

The Village Record



The Newsletter of
Village of Flat Rock
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September 2021

From the Mayor's Desk

Nick Weedman

American Rescue Plan— The Village received about \$538,000 from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) but as of this writing, lacking is specific guidance on how those funds can be spent. Henderson County and each of the five municipalities have formed an ARP Coordinating group to share specifics and on each organization is planning for fund disbursements. The guidance received shows most have to do with Covid-19 relief but there are other possible uses as well. All Henderson County governmental units are moving slowly since there is a clawback provision if the Department of Treasury guidelines are not strictly followed.

We will be announcing more details when available.

Town Hall Meetings — Two of a series of town hall meetings have been held during July and August. Attendance has revealed some good constructive suggestions. Citizen concern include vehicular speeding, the North Highland Lake Road project, and curiosity about the ARP. There were be at least two more town hall meetings and citizens are cordially invited to attend. The meetings are intended to be conversations about your municipal government and what your expectations might be. The next meeting will be on September 9th at 6:30 pm— and will be conducted at the Parish Hall, St. John in the Wilderness.

North Highland Road Project - The contract for this project has been awarded to Buchanan & Sons and construction is slated to begin in early October. The cost has escalated from the original estimate of \$2.6 million to about \$9.6 million and will take about two years to complete. The most disruptive aspect of the project will be a period of 90 days when the road will be closed for the construction of a new culvert system for King Creek by the dam on Highland Lake. The Village website, Facebook page and other social media will be used to keep residents apprised of project timing, detours and other pertinent aspects as construction begins.

Property Taxes - Billing of property taxes is underway as this is being written and the bills should be out by the time this newsletter reaches residents' homes. Tax rates are unchanged from last year and, unless your property has undergone some type of improvement, tax amounts should be unchanged. An article on property tax collections appears separately in this newsletter.

Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue Station 2 Expansion - The expansion and upgrade of Station 2 of the Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue next to the Village Hall is nearing completion. When finished, the new bays will house four vehicles and the old bays will be used for staff housing. Plans are to staff the station with full-time personnel, and this will make a significant improvement in response times for all of Flat Rock.

We anticipate a formal opening, which will likely include a public reception. Once an event is announced, please make plans to attend and meet some of the staff who will be servicing most of Flat Rock!

Municipal Election - 2021 is a year in which municipal elections will occur in November. Unlike the 2019 election in which all positions other than Mayor were contested, this year only one of the three seats on the Council will be contested.

In District 1, which is south of Little River Road and includes Kenmure, Claremont and Kingwood, current Council member Pam Tiles decided not to continue. The one candidate to fill her position is Matt Toner, who lives in Claremont. Pam has done an excellent job but family obligations convinced her to put her energies in that direction.

In District 2, incumbent Susan Gregory is running to retain her position on the Village Council. Jim Hart, a resident of Staton Woods, is challenging Ms. Gregory. District 2 is the area east of Greenville Highway north of Claremont and going up through Staton Woods.

The District 3 seat is currently held by Albert Gooch, who decided not to run for a third term. Albert has made many contributions to the Village and his service has been highly appreciated. Barbara Jeter is running to fill that position.

We wish Albert Gooch and Pam Tiles all the best in their retirement and sincerely appreciate all of the time and effort they contributed.

Shred Day and Pill Drop Event

The Village will provide its annual fall Shred Day on Saturday, October 16th, from 9 to 11 am. The Henderson County Sheriff's Office will also be there to accept and safely dispose of everyone's outdated prescription drugs.

Village residents can bring up to three file-size boxes of paper records, or their equivalent in bags. Shredding is done immediately and on site to ensure the safety of your information. The shredder can handle staples and standard paper clips, but metal binder clips or binders can bring the event to a halt. Your cardboard boxes will be returned to

you. Rumors abound that years ago the shredder ran out of room, making people anxious to arrive sooner than later. Actually, on one out of many occasions, the hired shred truck had a malfunction. We are not using the same shred service now, and last year the Village broke a record in the pounds of paper shredded — and there was still room when it was over.

There is no limit on the number of prescriptions and associated items you may bring. Items allowed include: pills, capsules, inhalers, and patches. (And Flat Rock broke the county record last spring with its medicine drop!) Items not accepted: chemotherapy medications, epi-pens and sharps or needles.

This is a “drive-thru” event on Village Center Drive. The VIP Traffic guys will be there to help us keep moving. Be patient—Village Council members will be handling your boxes and moving the best we can!

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

HELP CLEAN UP LITTER!

The topic of litter was well and thoroughly discussed at the last Town Hall Meeting. It is hard to stop this boorish behavior, but Flat Rock residents can join in the efforts to mitigate the mess.

There are two NCDOT-sponsored “Litter Sweeps” each year, in April and in September. In April, Village Council members quickly accumulated all the bags they could carry on N. Highland Lake Road. . NCDOT provides safety vests, trash bags and other equipment and then picks up the filled bags.

Groups or businesses can also “adopt a highway,” and regularly clean up the litter on that route. NCDOT will provide supplies and erect a sign identifying the good citizens. Details can be found on the Village website.

The next “Litter Sweep” runs from September 11 to 25. For information on how your group can participate, use this address: www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/environmental/litter-management/.

PROPERTY TAX TIME HAS ARRIVED

The new fiscal year has arrived, and the Village of Flat Rock is in the process of finalizing the mailing of property tax bills!

Our tax rate is unchanged from the prior year, so if there have been no improvements to your home or other property, you will see bills like those mailed in 2020.

By law, all taxes are due on September 1st. Some see that due date and are concerned about receiving the tax bill even as the taxes are due. However, taxpayers have until January 5, 2022, to pay the bill with no interest being charged. Just remember, September 1st is the start of the tax collection cycle. On January 6, 2022, unpaid bills will have a 2% interest charge added, with another 3/4% interest charge added on due on the 1st of each subsequent month until the account is paid in full.

If needed, partial payments are accepted. If you need to spread payments over the next few months, please discuss this with the Village Tax Collector so there is a mutual understanding of due dates and tax payment commitments.

Property tax bills may be paid online by credit card (Visa and MasterCard are acceptable). Those wishing to use this service are advised that a convenience fee is established by the credit card company and the rate may vary depending on the card you use. To pay with a credit card, go to the Village website (www.villageofflatrock.org) where you will find a link to tax bill payments on the home page. Click there and follow instructions to complete the transaction. If you have questions or problems, contact Martha Orr, Tax Collector, at (828) 697-8100. Property tax bills may also be viewed online. To do so, go to the Village website, click on the link, input your name and you will see your bill and status of the account.

Flat Rock Transportation and Advisory Committee (TAC)

At the May meeting, the Flat Rock Village Council established the Flat Rock Transportation Advisory Committee. This five-member committee will advise the council on such projects as long-range transportation planning, major and minor road im-

provement projects, road and bridge safety, and any other transportation issues. By working proactively on transportation issues affecting the Village, the Committee will provide information to help the Council make knowledgeable and responsible decisions. The committee will also work to eliminate confusion in the community over transportation projects by increasing community involvement and input in transportation decisions.

Given that Flat Rock's renomination on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015 requires communication among several groups, the committee will help facilitate coordination among NCDOT, the Council, and the NC State Historic Preservation Office, as all three groups are involved in any discussions about transportation projects within the part of the historic district that is inside the Village municipal boundaries.

The Committee had its first meeting on July 27, with a presentation by Tristan Winkler, director of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), on what the MPO is, how its Board operates, its responsibilities, and how the Board works with NCDOT on regional transportation issues. All committee meetings are open to the public.

Current committee members are Anne Coletta, Dennis Flanagan, Patrice German, John Jeter and Ed Tiles.

NCDOT Works on Village Roads

The NCDOT Henderson Country Maintenance Yard has been working hard in Flat Rock. Over the past several months, crew teams have removed debris from Little River Road and Greenville Highway several times. They have also helped replace missing traffic signs and worked on bridge repairs even while understaffed and underfunded. We appreciate their quick response once they are alerted to a problem.

West Blue Ridge Road was recently repaved and center lines painted.

If you have a concern about road maintenance, you can report it directly to NCDOT online at [ncdot.gov/contact/pages](https://www.ncdot.gov/contact/pages) or call the Village office at 828-697-8100.

IVY AND OTHER INVASIVE INVADERS

Special Report from Steve Pettis
NC Cooperative Extension
Avoid Invasives, Plant Natives

The winters in Western NC are warmer now and summers are not as mild as in the past. There was a time when ponds would freeze over in the winter and soil was deeply frozen.

Without freezing winter temperatures to kill off plants and insects that thrive in warmer climates, native mountain ecosystems are under threat. Native plants can suffer while invasive plants thrive. Even ponds are under threat from new invasive plants and warmer temperatures. A great way home gardeners can address potential landscape issues is to embrace native species. We have too many beautiful native plants to replace them with plants from outside the area that may not grow as well or become invasive.

Some plants, such as **miscanthus grass**, may not be terribly invasive in other areas of the country but become invasive when they are transplanted to the mountains. Other plants such as **English ivy** and **Oriental bittersweet** may be more easily contained elsewhere as well but spread like wildfire in the mountains.

English ivy is VERY invasive in Western NC. The plant competes with tree roots, chokes out native ground covers and flowers and in the long run KILLS TREES. Learn more about English ivy by reading this article by my colleague here: <https://caldwell.ces.ncsu.edu/2019/04/english-ivy-friend-or-foe/>.

Western NC is one of the best growing areas in the world. Native plants will

thrive here if they don't have to compete with invasive plants. As the climate changes and the winters get milder, invasive species will thrive and continue to push out native species. As gardeners, let's do what we can to promote native plants and kill invasive plants.

Here is a great list of native plants from the NC Native Plant Society: <https://ncwildflower.org/recommended-native-species/>.

Gardeners interested in using native plants in their landscapes and avoiding invasive species should consult the NC Native Plant Society at: ncwildflower.org.

Village Kudzu Program

The Village-sponsored kudzu program allows all residents to receive annual spraying of kudzu on their property. The latest spraying ended recently, but everyone is urged to be vigilant to new growth. The next spraying will occur late July or early August in 2022.

When you report kudzu, a volunteer will visit and review the affected property. If you agree, you will be on the schedule for free spraying.

The Village is already compiling a list for next year. To be placed on the list, call either the Village Hall at 828-697-8100 or Council member David Dethero at 828-692-5375.

Meet the New Park Ranger

The Park at Flat Rock has a new Park Ranger, Michael Dages, who comes to us after three years working at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. Michael has a life-long passion for the outdoors, growing up in Cuyahoga Valley National Park (where his mother worked), studying environmental science, taking work-study trips across the country, working internships in conservation and research, and working at an educational farm. Michael is very excited to be bringing his experience and skills to the Park. He asks that next time you are there, come and find

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The Village Council has held two “Town Hall” meetings this summer, on July 8th and August 12th, with several more scheduled for the fall. The first two meetings were held at Pinecrest Presbyterian Church, and the third on September 9th at the Parish Hall, St. John in the Wilderness.

The meetings, designed to help Village residents become more involved with their local government, follow a format of brief introductions by Village Council Members and then an extended time for attendees to provide input and ask questions on topics important to them. Meetings are scheduled in the evenings for both a more informal atmosphere and to allow those unable to come to day-time Council meetings to attend.

There have been discussions on the American Rescue Plan and how to allocate those funds (see “From the Mayor’s Desk, page 1); traffic issues, including the latest news on the North Highland Lake Road project; increasing trash along Flat Rock roads; and other topics raised by those attending.

The next town hall event will be October 13th, from 6:30 to 8 pm. The location has not yet been identified but it will be provided on the Village website and Facebook page. Or call the office at 828-697-8100.

REPORT FROM THE FLAT ROCK VILLAGE MERCHANTS By Ruth Reeves

A busy year so far for the Flat Rock Merchants as COVID numbers let up in the last few months. We have seen our visitors come back in droves...to enjoy our lively

shops, art galleries, historic places, wonderful eclectic restaurants and eateries, wineries and our own movie house!

AND now we can celebrate our famous anchor business, The Wrinkled Egg, which turned 32 this year. Always so grateful to Virginia Spigener and her brilliant mind for this crazy, zany delightful store which puts our area on the map.

In case you haven’t noticed, our speed limit along Greenville Highway changed to 25 mph. The merchants would appreciate your observance of that speed as we try to accommodate tourists and locals alike with a safe entry into Flat Rock Square, the Garrison Shops (next to the post office), and Little Rainbow Row.

For more of what is going on in our neighborhood, please “like” and friend the Flat Rock Merchants Facebook and Instagram pages. We look forward to seeing you soon.

MORE PARKING FOR LITTLE RAINBOW ROW

Thanks to some of our local merchants, there is now additional parking for Little Rainbow Row. This is especially true for those who peer into the lot behind the Flat Rock Bakery and face a difficult prospect.

The right side of the lower parking lot at Flat Rock Square is now available for our visitors and residents to use. Much safer than pulling out— or backing out—onto either W. Blue Ridge or Greenville Highway.

The entrance is on W Blue Ridge Road. The left side of the lot remains reserved for the Flat Rock Cinema.

From the Flat Rock Park & Recreation Foundation:

THE PARK AT FLAT ROCK

The Park at Flat Rock is an absolute gem and an asset not just to Flat Rock, but the entire community of Western NC. If you've ever walked, jogged or biked the trails at The Park at Flat Rock, you understand what a gift it is to our community. The Pollinator Garden and Wildflower Meadow continue to reward Park visitors with a sea of color. Pavilions are providing shade and shelter for small, socially-distanced gatherings and family lunches. The Park is well-used and well-loved.

The Flat Rock Park & Recreation Foundation's work is far from being done. We hope you will continue to contribute and make this special Park even more special.

The Friends of the Park at Flat Rock raises funds for sustainability, trail improvements, wellness programs and nature education. Your support ensures that our community can continue to enjoy The Park for many years to come. We currently have over 170 charter members and hope to double that number in 2021-2022.

JOIN our inner circle of donors, whose support gives us the ability to take the lead in preserving The Park at Flat Rock as a community asset. Members commit to a monthly or yearly donation to the Park for a minimum of three years.

PROVIDE official dollars and work to keep our programs and conservation efforts moving forward.

CONTRIBUTE – 100% of your donations goes directly to The Park at Flat Rock.

As always, feel free to reach out and connect with me regarding The Friends of the Park at Flat Rock and nature and wellness programming ideas.

Please stay safe and healthy. I look forward to meeting YOU at The Park.

Tracey
Tracey Daniels, CNP

Development & Programming Director, Flat Rock Park & Recreation Foundation

828-697-8100 * tracey@villageofflatrock.org

UPCOMING FALL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

!!!!!!!!!!!!NEW EVENT: PICTURES IN THE PARK!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sunday, September 12th 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

On Grandparents Day, bring your favorite family members (of all ages) for a professional photography session AT THE PARK. Couples, families, and well-behaved dogs are welcome to pose for pictures! “Suggested donation” of \$10 per session. 100% of donations collected will go directly to support the sustainability of The Park. Help make our Park THRIVE! **Email tracev@villageofflatrock.org to reserve a time slot.** Digital files will be sent.

ANNUAL PUMPKIN SALE Saturday, October 9th -- Plan ahead & purchase your pumpkins at the park!

PARDEE AT THE PARK: FREE YOGA - Thursdays @ 5:30 pm & Saturdays @ 10:00 am

Classes continue through 10/30/21; Meet at area behind Welcome Center
Our yoga program is in partnership with Pardee UNC Healthcare and YAM (Yoga and Massage Hendersonville)

NATURE WALKS

Saturday, September 18 @ 10:00 am (Nature Walk & Talk)

Saturday, October 16 @ 9:00 am (Fall Bird Migration)

NATURE IMMERSION WALKS

Saturday, September 25 @ 9:00 am

SIGN-UP FOR OUR MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER – The Foundation sends out **one** informative newsletter every month with updates on FREE programming, park projects, events, and more! We share beautiful photos from our park users. It’s an email that will lift your spirits and feature our park pride. SIGN UP TODAY!

OUR 2021-2022 goal is to DOUBLE our Friends of The Park at Flat Rock memberships to assist with the sustainability of The Park.

Please help us sustain our beautiful park for generations to come.

WILL YOU make a gift today?

WAYS TO GIVE:

ALL donations are tax deductible. 100% of your donation goes directly to benefit The Park at Flat Rock.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE – Flatrockparkfoundation.org

to read our annual report, learn more about our Friends of The Park at Flat Rock giving society and donate online.

USE THE ENCLOSED DONOR ENVELOPE – use the Village Newsletter’s enclosed donation envelope and mail your donation.

The Flat Rock Park and Recreation Foundation

The Flat Rock Village Council created the Flat Rock Park and Recreation Foundation, Inc. and incorporated it as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2013 for the purpose of securing resources for the development of The Park.

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, and will start at 9:30 AM, unless that day is a holiday.

Agenda Workshops are scheduled to start at 9:30 AM on the **Monday** 10 days prior to the Council Meeting, unless that Monday falls on a holiday.

The Planning Board meets the **first Tuesday** of each month from 10:30 AM until 12:00 Noon

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

The Historic Landmarks Commission meets the second Thursday of each month after the monthly council meeting (if there are agenda items).

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

Pam Tiles 317- 408-5127

Tom Carpenter 551-3282

District 2

Anne Coletta, Vice Mayor 595-0707

Susan Gregory 703-509-8230

District 3

David Dethero 692-5375

Albert Gooch 698-0045

Village Clerk:

Michelle Parker, CMC 697-8100

Deputy Village Clerk/Tax Collector:

Martha Orr, CMC 697-8100

Village Administrator:

Pat Christie, CZO 697-8100

Park Ranger:

Michael Dages 828-435-0397