
The Village Record



The Newsletter of
Village of Flat Rock
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April 2022

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Nick Weedman

American Rescue Plan

The Village of Flat Rock has received a federal grant of \$1,078,153 from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Half of this has been banked. The balance is expected in July. The money must be obligated by the end of December 2024.

Because of the complexity of the programs both in terms of mechanics as well as restrictions on how the money could be spent, the Village Council has engaged the services of expert help, Dr. Mary Roderick of the Land of Sky Regional Council. Dr. Roderick stays in tune with both federal and state organizations who oversee this program and has met with the Council on several occasions. In addition, she is working to develop required policies and procedures for the Village to use in administration of this grant.

The Council intends to have a series of public meetings at which input will be sought on how this money should be spent. The Village Council wants to ensure the funds are used for community betterment.

We extend an invitation to any village resident who may have an interest in this to attend and participate in our public meetings. Stay tuned for exact dates and times.

Speed Control within the Village

During the Town Hall meetings held in 2021, a common request from participants was to do more to control what is perceived to be excessive speeding by vehicles within the village. The Flat Rock Traffic Advisory Committee has examined alternates and concluded that electronic speed measurement and display units are most appropriate. The Village Council has approved this purchase, which will be enabled by the American Rescue Fund monies. These units will measure and display vehicular speeds to drivers, who hopefully will take corrective action if they had been speeding.

Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue Station Two Formal Opening and Dedication

On Saturday February 26th, the Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue Station 2 was officially dedicated and opened. The Village of Flat Rock participated in this ceremony and is thrilled to have the station open and staffed on a 24-hour per day basis year-round. Service from Blue

Ridge Fire and Rescue has been excellent, but the proximity of this facility within the village will vastly improve response time for both fires and emergencies. The event was well attended, and the village provided refreshments for all who came on that day. We applaud the Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue for their foresight and willingness to invest in this new station in the Village of Flat Rock.

North Highland Road Project

Construction on the North Highland Lake Road has finally begun. It is still scheduled for completion by March 2024. The cost of the project, including construction, engineering and right of way procurement is anticipated to reach approximately \$10 million. It is hoped that this project will cause minimal inconvenience to our citizens. We will keep everyone informed on progress on our website and our social media pages. Thank you for your patience as we enter the next phase of this project.

2021/2022 Property Tax Collection Status

The Village billed \$1.274 million in real and personal property taxes for this current fiscal year. Approximately \$1.267 million has been collected as of March 18th. In addition, the County has billed and collected \$74 thousand in vehicle taxes. Our collection rate is about 99.4 percent at this point. Remaining are just over 30 real and personal properties for which tax payments have not been received.

Our new Tax Collector is Carol Richard, who replaced Martha Orr upon her retirement at the end of January. Both have done and are doing excellent work on tax collections. Our goal is to have 100 percent of the real and personal property tax bills col-

lected by June 30th, the end of this current fiscal year.

THE ICE CREAM SOCIAL IS ON!!

The Village Ice Cream Social returns after two years of COVID cancellations! As usual, it will be held on the Village Green on the first Saturday in June. Mark calendars for June 4th, noon to 4 pm.

This annual event is a celebration of Flat Rock, with free ice cream, a band and an opportunity to meet and possibly name a baby goat from the Sandburg barn. The K-9 Unit of the Henderson County Sheriff's Office will once again give a demonstration.

This year, we also remember and celebrate the selfless volunteer works of Chris and Mary Jane McDonnell, whose efforts included making the Ice Cream Social a success every year. The passing of these wonderful people was a loss to the entire community and many of its volunteer organizations.

Things to remember: NO PETS allowed; BRING YOUR OWN CHAIRS; and CAR-POOL if you can. There will be parking in the lot in front of the fire station, but the Flat Rock Playhouse has a performance that same afternoon and will not be available for a back-up parking. Hope to see you there.

ANNUAL SPRAYING FOR INVASIVES

Hemlock Treatment – Respond Soon!

This spring, the Village has hired “Hemlock Healers” to treat threatened trees along the greenways of Blue Ridge Road, Greenville Highway and Rutledge Drive. Residents along these routes should have received a letter from the Village requesting permission for this free service. Please respond in early April if you agree to have your hemlocks treated. For any more information, call Council Member David Dethero at 692-5375.

Kudzu Control

In late July or early August, the Village will begin spraying kudzu throughout Flat Rock to control the spread of this invasive pest. If property owners have, or believe they might have kudzu, please contact Council Member David Dethero at 692-5375 prior to that time. He will visit your property and, if needed, place it on the list for treatment. This service is paid for by the Village.

SHRED AND PILL DROP IN MAY

The Village will hold its spring Shred Day on Saturday, May 21st, from 9 to 11 am. The Henderson County Sheriff's Office will also be there to accept and safely dispose of outdated or unused prescriptions. Shredding is immediate and on-site to ensure the safety of your information. Please limit your shredding to personal papers that require protection. Drive-through on Village Center Drive to hand over both papers and pills.

DO and DON'TS - Shredding

- No more than the equivalent of three file-size boxes (3 paper bags preferred)
- No plastic or plastic bags
- No notebooks
- No metal larger than a standard paper clip

DOS and DON'TS – Pill drop

- No restriction on the number of permitted items – pills, inhalers and patches
- Not accepted – chemotherapy drugs, epi-pens or sharps and needles

SHOULD THE SHRED EVENT NEED TO BE POSTPONED DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER, THE ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE POSTED ON THE VILLAGE WEBSITE:

www.villageofflatrock.org

2022 TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The Flat Rock Village Council will be holding two Town Hall meetings this year. As they were last year, these meetings are designed to facilitate conversation between the Council and residents . After Council Members introduce themselves, the floor is open.

The first Town Hall meeting will take place on Thursday, May 12th from 6:30 – 8:00 pm, and the second is scheduled for Thursday, September 8th at the same times. Locations have not yet been determined. That information will be posted on the Village website and Facebook page once set

The Council would like to hear your ideas, thoughts, gripes and vision for and about our Village. We strongly urge all residents to try to attend at least one of these meetings.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS #1

During the four Town Hall Meetings held last year, the Council heard the same questions on the same topics at more than one meeting. To improve communication and transparency, this “column” will appear in succeeding editions of the Flat Rock newsletter to answer and/or provide further information on the most repeated questions.

“WHY NOT CHARGE ADMITTANCE TO THE PARK AT FLAT ROCK?”

This question always referred to charging park visitors who do not pay Flat Rock taxes. The answer is that it would violate a legal agreement the Village has with the State of North Carolina.

In 2013, the Village sought financial assistance for the purchase of the park property, a nine-hole golf course at the time, to help defray costs to residents. The NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources gave a significant grant to the Village for that purpose. The grant included the caveat the park must be available to all the public. The Park Foundation does seek contributions from neighboring areas, and many non-residents have been generous donors to the park.

UPDATED VILLAGE LAND PLAN SUBMITTED

Over the past several months, the Village Planning Board has been reviewing and updating the Village’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), adopted in 2013. They submitted their recommended draft to the Council in February. This recommended draft is available for review on the Village website, villageofflatrock.org, and will be discussed at the Council Meeting on April 14, 2022. There will be a legislative hearing and vote on the final plan at the Council Meeting on May 12, 2022.

NC Statute requires that a CLUP reflects current policies, which prompted the update. The final, adopted version will present a vision for Flat Rock’s future and the steps to achieve that vision. In addition to guiding Village government, the CLUP will inform future residents and those who may be considering property development within the Village of our current policies and intentions.

The Planning Board is made up of seven Flat Rock residents, who volunteer their time and efforts to consider requests for residential and commercial development and provide recommendations to the Council. When making these recommendations, the Planning Board considers zoning regulations, local ordinances and the CLUP. The Flat Rock Planning Board meetings are open to the public and take place at 10:30 am on the first Tuesday of every month at the Village Hall.

As noted above, the Planning Board's recommended CLUP draft can be reviewed on the Village website, villageofflatrock.org. Please send any comments on the draft to Council Member Susan Gregory at susangregory@villageofflatrock.org by May 4th.

P.S. Some photos on the draft are place holders and will be replaced.

BIGGEST HEALTH CONCERNS IN THE COUNTY

The Henderson County Department of Public Health recently completed a Community Health Assessment (CHA) for Henderson County to determine health priorities for the next three years. The CHA is an important part of identifying issues and improving the health of county residents.

The health priorities identified in the report are:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Physical activity and nutrition
- Safe and affordable housing
- Interpersonal violence

Sharing this information is the first step in understanding and addressing our community's health needs. Local hospitals and community partners will collaborate to identify and develop strategies, action plans and performance measures to address these priority issues.

Later in the year, these action plans and measures will be used to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) with an online electronic scorecard, accessible to the public, so that all can monitor our community's progress. The full CHA report is available online at :

www.hendersoncountync.gov/health/page/community-data, or at the library.

WELCOME TO VILLAGE HALL!

Meet Carol Richard, our newest Village staff member! Carol comes to us with extensive corporate experience in bookkeeping and project management, and she fills the position of deputy town clerk/tax collector. She recently passed the test to become a Certified Tax Collector through the N.C. Tax Collectors Association, a professional organization of tax revenue directors and personnel representing counties and municipalities throughout the state and has started her training for certification as a town clerk. Please welcome her to the Village!

HAPPENINGS IN THE PARK AT FLAT ROCK

Arbor Day Observance at the Park

Flat Rock Village will hold its second annual Arbor Day observance at The Park at Flat Rock on Saturday, April 30th (National Arbor Day), 11 am to 1 pm. We will be planting some new native trees in the park, as well as hearing a short speech by our mayor, Nick Weedman, and hosting tables to distribute tree-related literature and other items. In addition to adding trees to the park, this event is part of our application for Tree City USA certification by the National Arbor Day Foundation. Last year we had approximately sixty (60) people in attendance and a good time was had by all. Please join in as we add additional trees to our park.

More Park Activities

The Park is happy to announce the return of our Nature Immersion/Forest Bathing classes. Join Park Volunteer and certified guide Roger Bass each third Saturday of the month at 10:00 am to explore the park and your senses. Lastly, our educational series of Nature Walk and Talks resume the fourth Saturday of each month, 10:00 am, May through September. Topics range from ecology, to beekeeping, to birdwatching. All events are free, see you at the park!

FLAT ROCK PARK FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER FOR THE PARK

The Flat Rock Park Foundation recently completed a very successful fundraiser for the Pollinator Garden in the park. The theme of the promotion was "Bee My Valentine." Donations entitled the giver to have a special Valentine sent on their behalf.

The monies raised, almost \$15,000, will help fund new park-owned beehives, a healthy bee habitat, additional plantings, and a potting shed for our dedicated Pollinator Garden volunteers. The Foundation has extended thanks to all who helped support this effort.

A LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT MAUREAN ADAMS

“You can’t tell a kid that it’s time to exercise; that’s a turn-off...you have to say, ‘Let’s go to the park and have some fun!’ Then you get them to do some running, play on the swings, practice on the balance beam, and basically get a full workout disguised as play.” – Arnold Schwarzenegger

How true this statement is!

It was 2014 when former Mayor Terry Hicks persuaded me to come out of retirement and join him, Sally Boyd, Bud Hunter, Ron Redmon, and Jim Kessarlis to form a 501(c)(3) foundation dedicated to raising funds to assist the Village in transforming Highland Lake Golf Course into The Park at Flat Rock.

So much has happened since those early days...The Park now has miles of trails, a pavilion, playgrounds, resting spaces, a nature center, gardens, a community room, and much more. Thanks to the generosity of donors, Foundation board leadership, and the commitment and vision of the Village Council... all this happened. But the park continues to need our support.

It has indeed been one of the great joys of my life to be part of the success of The Park at Flat Rock. After my stint at the helm of the Foundation, I continued my support and love of The Park. Today, I am involved as a member of the Board of Directors. Our current board members are committed to that goal. They are Don Luy, Jim Olson, Bill Hale, Dennis Flanagan, David Leiman, Sharon Nunnelee, Cathy Veal, and Bob Lane.

It takes a village to raise a park. Past Park Foundation board members, in addition to the founders mentioned above, include Jan Egolf, Marcia Caserio, Tom Darnall, Duncan Fraser, Anna Hicks, Eleanor Bryan Mathews, Louiane Leisching, Judy Petersen, Terry Stein, Hilton Swing, Alicia Hearne Wallace, Paige Willms, and Jim Wright. Thanks to all of you and the many donors over the years.

In April 2022, the Foundation continues its partnership with Pardee UNC Healthcare to provide free, weekly yoga classes. Be sure to follow along on Facebook and/or our newsletter for date and time announcements. You can email Tracey Daniels (Foundation Development Director) at tracey@villageofflatrock.org with any questions and to join our email list.

If you have already donated in 2021 and 2022, we sincerely thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Let’s go to The Park at Flat Rock and have some fun!

Maureen Adams, Board President

Village of Flat Rock
P.O. Box 1288
Flat Rock, NC 28731-1288

Schedule of Meetings

All monthly **Council Meetings** are on the **second Thursday** of each month, starting at 9:30 AM.

Agenda Workshops are scheduled to start at 9:30 AM on the **Monday** 10 days prior to the Council Meeting.

The Planning Board meets the **first Tuesday** of each month at 10:30 AM.

The Board of Adjustment meets monthly on the **first Tuesday** of the month at 2:00 PM as needed.

The Historic Landmarks Commission meets the second Thursday of each month at 11:00 AM as needed.

Flat Rock Transportation Advisory Committee meets at 10:00 AM on the **second Tuesday** of the month.

Park Commission meets at the Rudnick Room at the Park through September 22 on the **fourth Thursday** of the month at 10:00 AM.

For all meetings—please check the Village Calendar for Holiday reschedules or cancellations.

Village of Flat Rock office hours are 9:00 AM—4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Village Directory

Mayor:

Nick Weedman 693-5300

Council Members:

District 1

Matt Toner 832-256-7631

Tom Carpenter 551-3282

District 2

Anne Coletta, Vice Mayor 595-0707

Susan Gregory 703-509-8230

District 3

David Dethero 692-5375

Barbara Jeter 290-7485

Village Clerk:

Michelle Parker, CMC 697-8100

Deputy Village Clerk/Tax Collector:

Carol Richard 697-8100

Village Administrator:

Pat Christie, CZO 697-8100

Park Ranger:

Michael Dages 435-0397

Director of Development Park Foundation:

Tracey Daniels

e-mail: tracey@villageofflatrock.org

Website: villageofflatrock.org