

The Village Record



The Newsletter of
Village of Flat Rock
110 Village Center Drive
Post Office Box 1288
Flat Rock, North Carolina
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Editor: Albert Gooch

Volume XXIX Number 2

September 2020

From the Mayor's Desk

Nick Weedman

The Covid-19 pandemic remains with us and has dictated a change in the way business is conducted. Virtually all meetings are online Zoom events and while we miss having constituents attend, we are getting used to the new normal.

Since almost the beginning of the pandemic, we restricted use of our facilities but have gradually loosened what is permitted. If social distancing is practiced use of the Council meeting room is permitted for small groups. Similarly, greater use of the Pavilion are permitted if CDC guidelines are followed.

Masks are required to conduct business in the Village Hall and some have been denied entry when they refused to comply with the mask guidelines.

Confirmed cases of the virus are diminishing in North Carolina and in September, Governor Cooper will consider loosening restrictions. At that time, we will consider new guidelines in the use of Village facilities.

2020 / 2021 Fiscal Year Budget

The Village Council passed a budget for the new fiscal year and retained the same tax rate for the prior year. There are virtually no significant capital projects and each cost center was examined closely to keep expenses as low as possible. The

biggest challenge is the uncertainty of revenue sources. The biggest expense is fire protection (the Village contract with three fire departments for coverage). Operating and maintaining the Park at Flat Rock is a significant expense but is managed well. To pay for these, property taxes and sales tax distribution from the State constitute most revenues. The uncertainty lies in the sales tax revenue stream. Guidelines from the North Carolina League of Municipalities were used and although early, these look to be reasonable. We will continue to report on Village finances as the year progresses.

Property Tax Collections

Tax collections for the past fiscal year were excellent at 99.99% of the amount billed. At year end, there was a single delinquent account and the Tax Collector is working with the property owner to bring this account current. Since tax collections began in 2005, the Village has had a collection rate of 100% until this year.

Property Tax Bill

As reported elsewhere in this issue, you should receive your property tax bill about the same time you receive this Newsletter. With the tax rate retained from last fiscal year, you will find your tax bill to be unchanged unless improvements were made in your property. We want to emphasize that if necessary partial payments may be made and the bill can be paid by credit

card if so desired. Calls are received every year about the bill being sent on a post card and on the due date of September 1. Property values are a matter of public record so the fact that the post card reveals those values does not constitute revealing of sensitive information. The due date is set by State law. Bills may be paid at any time from September 1 until January 5th without an interest being added.

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 the taxes to be like bills mailed in 2019.

The Village Council passed a conservative budget which reflected the uncertainty of revenues due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There was much uncertainty regarding sales tax revenues received from North Carolina so as a result the Council acted accordingly. By law we must have a balanced budget and to achieve this, the budget taps our fund balance (savings account) by a slight amount. The budget is in slight surplus since none of the elected officials receive any compensation.

By law, all taxes are due on September 1. However, taxpayers have until January 5th of 2021 to pay the bill with no interest being charged. Some people are confused by the September 1st date. Just remember that is the start of the tax collection year. On January 6, 2021 unpaid bills will have a 2% interest charge added with another ¾% interest charge added on the balance due on the 1st of 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 Tax Collector so there is a mutual understanding of due dates and taxpayment commitment.

Property tax bills may be paid on-line by credit card (Visa and MasterCard are acceptable).

Those wishing to use this service are advised that a 2% convenience fee will be added to the payment amount and charged to the taxpayer. This convenience fee is established by the credit card company and the rate may vary depending on the card you use. To use this service, go to the Village web site (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 owners may also view their tax bills online. To view your bill on-line, go to the Village web site (see above), click on the link, input your name and you can see your bill and the status of the account.

KEEPING FLAT ROCK CLEAN AND GREEN

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has three volunteer programs to help keep our roadways litter free:

- Adopt-A-Highway
- Sponsor-A-Highway Litter Sweep

Flat Rock resident Luke Hunter recently signed up for the **Adopt-a-Highway** program, and writes of his experience:

I have had plenty of time to think this spring. I wanted to do something productive, something others could enjoy, too. I decided an Adopt-A-Highway contract would be my project. I have noticed that our secondary roads get the least amount of NCDOT attention and manpower, especially after a harsh winter storm. So, I chose a Flat Rock backroad and applied for the contract. Much to my surprise my application was accepted and a three-year contract was issued. The local DOT employees could not be more friendly or helpful. They provide safety equipment and supplies and make organizing pickup of trash and storm debris very easy.

My project, so far, has been a success and much easier than I had thought. I feel good about what I am doing. I get to do this with family and friends, and my neighbors benefit from it, too. So, I encourage you to consider an Adopt-A-Highway contract in your neighborhood. It is easier and more

productive than you might think and it helps keep Flat Rock clean and green.

For more information, contact northcarolina@adoptahighway.net or telephone 800.499.2367. The **Sponsor-A-Highway** program is a public-private partnership and includes service providers that are responsible for installing and maintaining signs and removing and disposing of litter using their own crews.

In return for contracting with one of the service providers to clean a one-mile segment of roadway, an acknowledgement sign identifying the sponsor is displayed on the Sponsor-A-Highway sign.

Businesses, organizations, or individuals interested in becoming a highway sponsor should contact NCDOT at 919.707.2920 for more information.

Litter Sweep, NCDOT's statewide roadside litter removal initiative, usually happens twice a year, in the spring and the fall. This year, with COVID-19 concerns, the fall Litter Sweep is cancelled. Litter Sweep involves residents throughout the state participating in local efforts to help clean up North Carolina's roadways.

In addition to volunteer help, NCDOT maintenance crews devote one week of their time to pick up litter and collect orange bags placed on the roadsides by volunteer pickups.

Flat Rock volunteers would be provided cleanup supplies, such as reversible orange/blue trash bags, gloves and orange safety vests, from the Henderson County NCDOT Maintenance Yard office.

To participate in Litter Sweep in 2021, contact Laurie Plemmons at 828.891.7911.

Participating in any of these three programs is a great way to bring neighborhoods together and clean up our roadways, so please think about organizing or joining a group to help keep Flat Rock "clean and green"!

Anne Coletta
Council Member
Village of Flat Rock

HELLO FLAT ROCK NEIGHBORS

I wanted to remind those of you who have not filled out their census form to please do so as soon as possible .

The 2020 Census Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU) operation has begun. Census field workers will visit the 1.6 million North Carolina households that have not completed their 2020 Census. The revised 2020 Census deadline is September 30. You can be counted online (my2020census.gov), by telephone (844-330-2020), or by paper questionnaire until September 30. Completing your Census form at home reduces the need for a Census worker visit. The Census workers going door-to-door will have COVID protection (ie masks and gloves), and they will maintain social distance.

Some reasons that an accurate census is so important:

The Census directly affects the allocation of \$16.3 billion annually in federal funds for critical public services such as hospitals, schools, road repairs and emergency response services for the next 10 years in North Carolina.

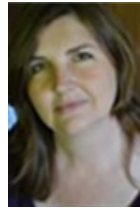
Ensures that communities are appropriately represented in the statehouse and in Congress. With an accurate 2020 Census count, North Carolina is projected to gain a seat in the House of Representatives, increasing its representation from 13 to 14 representatives.

Knowing how many children live in a community will provide the foundation for important policy and planning decisions over the next 10 years. For example, should a community build a new library? A new school? Should it expand Head Start for pre-K children?

Even just a 3% undercount of North Carolina's children could represent a loss of \$330 Million over the next ten years.

Please be counted today!

Sheryl Jamerson
Vice Mayor
Village of Flat Rock



NEWS FROM THE FLAT ROCK PARK FOUNDATION

The Park at Flat Rock was built with dedication, grit, love and foresight from our current and former Village Council and Foundation Board Members. The Park would not exist without gifts from our donors. When looking to build a community asset for future generations to enjoy and lovingly-use, I do not think anyone could have predicted how important The Park would prove to be during a Covid-19 pandemic.

We thank our Park's history as we step up and focus on the need for current and future sustainability. Launched last April, **The Friends of the Park at Flat Rock** initiative raises funds for sustainability, trail improvements, wellness programs and nature education. **WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT.**

In 2020, many are using The Park at Flat Rock as their current gym and fitness studio. Walkers, joggers, and self-instructed Cross-Fit workouts are happening **DAILY** at The Park. Consider joining **THE FRIENDS** as a monthly or yearly gym membership not only for yourself *but your entire community!* Starting at \$10-\$100 a month... you can choose a contribution that fits your budget and your time-table! Please remember **ALL** that The Park gives back in return.

- **100% of your contribution goes directly towards The Park** and maintaining 2.8 miles of walking trails, planting trees and native shrubs, preserving our riverbanks, and providing **FREE** educational and wellness programs to park patrons and guests of all ages.
- **The Foundation is a 501©3** and your donation may be tax deductible. Donations can be paid as a once-yearly payment or divided into monthly installments.

Your support ensures that our community will enjoy The Park for years and generations to come. Please see the enclosed card and remit envelope for more information. Donations and sign-ups can also be made through our website www.flatrockparkfoundation.org. Please see the **Friends** link.

Cooler temperatures and fall regalia are just around the corner! **Please save the date for Saturday, October 10** for our annual Great Big Pumpkin Sale starting at 10:00 am. Due to Covid-19, this will be the Foundation's only public-in-person fundraiser in 2020. We know you have options to get your pumpkins in many places, please try to remember that 100% of your pumpkin purchase will go directly to The Park! We will have a drive-thru and social-distance logistics in place.

As always, feel free to reach out and connect with me regarding **The Flat Rock Park Foundation**, **The Friends of the Park at Flat Rock**, and wellness & nature programming ideas. I truly miss seeing our donors, supporters and board members more often and in real life. *If anyone wants to meet at the pavilion for a socially distanced cup of coffee – let me know!*
Please stay safe and healthy.

I look forward to meeting YOU at The Park... *6-feet apart, of course!*

Tracey Daniels
Development Director, Flat Rock Park Foundation
tracey@villageofflatrock.org

Top 10 Park Activities for Kids

We all wish the playgrounds were open, but there are lots of other awesome things for kids to do in the park. Here are my top 10:

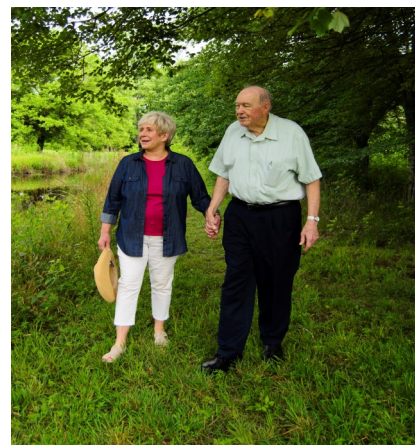
1. Visit King Creek: This waterway is a beautiful feature of the park. Kids love to visit the waterfall and dip their toes in the water.
2. Toss a ball or Frisbee: Our wide-open spaces offer lots of room for play. Bring your favorite ball or Frisbee to toss around or play a game of kickball.
3. Go on a scavenger hunt: Download the free printable at this link and your children will have a blast trying to find everything on the list.
<https://www.doinggoodtogether.org/bhf/nature-scavenger-hunt>
4. Walk through the Pollinator Garden & Wildflower Meadow: Both are still in bloom and full of birds, butterflies and other pollinators. This is a must do!
5. Observe the wildlife in the ponds: Our four ponds are full of a wide variety of wildlife including fish and turtles. Please remember not to feed or disturb any of the animals.
6. Take a bike or scooter ride: Our 2.7 miles of trails are a blast for kids on bikes and scooters. This classic never gets old!
7. Enjoy a picnic lunch: Sitting on a blanket under one of our beautiful trees enjoying a picnic lunch is a great way to spend an afternoon. Bring some games to make it even better.
8. Stroll through the Nature Center: Our Nature Center is not only beautiful but filled with cool information panels. The amazing bench inside is a great spot to take a break.
9. Go birdwatching: Check out the bird information panels in the Nature Center and then try and find as many of the birds as possible.
10. Visit the Quiet Place: This adorable structure is located deep in the park and is another great spot to take a break or read a book.

CONTINUING THE PARK'S LEGACY TO OUR COMMUNITY

The Park at Flat Rock's enduring legacy to the community is the enjoyment you receive through visits there. Such enjoyment, walking, watching nature...is one of the reasons Terry Hicks, former Mayor of Flat Rock, wanted this park to be and continue far into the future, and why he envisioned The Quiet Place, meditation center. Located near the Ed Lastein Perimeter Trail and King Creek, The Quiet Place offers a resting spot, a place to enjoy calmness and reflect on all around you. Terry, and his wife, Christine worked tirelessly to make The Park a special place---a place where memories are made. The Quiet Place, benches and other projects where they were both integrally involved are used often today and will be far into the future.

You can also remember Terry and Christine's work, and that of many others, whose dedication to The Park and desire to preserve it can continue for generations to come. The Park receives many gifts---both small and larger to provide for current plans, but the longer term needs of The Park are options you may consider.

If you would like more information about creating a legacy for The Park at Flat Rock through your will or estate plans, or have already made such plans, please contact Myra Grant at myra_grant@villageofflatrock.org or 828-697-8100.



DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF FLAT ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA

Historic Flat Rock, Inc. (HFR) is a preservation nonprofit founded in 1968. HFR, as an all volunteer organization, established the Flat Rock Historic District in 1973. The District, 6.25 square miles, as documented within the National Register of Historic Places, includes not only historic homes, but the natural and cultural landscapes within the district. The District is recognized by The United States Department of the Interior and the State of North Carolina, Office of Historic Preservation.

Historic Flat Rock, Inc. Heritage Tree Program

Following the example of Hendersonville and their program to recognize Heritage Trees within the city limits, HFR has implemented a similar program for heritage tree specimens within the Village of Flat Rock. In May 2016 Hendersonville Tree Board agreed to allow HFR to use the term Heritage Tree as they do in Hendersonville.

What is a Heritage Tree? It is defined as a tree which has:

- reached it mature growth;
- has significant historic value to the community;
- is a rare species or provides a habitat for rare species of plants, animals or birds.

These trees are as much a reflection of the history of Flat Rock as are the homes and structures found here. HFR is documenting the location of potential heritage trees and beginning the process of photographing and preserving images of them. Not only should the beauty of these heritage trees be documented as we would find them in the summer months but photographed throughout the seasons. Our volunteers will photograph and measure trees while on site.

The Village of Flat Rock welcomes us in these efforts. HFR is aware that there is a Village of Flat Rock Tree Ordinance. The HFR program is not, nor will it ever be in conflict

with the ordinance, which precedes a Heritage Tree designation. The application form for Heritage Tree review is on the HFR website: www.historicflatrockinc.com

Interested in being a part of an educational group within HFR that focuses on plant and tree health and conservation rooted in the natural? Send an email to historicflatrock@gmail.com. or text 828.974.4242 to be placed on the “We like to get dirt under our nails and on our jeans” list. A small organizational meeting will occur outdoors when safe. Please email, text or telephone if you wish to learn about volunteer opportunities. We have opportunities for those interested in archival work, multicultural explorations, and are planning for 2021 workshops to take place in the Cultural Center/ Museum at 118 Village Center Drive in front of The Flat Rock Village Hall. We look forward to meeting you.

Please join HFR by becoming a member today: visit our website at www.historicflatrockinc.com to join online. Follow us on Facebook at [historicflatrockinc](https://www.facebook.com/historicflatrockinc).

It is that time again, don't forget to turn your clocks back one hour on Sunday November 1st.



FLAT ROCK VILLAGE SHRED DAY/DRUG TAKE-BACK EVENT SCHEDULED

In partnership with TRIAD, the Village has scheduled a tentative date for a Shred/Drug Take-Back Event on Saturday, October 10th from 10:00am to 12:00pm. Carolina Shred and TRIAD will be onsite at the Village Hall for residents to safely dispose of old records and outdated prescription drugs. We ask that you bring no more three file-size record boxes for shredding. Please check your boxes and remove any 3-ring binders or large metal clips before arrival.

There is no limit on the number of prescription drugs you may bring, however there are some regulations. The program accepts prescription pills, capsules, ointments, vitamins, liquids in their original containers, inhalers and patches. They cannot accept chemotherapy medications and sharps, needles, Epi-pens.

Council members and volunteers working these events will be accepting non-perishable food items and personal hygiene products for donation to Interfaith Assistance Ministries. We encourage everyone to make a donation of items. Together we can make a difference for IAM. Please box or bag these items separately.

Shred Day events are very popular and draw a large number of residents, many of whom arrive before the truck is able to get in and parked. This causes back-ups that create traffic flow issues on Greenville Hwy. Please keep in mind that after the initial flurry at 10:00am, the line dies down and by 11:00am the wait time is greatly decreased. **Should this event need to be cancelled, it will be posted on the website and on our social media outlets - please check the website in advance of the scheduled date to be sure it has not been cancelled.**

FLAT ROCK PLAYHOUSE

Flat Rock Playhouse's Studio 52 is excited to offer virtual classes this fall for students near

and far. There are classes open to students in Kindergarten all the way through 12th grade with options for acting and musical theatre. Classes will be taught by theatre professionals and Vagabonds including Studio 52 Director of Education **Anna Kimmell**, Flat Rock Playhouse Artistic Director and Artistic Associate **Lisa K. Bryant** and **Matthew Glover**, **Betsy Bisson**, **Tania Battista**, and Flat Rock Playhouse newcomer **TJ Medel**! The semester begins the week of September 21st and runs for nine weeks.

For younger artists, there are classes available for K-2nd grades and 3rd-5th grades where students learn the basics and *fundamentals* of theatre including improvisation, acting through movement, and creative play. For older artists, there are classes for 6th-8th grades and 9th-12th grades that dive further into theatre and music theatre with self-scripting, scene work, and even audition prep. Full and partial scholarships are available through the Dave Hart Scholarship Fund. Scholarship applications are on the Studio 52 website and the deadline is September 4. For those inspired to donate, contributions to the Dave Hart Scholarship Fund are accepted on a rolling basis through the Flat Rock Playhouse website.

“Theatre has never been more important than it is right now,” says Studio 52 Director of Education **Anna Kimmell**. “Not only do these classes give students a chance to connect through a shared passion and develop their talents in theatre arts, but they’re also learning valuable life skills like communication, problem solving, and creativity. All of these have proven instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic.” The announcement of Kimmell joining as Director of Education was shared on August 21. She comes to the Playhouse from Arkansas Repertory Theatre where she also worked as Director of Education.

The full list of classes including dates, times, and instructors can be found below or online at frpstudio52.org. You can register online or by telephoning the Box Office at (828) 693-0731. Payment plans are available through the Box Office. Registration closes on Thursday, September 17.

**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.

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 3:00 PM (if there are agenda items).

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.

The deadline for articles to be included in the September issue of "The Village Record" is November 16, 2020

Village Directory

Mayor:

Nick Weedman 693-5300

Council Members:

District 1

Sheryl Jamerson, Vice Mayor 698-3330
Tom Carpenter 692-5352

District 2

Paige Posey 606-7078
Anne Coletta 595-0707

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

John Wilkerson 435-0397