

CITY COUNCIL

CHRISTINE M. JOHNSON
At-Large

JAMES KOLE
First Ward

ADRIAN G. SIMMONS
First Ward

KYLA M. CLARK
Second Ward

JEFFREY W. MILLS
Second Ward

Council meets second and fourth
Mondays of each month.



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

8103 Sandy Spring Road
Laurel, Maryland 20707-2502

KEITH R. SYDNOR
Mayor

CHRISTIAN L. PULLEY, CPM
City Administrator

NEKESA MATLOCK
Deputy City Administrator

STEPHANIE P. ANDERSON
City Solicitor

SARA A. GREEN, CPM, MMC
City Clerk

(301) 725-5300

www.cityoflaurel.org

Thirty-Eighth Regular Meeting

Mayor and City Council

Monday, September 22, 2025

6:00 PM

Agenda

In-Person Meeting

Watch the meeting on Laurel TV streaming live in your web browser at <https://laurelvtv.org/watch-live> or locally Laurel TV can be found on Comcast Channel 996 (HD), 71 (SD) or Verizon FiOS Channel 12.

1. Call to Order – Kyla M. Clark, President
2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America- Keith R. Sydnor, Mayor
3. Roll Call- Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk
4. Approval of Minutes
 - July 28, 2025 Closed Session
 - September 3, 2025 Work Session
 - September 8, 2025 Regular Meeting
5. Report of the Mayor and City Council
6. Mayoral Appointments/Reappointments

Appointments

- | | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------|
| • Stephen Slaughter | Public Safety and Transportation Committee | 09/22/2025-09/22/2027 |
| • Gail Heath | Ethics Commission | 09/22/2025-09/22/2028 |
| • Connor Johnson | Public Safety and Transportation Committee | 09/22/2025-09/22/2027 |

Reappointment

- Roy M. Smith, II Public Safety and Transportation Committee 09/22/2025-09/22/2027

7. General Public Hearing

8. Second Public Hearing with Possible Action on Ordinance No. 2043- (Text Amendment No. 267)- An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland to Amend the Unified Land Development Code, Chapter 20, "Land Development and Subdivision Regulations," Section 20-22.50, "Interim Limited Retail Uses and Providing an Effective Date."

9. Second Public Hearing with Possible Action on Resolution No. 8-2025- A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland for the Purpose of Approving Procedures on Social Media Use for the Laurel City Council.

10. Adjournment



CITY OF LAUREL OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, MD 20707
Phone: 301-725-5300 ext. 2125 • Fax: 301-725-6831

Item 6.

Keith R. Sydnor
Mayor

September 5, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kyla Clark, Council President
Laurel City Councilmembers
FROM: Keith R. Sydnor, Mayor *Keith R. Sydnor*
SUBJ: Mayoral Appointments/Reappointments

I plan to make the following appointments at the September 22, 2025, Mayor and City Council meeting.

APPOINTMENTS

Stephen Slaughter	Public Safety and Transportation Committee	09/22/25 – 09/22/27
Gail Heath	Ethics Commission	09/22/25 – 09/22/28
Connor Johnson	Public Safety and Transportation Committee	09/22/25 – 09/22/27

REAPPOINTMENTS

Roy M. Smith, II	Public Safety and Transportation Committee	09/22/25 – 09/22/27
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I look forward to your confirmation of these appointments/reappointments.

ec: Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk



CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

ORDINANCE NO. 2043

TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 267

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL, MARYLAND TO AMEND THE UNIFIED LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, CHAPTER 20, "LAND DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS," SECTION 20-22.50, "INTERIM LIMITED RETAIL USES AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

Sponsored by the President at the request of the Administration.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland adopted City Ordinance No. 1702, Text Amendment No. 223, on March 28, 2011, approving a Unified Land Development Code ("Code") including all requirements for development within the City; and

WHEREAS, Section 20-22.50 of the Code addresses "Interim limited retail uses" in areas of the PDA-E zone which are "designated primarily for Industrial Research and Technology Park uses"; and

WHEREAS, within that Section of the Code, certain retail uses may be allowed as "interim limited retail uses" within the PDA-E zone as described hereinabove, some as uses permitted by right, and some as uses permitted by special exception; and

WHEREAS, uses permitted by special exception in this zone are subject to not only the conditions related to all special exceptions, and any additional conditions for certain specific uses, but also to conditions and restrictions as set forth in Section 20-22.50 related specifically to interim limited retail uses in the PDA-E zone, and which must be approved by the Laurel Board of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, Section 20-22.50 (g) states: "No special exception may be granted pursuant to this section unless an application for such special exception is made on or before August 1, 1993; and

WHEREAS, the reason for this time limitation is lost to history, and cannot now be determined; and

WHEREAS, the allowance of uses permitted by special exception in the PDA-E zone are subject to adequate oversight by the City's Department of Economic and Community Development, the City's Planning Commission and the City's Board of Appeals, and if approved, would be beneficial to the economic health of the City of Laurel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED, by the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland that the following section of the Laurel Unified Land Development Code, Chapter 20, "Land Development and Subdivision Regulations,"

Article 1, "Zoning," Division 10, "Special Exceptions," Section 20-22.50, "Interim limited retail uses," is hereby amended as follows:

Sec. 20-22.50. – Interim limited retail uses.

* * *

~~(g) No special exceptions may be granted pursuant to this section unless an application for such special exception is made on or before August 1, 1993.~~

AND, BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED, that this Ordinance shall take effect on the day of its passage.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST:

SARA A. GREEN, CPM, MMC
 Clerk to the City Council

KYLA M. CLARK
 President of the City Council

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

KEITH R. SYDNOR
 Mayor

____ *Underlining indicates new language added.*

~~_____~~ *Strikethroughs indicate language deleted.*

*** * *** *Asterisks indicate intervening language and section unchanged.*



CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

Item 9.

RESOLUTION NO. 8-2025

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL, MARYLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING PROCEDURES ON SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR THE LAUREL CITY COUNCIL

Sponsored by the President at the request of the Administration.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel (the “City”) have determined that procedures on social media use for the Laurel City Council should be established; and

WHEREAS, in *Lindke v. Freed* (2024), the Supreme Court of the United States clarified the use of social media accounts by public officials and the subject of First Amendment constraints; and

WHEREAS, social media provides a way to build community and rapidly communicate directly with stakeholders, partners, the public and the media as part of online communications; and

WHEREAS, the official City website, www.cityoflaurel.org, remains the primary and predominant public source for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City; and

WHEREAS, official and personal usage of social media by elected officials must comply with public records laws, open meetings statutes, and preserve public trust; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland have determined that the terms and conditions of the procedures on social media use for the Laurel City Council are acceptable, and are in the best interests of the City:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the procedure on social media use for the Laurel City Council attached hereto as Attachment A and incorporated herein by reference are approved, and hereby adopted.

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST:

SARA A. GREEN, CPM, MMC
City Clerk

KYLA M. CLARK
President of the City Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2025.

KEITH R. SYDNOR
Mayor



CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND CITY COUNCIL PROCEDURES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

EFFECTIVE DATE: DRAFT Revision 1.0

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This procedure is designed to support Councilmembers in navigating compliance with the First Amendment, Maryland Public Information Act, Open Meetings Act, City Election Code, and other statutory requirements. This procedure applies to the use of social media by City Councilmembers, especially when they represent themselves - explicitly or implicitly - as elected officials of the City of Laurel, Maryland through the use of title, role, or official actions. It establishes guidelines for lawful, ethical, and effective communication across official and personal accounts, with the goals of protecting public trust, ensuring transparency, and upholding legal compliance while protecting the free speech, safety, and autonomy of the Councilmembers.

DEFINITIONS

- **Social Media:** Digital platforms and applications that enable users to create, share, or interact with content and engage in social networking. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn, Nextdoor, and similar services. For the purposes of this policy, social media also encompasses blogs, newsletters, and web-based forums used for public communication.
- **Account (generally):** A social media account maintained by, or on behalf of, a Councilmember. All Councilmember accounts are created, maintained, and managed by the Councilmember and their designees. City staff do not have access to, or responsibility for, these accounts or their content.
- **Official Account:** An account used primarily for conducting City-related business.
- **Personal Account:** An account used primarily for private, non-City-related communication.
- **Campaign Account:** An account used to support election or re-election efforts, fundraising, or political advocacy. Campaign accounts are not covered by this policy.

- **Content:** Any posts, messages, comments, replies, shares, images, videos, links, or other communications created, published, or received through a social media account. This includes both original and shared material, whether public or private, and regardless of format or platform.
- **City-Related Content:** A subset of Content that pertains specifically to City community programs, services, events, meetings, legislation, policy decisions, or other official matters before the Council. City-Related Content is subject to legal requirements under the Maryland Public Information Act, Open Meetings Act, and other applicable statutes.

PROCEDURE

I. City Governance of Accounts

Councilmembers' official social media accounts and personal social media accounts are independently created, owned, and operated by the Councilmembers. The City does not govern or influence their content or use, except as necessary to enforce applicable laws and ordinances, or to protect the City's legal interests, intellectual property, and public reputation.

II. Training and Support

Training and support on the implementation of best practices and adherence to this procedure are available from the City's Departments of Communications and Information Technology. Requests shall be made through the City Clerk.

III. Use of City Branding

- A. Official Accounts may use City logos, City branding, official headshots, and imagery that implies municipal affiliation with approval from the Office of the Mayor, in accordance with the City Code Section 2-3. - City seal, City department seals and logos, official City board, commission and committee logos, and official City branding logos.
- B. Personal accounts shall not use City titles, City logos, branding, or imagery that implies City endorsement. Personal accounts may share content from official sources that contain City branding but shall retain original context and shall not imply City endorsement.

IV. Sharing, Linking, and Promotion of Accounts

- A. The City may share, link to, tag, or otherwise promote official accounts or content as detailed under this Section IV. Councilmembers may request that content be promoted by City social media accounts and outlets in accordance with City Policy 6-004.01 - Social Media.

1. The City will only share or promote accounts that meet the criteria of an official account, as defined in this procedure.
2. Shared content shall align with City values, be factual, non-partisan, and promote programs, services, or initiatives that serve the public interest.
3. Content that is campaign-related, personal in nature, or inconsistent with City policies will not be shared.

V. Official Accounts

The following section provides guidance for Councilmembers in their use of official social media accounts, supporting legal compliance and maintaining clear distinctions from personal activity.

A. Legal Compliance

Official accounts are subject to various legal requirements, the most prominent of which are:

1. **Public Records:** The Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) states that official communications, including those made by local City Councilmembers, are public records and are subject to retention, public request, and review.
2. **First Amendment & Limited Public Forum:** If an official account allows public interaction (e.g., comments) it becomes a limited public forum, subject to free speech protections for public participants. Moderation policies must be clearly disclosed, viewpoint-neutral, and carefully implemented to avoid legal challenges.
3. **Campaign Finance and Ethics Laws:** State and City laws prohibit the use of government resources for campaign purposes and regulate fundraising activities. Official accounts may not reference candidacy, endorse other candidates, or solicit campaign donations. In accordance with the City of Laurel Election Laws, Councilmembers may not publicly affiliate with a political party in connection with their candidacy or elected office. This restriction extends to content posted on official accounts.
4. **Maryland Open Meetings Act (OMA):** Councilmembers shall avoid engaging in any online communication that, directly or through serial posts, could establish a quorum on matters related to public business, as this may violate the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

B. Recommendations

1. Content on official accounts shall be retained in compliance with the MPIA.
 - a. When using a social media account to conduct public business, the Councilmember is considered the custodian of any resulting public records under the MPIA.

- b. Councilmembers maintain sole responsibility for the preservation and production of public records.
 - c. The City will provide technical and legal support to Councilmembers in the fulfillment of MPIO public records requests.
 - d. Councilmembers may opt to connect accounts to City-supported archiving platforms on request, and will be granted access to connect, access, and retrieve archived records.
- 2. Councilmembers may use official City headshots on their official accounts. Councilmembers may use City logos, branding, and other City-owned materials on their official accounts with approval from the Office of the Mayor, in accordance with the City Code Section 2-3. - City seal, city department seals and logos, official city board, commission and committee logos, and official city branding logos.
- 3. Councilmembers are encouraged to use official accounts in the execution of their office. In the use of their official accounts, Councilmembers shall:
 - a. abide by all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as well as applicable City policies.
 - b. avoid partisan content, personal promotion, or commercial endorsements on their official accounts.
 - c. not reference candidacy, endorse other candidates, or solicit campaign donations.
 - d. refrain from joining private and invite-only groups on official accounts, as doing so may restrict public access, undermine transparency, and potentially conflict with open government and public forum requirements.
 - e. not use official accounts for personal or campaign communications.
 - f. be mindful when participating in online discussions to avoid establishing a quorum with other Councilmembers.
 - g. not distribute any internal reports, drafts, or communication not formally approved for public distribution.
 - h. preserve original content, context, and links back to primary sources when sharing centrally disseminated information such as City alerts and event notices.
- 4. Official accounts shall only be used during the Councilmembers' term of office.
 - a. When a Councilmember leaves office, use of the official account shall cease, and instances of the title "Councilmember" shall be replaced with "Former Councilmember" to prevent issues of confusion, impersonation, or unauthorized communication.
 - b. Archived content shall be retained even after the account is deactivated.

5. Official accounts shall include a disclaimer and content moderation statement in their description.

Example: *This is the official social media page of Councilmember [Councilmember's Name], representing the City of Laurel, Maryland [Ward #]. The content shared here is intended for informational purposes related to official duties. Public comments are welcomed; however inappropriate content may be removed if it contains:*

- *Obscenity or sexually explicit material*
- *Threats, harassment, or hate speech*
- *Incitement to violence or criminal activity*
- *Spam, phishing, or commercial advertisements*
- *False impersonation of others or misleading account identification*
- *Personal attacks or violations of platform terms of service*
- *Content that compromises public safety, violates privacy, or discloses sensitive personal information*

If you believe that your content was moderated inappropriately, please contact [contact method].

VI. Account Security

- A. The City highly recommends the use of multi-factor authentication and limiting administrative access to trusted individuals for all types of accounts.
- B. Councilmembers are responsible for content security, moderation, and primary response to security incidents on their own Councilmember-owned accounts. The City's Department of Information Technology does not have access to Councilmember-owned accounts but will, at the Councilmember's request, assist with configuration and security incident response on Official Accounts.

VII. Personal Accounts

The following recommendations are made for the benefit of the Councilmembers in the use of personal accounts, to maintain the distinction between personal and official accounts.

- A. Personal accounts should include a disclaimer in their description that indicates that the account is a personal account.

Example: *"This is the personal page of [Name]. The views expressed here are solely my own and do not reflect the views of the City of Laurel, Maryland, its*

Council, or any affiliated entities. For City business, please follow [Official Page Name/Link].”

- B. Refrain from using City seals, logos, City branding, City headshots, or imagery that implies City endorsement or would otherwise blur the distinction between personal and official accounts.
- C. Personal accounts should not be used to conduct or discuss City-related business. Conducting or appearing to conduct City-related business on personal accounts may open those accounts to legal requirements usually reserved for official accounts.
- D. Content shared by official City sources shall retain original context and avoid implying endorsements or City affiliation.