weather event, public works is always there when people need them.

-American Public Works Association



Laurel Park Public Works Crew photo provided by Ann McFadden





Laurel Park Police Department



A Message from Chief Trotter

As summer approaches, we take advantage of the sunny weather to do outdoor projects, take our families on vacations, or relax and keep cool. For criminals, however, it is a very busy time of year. It can be easy to forget to close a door or window, but if they are left open it creates an easy opportunity for a burglar. Criminals focus on easy targets; make it difficult for them to choose you!

Here are some tips to keep yourself, your family, and your home safe. For your home, always lock your doors and windows, especially at night and when you are away. Close your garage and pet doors. Secure ladders and tools so they cannot be used to enter your home.

When going on vacation, lock up your home, activate your alarm. Do not broadcast your plans on social media. Hold the delivery of your mail and newspaper or ask a trusted friend to pick them up for you. Fill out a Laurel Park Residential Security Watch Form. To request a check, you may call, come in person, or download a form from the Town's website. www.laurelpark.org/house-check-form

Be a good neighbor, look out for one another. If you see something or someone suspicious, call for an officer to respond. In an emergency, call 911. If it is non-emergency, call Dispatch at 828-697-3025. In a non-emergency, you can request either of two options: You can request a response from a Laurel Park Officer or just to provide information. Just remember: if we do not know, we cannot help.

Thank you for your continued support!

National Police Week - May 11 to May 15

National Police Week offers honor, remembrance, and peer support, while allowing law enforcement, survivors, and citizens to gather and pay homage to those who gave their lives in the line of duty.

Parks & Greenways



Our Parks Need Your Help!

The beds in our Parks are maintained largely by Volunteers who spend about 2 hours every other week from March through October weeding, mulching, planting and just generally keeping Laurel Park the delightful place that it is. If you can spare the time, we'd love for you to join us! It's not necessary that you come every time, even just once would be a great help!

To volunteer and/or find out when our next work session is, click on the link to the volunteer website.

<https://www.laurelpark.org/parks/volunteer-opportunities>

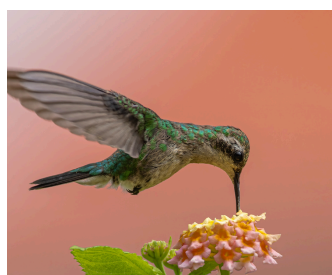


Bee City Committee



“To raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development, the UN designated May 20th as World Bee Day. The goal is to strengthen measures aimed at protecting bees and other pollinators.”

www.beecityusa.org



National Pollinator Week is from June 16th to June 22nd. “The purpose is to highlight the importance of pollinators like bees, birds, and butterflies, and encouraging efforts to protect them and their habitat. It is a celebration of the vital role that pollinators play in our ecosystems, economies, and agriculture.”

www.pollinator.org



“The goal of No Mow May is to pause mowing during the month of May, allowing flowers to bloom in your lawn to help early season pollinators. Late winter and early spring is a time when floral resources are often limited.”

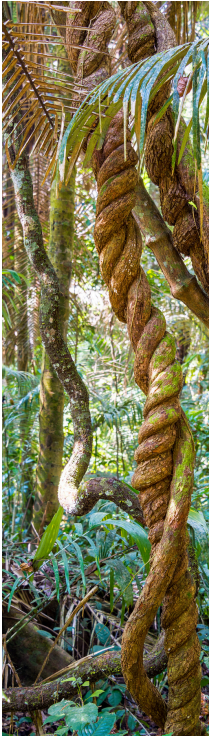
www.beecityusa.org

Although pollinator conservation is a big task, it all begins with each of us adopting four simple steps: growing pollinator-friendly flowers, providing nest sites, avoiding pesticides, and spreading the word. With these core values, pollinator conservation can be adapted to any location, whether you tend an urban community garden or a suburban yard, work in a city park or on a farm. Make your commitment to these four principles official by signing our [Pollinator Protection Pledge!](https://xerces.org/blog/want-to-save-bees-focus-on-habitat-not-honey-bees)

<https://xerces.org/blog/want-to-save-bees-focus-on-habitat-not-honey-bees>

Invasive Species Committee

www.floraoflaurelpark.com



Trees*

I think that I shall never see,
A sight so ugly as a tree.

A tree whose mighty trunk stood tall,
Strangled by vines before it's fall.

A tree that looks at God all day,
Leafy arms bared by decay.

A tree whose canopy spread wide,
Ensnaring tendrils its shade denied.

A tree, like us, a living creature,
Yet leans on us as trusted keepers.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only you can save a tree.

**With apologies to Joyce Kilmer*



Stay in the Laurel Park Loop!

facebook

Find us on Facebook: Town of Laurel Park, North Carolina

Blackboard
connect

Follow this link and sign up to be notified of special events, Town emergencies, garbage service day changes by phone, email or text. <https://laurelparknc.bbcportal.com>

LATEST
NEWS

Look for the latest Town news and announcements on our website www.laurelpark.org. Select the "News" tab and choose "Latest Town News & Announcements".

MEETING

Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on our website www.laurelpark.org. Select the "Government" tab, and choose "Agendas & Minutes".



Cook With Caution

Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips, you can prevent cooking fires.



- If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stove top.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are cooking! If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- Use a timer to remind yourself that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove top like oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging and towels.

If you have a small (grease) cooking fire and decide to fight the fire:

- You can smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner.
- Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire:

JUST GET OUT! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.

CALL 911

For questions or more information, contact
Fire and Life Safety Officer Chris McDowell
828-692-2581 EXT 105

Public Meeting Schedule

-Please check on the website for up-to-date meeting changes prior to attending-

Town Council Work Session

May 15 at 9:30 am

June 12 at 9:30 am

Town Council Regular Meeting

May 20 at 9:30 am

June 17 at 9:30 am

Planning Board

May 13 at 3:00 pm

June 10 at 3:00 pm

Parks & Greenways Board

May 13 at 9:30 am

June 10 at 9:30 am

ABC Board

May 27 at 8:30 am

June 24 at 8:30 am

Invasive Species Committee

May 7 at 10:00 am

June 4 at 10:00 am

Centennial Committee

May 12 at 11:30 am

June 9 at 11:30 am

Bee City Committee

May 20 at 4:30 pm

June 17 at 4:30 pm

Bicycle Committee

May 12 at 3:00 pm

June 9 at 3:00 pm

Board of Adjustment

May 15 at 4:00 pm

CALENDAR

May 6 at 6:30 pm

Community Education Class
hosted by LP Police

May 10 at 5:00 pm

Friends of Laurel Park Concert
Laurel Green Park

May 13 from 9:00am to 12:00pm

Shred & Community Event
First Congregational Church Parking Lot

May 22 at 6:00pm

Centennial Dinner
Hendersonville Country Club

May 26 - Town Hall Closed

In observance of Memorial Day

June 3 at 6:30 pm

Community Education Class
hosted by LP Police

June 7 at 5:00 pm

Friends of Laurel Park Concert
Jump Off Rock. Rain date: June 8

June 19 - Town Hall Closed

In observance of Juneteenth

Community Shred Day



COME JOIN US!

May 13, 9am - 12pm

First Congregational Church Parking Lot



We will have onsite:

Shred-it: Secure Destruction of unwanted documents



**Friend of Laurel Park:
Town Info and Events**



**Laurel Park Police Department:
Unused Medication Disposal**

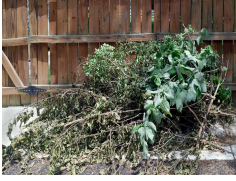


**Valley Hill Fire Department:
Fire Safety Information**



**Sponsored by Civic FCU and LGFCU
Hosted by the Town of Laurel Park**

Other Dates of Interest



Spring Brush Collection

The town has not scheduled a spring brush collection due to all the Helene debris remaining to be picked up by Henderson County. We *anticírate* having a fall brush collection after this year.



Mother's Day - May 11th

Don't forget your Mom on her special day!



Municipal Clerks Week - May 4th to May 10th

Municipal Clerks play a vital role in local government, serving as the liaison between the public and elected officials and ensuring the smooth functioning of city and town administration.



National Bike to Work Day - May 16th

The goal of this day is to encourage more people to bike to work, both to reduce the environmental impact of global daily commutes and to encourage people to get active and healthy.



Flag Day - June 14th

This day celebrates the birthday of the United States flag, which was first adopted on June 14, 1777. This day also coincides with the U.S. Army's Birthday, founded on June 14, 1775.



Father's Day - June 15th

Don't forget your Dad on his special day!



MAYBIN'S

A division of Kirby Sanitation

☎ 828-692-9872

maybinsgarbage.com

Garbage pick up will be on Friday May 30th due to the Memorial Day holiday.