

THE TOWN OF LAUREL PARK

Official Newsletter

www.laurelpark.org

A Message from the Mayor

Town Council Appoints Mark Morse as New Commissioner

April 25th was a sad day when we lost our dear friend, Commissioner Paul Hansen. Few people have ever had such a significant impact on the success and improvements to Laurel Park. Paul dearly loved our Town and history.

Paul is forever missed!

Council and Staff advertised and sought a replacement for Paul's seat, culminating in interviews and the selection of Mark Morse as our new Councilman. Swearing in for Commissioner Morse took place on August 19th at Town Hall.

Our entire Council was thrilled with the enthusiastic reply to our request for applicants. Four extremely talented residents offered their time and experience to this vital opportunity. The assumption of commissioner involves participating with other communities, businesses, traffic advisory boards, metropolitan planning, state and federal officials. Mr. Morse's experience enables him to readily assume some of these responsibilities.

Mark Morse has lived in Laurel Park for 15 years. He retired in 2018 from Selee Corporation where he served as President and Chief Operating Officer. Many of the other candidates have similar backgrounds but Mark excelled with his committee involvement in Laurel Park. Over the years, Mark has served on the Board of Adjustment, Steering Committee regarding Comprehensive Plan and the Civic Association. Many non-profits have had the pleasure of Mr. Morse's involvement like the Carolina Village Board and Pardee Hospital Foundation.



In Mark's application he stated: "I don't think anyone can fill Paul Hansen's shoes and his passion, knowledge and history of Laurel Park. Living in Laurel Park is a privilege; privileges require taking on responsibilities. I have always thought the responsibility of being on the Town Council is the ultimate way to afford that privilege."

Please welcome Mr. Mark Morse to our Laurel Park Town Council.

Rhododendron Lake Nature Park



Watermark Landscape Architecture, in conjunction with Robinson Design Engineers, is working with the Town, FEMA, NCEM, and Land of Sky Regional Council to finalize identification and scope of damage to Rhododendron Lake Nature Park. Watermark is also performing similar work for Laurel Green Park and Glenn Rock Spring Park. The team is developing plans to address repairs effectively and efficiently for the parks, while incorporating sustainable design principles to improve and strengthen the parks to minimize

impacts from future events. All as quickly as possible.

Issues and damages being addressed include stormwater management, flooding, sediment transport, and sediment removal; repairs, stabilization, and improvements for the stream and stream banks, lake outfall, lake and forebay, and lake inlet channel; and repairs to impacted trails, boardwalks, plantings, fitness stations, and parking lots; and evaluation of bridge condition.

Available for Purchase While Supplies Last!

Cash, personal check , or debit/credit card (Mastercard or Visa) accepted.

If paying with cash, please have exact change.



Commemorative License Plate \$15.00



Commemorative Coin \$5.00

Town Contact Information

Town Hall (828) 693-4840

9:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday to Friday

Police Non Emergency (828) 692-9399

Valley Hill Fire & Rescue (828) 692-2581



Mayor: J. Carey O'Cain

Mayor Pro-Tem: George W. Banta

Commissioners:

Travis Bonnema

Debra H. Bridges

Mark Morse

Town Manager: Cara R. Reeves

Finance Officer: Cortney Kidd

Town Clerk: Stephanie Banks

Zoning Administrator/

Assistant to the Town Manager: Vacant

Police Chief: Bobbie Trotter

Public Works Director: Brandon Johnson

Public Meeting Schedule

-Please check on the [website](#) for up-to-date meeting changes prior to attending-

Town Council Work Session

September 11 at 9:30 am

October 16 at 9:30 am

Town Council Regular Meeting

September 16 at 9:30 am

October 21 at 9:30 am

Planning Board

September 9 at 3:00 pm

October 14 at 3:00 pm

Parks & Greenways Board

September 9 at 9:30 am

P & G Site Meeting: Location TBD

September 23 at 4:00 pm

October 14 at 9:30 am

P & G Site Meeting: Location TBD

October 28 at 4:00 pm

ABC Board

September 23 at 8:30 am

October 8 at 8:30 am

Board of Adjustment

September 11 at 4:30 pm

Bee Committee

September 16 at 4:30 pm

October 21 at 4:30 pm

Bicycle Committee

October 13 at 3:00 pm

Native Plant Stewardship Committee

September 3 at 10:00 am

Centennial Committee

September 8 at 11:30 am

October 13 at 11:30 am

EVENTS CALENDAR

September 1 - Town Hall Closed

In observance of Labor Day

September 2 at 6:30 pm

Community Education Class:
Home Security. Hosted by LP
Police

September 4 - No Garbage Pickup

September 5 - Garbage Pickup

September 6 at 5:00 pm

FLP Concert at Jump Off Rock.
Featuring the Showboat Band.
Rain Date: September 7

October 4 at 5:00 pm

FLP Concert at Jump Off Rock.
Featuring the Autumnwud Band.

October 25 at 5:00 pm

Halloween in the Park: A kid-
friendly afternoon of trick or
treating at Laurel Green Park
Hosted by LP Police and FLP

LP Volunteer Gardening Schedule

Meet at First Congregational Church Parking
Lot closest to the Ecusta Trail at 10:00 am

September 3 - Wednesday

September 11 - Thursday

September 16 - Tuesday

September 24 - Wednesday

The Town of Laurel Park is Accepting Applications

for

Zoning Administrator / Assistant to the Town Manager

For more information, visit our website at

<https://www.laurelpark.org/departments/employment>

To apply, submit a cover letter, resume, Town application and three professional references to
humanresources@laurelpark.org

or

Attn: Cara Reeves
Town of Laurel Park
441 White Pine Drive
Laurel Park, NC 28739



**For Your Next Adventure
Pick Up a Bike Route Map
or
Foot Path Map
Today!
Available in the Boxes
Outside Town Hall**



Planning Board

In the Process of Developing the Next Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Board, besides our regular duties of reviewing new construction plans, is well into the process of assisting with the update to the Comprehensive Plan for Laurel Park. The Plan, required by the State of North Carolina, is intended to focus on land use which covers everything from zoning, to stormwater. We are reaching out to residents for help with this large project that will occupy the next year. If you have expertise in any relevant field such as commercial or residential real estate, forestation, parking, bike trails, etc. we would love to hear from you and invite you to our meetings at the Town Hall on the second Tuesday of each month at 3:00 pm. Contact Philip Wiehe: pfwiehe@gmail.com.

Native Plant Stewardship Committee

Help Stop Invasive Plants This Summer

By: John McGregor

Late summer is one of the best times to spot certain invasive plants in Laurel Park, because many are flowering or setting fruit. Taking a few minutes to look around your yard or neighborhood now can make a real difference.

Here are four invasives to watch for in late summer:

- **Autumn Clematis:** A climbing vine with masses of fragrant white flowers.
- **Autumn Olive:** A shrub with silvery leaves and red berries.
- **Japanese Knotweed:** A tall, bamboo-like plant forming dense stands, white flowers.
- **Oriental Bittersweet:** A vine with yellow seed capsules that split to reveal red berries.



What you can do:

Walk your property and nearby trails this month.

Learn to recognize these species. See photos using this [Photos of Summer Invasives](#).

If you spot them and need help with identification or advice on control, reach out to us at info@floraoflaurelpark.com.

Together, we can protect Laurel Park's landscapes and ensure our parks, greenways, and backyards stay healthy and beautiful.

Native Plant Stewardship Committee of Laurel Park - Protecting Native Plants and Combating Invasives, Preserving Laurel Park's Natural Heritage



Friends of Laurel Park

After hosting six historical bus tours of Laurel Park in August, the Friends of Laurel Park have a number of events planned for the Fall. On September 6th, the Rockin' on the Rock music series continues with the Showboat Band at 5 pm at Jump Off Rock, with a food truck available. (Rain date Sept. 7th). Also, continuing through the end of September will be free Yam Yoga at Jump Off on Monday nights at 6 pm.

In October, the popular band Autumnwud will return to Jump Off Rock on October 4th at 5 pm to wind up the Rockin' on the Rock music series for 2025. The Carolina Ace BBQ truck will be available for food.

Later that month, on October 25th, the Friends will provide support to the Laurel Park Police department for a Halloween in the Park event in Laurel Green Park from 5 to 7 pm. This will be a slight departure from the previous trunk or treat event.

On November 1st, the Friends will also host a Furry Friends Meet and Greet event from 12 to 3 pm at Laurel Green Park where residents can bring their leashed pets (well behaved ones) to meet other animal lovers and local vendors, animal hospital personnel, etc.

The Friends wish to give Mr. Knox Crowell special recognition for his superb bus tours in August, with three in a row on two successive Saturdays.

For further information about our organization and upcoming events, and to become a donor to the Friends of Laurel Park, please check our website at: www.friendsoflaurelpark.org.



Bee City Committee

The Bee City USA Laurel Park Committee is seeking new members. Our mission is to protect and provide habitat for pollinators and to educate the public on the vital role pollinators

play in our sources of food and shelter. The committee meets once per month, on the afternoon of the third Tuesday. To apply, please fill out an [application](#) on our website or contact our Town Clerk at townclerk@laurelpark.org.

Fall Brush Collection

September 13th: Begin Placing Brush

September 28th: Last Day to Place Brush

Beginning September 29th, Public Works will begin collecting brush. Every effort will be made to collect brush quickly, but it is a process that takes approximately one month to complete throughout Town.

- 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. Place piles parallel to the road.
- Limbs and branches cannot be more than 3" in diameter. Larger limbs will not be collected.
- The Town will not collect brush that results from major landscaping or land-clearing operations.
- Brush placed at any time other than the designated fall and spring collection, will not be picked up, and the residents will be notified of the violation.
- Brush and loose-leaf piles cannot be mixed. If a leaf pile contains brush, it will not be picked up.

Brush piles put out after September 28th will not be picked up.

Fall Leaf Collection

October 11th: Begin Placing Leaves

December 7th: Last Day to Place Leaves

Pickup runs October 13th until completion.

Loose leaves may be piled on the right-of-way beginning October 11th. Please make sure piles are free of limbs, rocks, and other objects that may injure employees or damage equipment.

Leaf collection is a very slow and labor-intensive process, and the schedule is affected by weather conditions and other Town activities. There are over 33 miles of roads to clear, by either blowing the leaves where possible or vacuuming up where necessary.

Bagged leaves are collected first, so if you want your leaves picked up ASAP, simply bag and fill out the form on our website for collection within three business days.

Leaf piles put out after December 7th will not be picked up.



Ecusta Trail

Trail Rules & Etiquette

- Respect private property. Stay on the trail.
- The trail is open at all times, except for dangerous weather events or repairs.
- Pedal-assist e-bikes are permitted.
- Wheels yield to pedestrians.
- Keep right except to pass.
- Give audible warning before passing.
- Stay alert & listen for approaching traffic. Decrease the volume of audio devices and keep one ear open.
- Trail users should only park in designated areas.
- Helmets are recommended for everyone on wheels but are required for children 16 years of age and under.
- Bicycle light-use is required from dusk to dawn (both front and rear lights are recommended).
- No devices shall be left on the trail unattended, unless parked in the appropriate parking places.
- Do not block the trail. Pull off the trail when stopped.
- Pets must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet and under control. Clean up after your pet.
- Call 911 to report any emergency or suspicious activity.
- Please report any vandalism, storm damage, or unsafe conditions immediately to Henderson County Parks and Recreation Department by calling 828-697-4884.
- Follow all posted regulatory signage.

Prohibited Activities

- Littering and vandalism.
- Tobacco and vaping use of any kind.
- Possession or consumption of open alcoholic beverages or any intoxicants.
- Killing, trapping, or harming wildlife.
- Fireworks.



- Selling, soliciting, or exhibiting materials without an appropriate permit.
- Collection, removal, damage, or disturbance of any trail property, natural or cultural object.
- Horses.
- Camping.
- Prohibited vehicles include, but are not limited to: ATVs, UTVs, 4-wheelers, golf carts, and tagged vehicles, including scooters or mopeds.
- **Note: Individuals with a mobility disability have the right to use an Other Power-Driven Mobility Device (OPDMD).**

None of these rules, regulations, or etiquette are to supersede state or federal law, infringe upon the rights of those protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion or gender.



Laurel Park Police Department

A Message From Chief Trotter



From time to time, we get some questions, concerns, or complaints. Lately, the Ecusta Trail is the main topic. By now you have all read the Trail Rules and Etiquette, as well as the prohibited activities, but what does that mean to the Laurel Park Police Department?

The Police Department has spoken to many other agencies, meaning local and others that have trails within their jurisdiction. There was no clear guidance as to how other agencies are handling such events along their trails. At this point, the Laurel Park Police Department will be handling events along the trail in the following manner:

We will be enforcing any incident that falls into three categories:

1. Any violation of Town Ordinances:

Examples, not limited to: § 130.02 BEGGING or § 130.16 DISTURBING THE PEACE.

2. Any violation of Criminal Offense Code of NC General Statutes: (Chapter 14)

Examples, not limited to: § 14-41 ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN or § 14-190.0 INDECENT EXPOSURE.

3. Any violation of Motor Vehicle Law of the NC General Statutes: (Chapter 20)
Examples, not limited to: § 20-173 PEDESTRIANS' RIGHT-OF-WAY AT
CROSSWALKS or § 20-174 CROSSING AT OTHER THAN CROSSWALKS.

Based on NCGS, where traffic-control signals are not in place or in operation, the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way.

To understand the difference of jurisdiction, we patrol and respond to the parts of the trail that are within our Town Limits. This can be better explained as the area within mile one of the Trail at the section below Southern Streams Coffee Shop and continues past mile 3 at the Ecusta Crossing development.

I sincerely hope this answers some questions and concerns.

Thank you!

Help Us Rebuild Crystal Springs

By: Curt and Monte Kruger



As part of the Laurel Park community, a group of neighbors came together to clear Crystal Springs of the fallen trees and vegetation caused by Hurricane Helene. We, along with the help of the Town of Laurel Park, were able to remove most of the debris; however, there is an enormous stump that has

crushed the historic arch of the spring.

We feel it is time for the community at large to have a win! Let us come together and rebuild our cherished historic landmark.

Friends of Laurel Park will match the first \$1,000 raised, and the rest is up to us! We already have pledges for \$200, but more is needed to remove the stump and rebuild the arch.

Our goal is to raise \$6,000. Any amount you can give will make a difference. Please donate whatever you can through our gofundme.

www.gofundme.com/f/rebuild-crystal-springs-help-restore-our-arch



Make checks payable to:

Crystal Spring Restoration

2007 Laurel Park Hwy

Hendersonville, NC 28739

Donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!

BEFORE A Wildfire Threatens Your Area

Wildfire season will be upon us this fall and Valley Hill Fire & Rescue wants you to use these wildfire reduction steps to give your home a defensible space.



- **Clear** leaves and other debris from roofs, gutters, porches, and decks at least 10 feet away from your home's perimeter.
 - **Remove** flammable materials (wood piles, propane tanks) away from your home's foundation, garages, and sheds at least 30 feet away from your home.
 - **Prune** trees so that the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet above the ground.
 - **Keep** your lawn hydrated and maintained. Dry grass is fuel for the fire.
-
- **Screen** in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

If you have any questions or concerns, contact:
Fire and Life Safety Officer
Chris McDowell at
cmcdowell@vhfd.com
or call
(828) 692-2581 ext. 105



HALLOWEEN IN THE PARK

SATURDAY OCTOBER 25TH

FROM

5:00PM TO 7:00PM

AT

LAUREL GREEN PARK

PARKING WILL BE LOCATED ACROSS THE STREET AT THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

HOSTED BY THE LAUREL PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT AND FRIENDS OF LAUREL PARK.

COME RAIN OR SHINE!

Halloween in the Park is going to be like a trunk or treat, but with different sections of the park for participants to decorate their area in creative ways and hand out candy & treats in a safe, kid-friendly afternoon of trick or treating in the daylight!

Currently, we have town staff members and some community partners joining in on the fun!

The Bicycle Advisory Committee will be on hand to talk about bicycle safety, do bike inspections, and handing out helmets for children (while supplies last).

If you would like to participate, here are a few ways:

- Help us decorate the park. Starting at 8:00am on Saturday October 25th.
- Choose to staff a section to hand out candy. We provide the candy & treats! Most candy comes from generous donations from residents.
- Donate candy. Please be sure the pieces are individually wrapped.

We will start accepting candy at Town Hall Monday September 1st.

**IF YOU ARE INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING, EMAIL CHIEF TROTTER
BY SEPTEMBER 30TH.**

BTROTTER@LAURELPARK.ORG

Who Carved The Bear?



The man “bringing wood to life” is chainsaw artist, Louie LaChusa. A Native American Indian from San Diego, California. He and his wife fell in love with Jump Off Rock and settled nearby when he retired in 2018.

The art of chainsaw carving, is a specialized form of wood sculpting that utilizes chainsaws as the primary tool for creating impressive sculptures,

often of animals like a bear or a fox. The wooden bear sculpture is a testament to Mr. LaChusa’s skill, highlighting the texture and form achieved through the carving process.

After an ice storm brought down trees all over his neighborhood in Laurel Park, he bought a chainsaw to help clean up. Louie remembered seeing artists carving bears out of tree stumps in videos. Since he had so many stumps to experiment with, he gave it a try.

"My first bear looked more like the character 'Alf!'" He carved it into a stump on the way up to Jump Off Rock. Louie was about to cut it down when neighbors hung



medals on it. That was the inspiration he needed to keep carving and learning. He says he listens to each piece of wood he uses to carve out his creations into what he calls “good spirits”. With a chainsaw and other tools, LaChusa crafts each work of art with their own personality. Most days you can find him in his driveway, riding the waves of energy coming off Jump Off Rock and carving out new creations.¹

Louie is a member of the Art League of Henderson County, and a juried member of the Carolina Mountain Artists Guild where his work is available in the guild’s store in downtown Hendersonville, North Carolina. To find out more about this chainsaw artist, visit his website louielachusa.com

¹ 'Good spirits' Wood carvings come to life with artist's touch by Meghan Danahey, WLOS. February 2023