

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.



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

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

8103 Sandy Spring Road
Laurel, Maryland 20707-2502

Thirty-Seventh Regular Meeting

Mayor and City Council

Monday, September 8, 2025

6:00 PM

Agenda

Virtual Meeting

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

Contact the Clerk for Zoom information at clerk@laurel.md.us no later than 2:00 pm the day of the meeting.

1. Call to Order – Kyla M. Clark, President
2. Roll Call- Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk
3. Approval of Minutes
 - July 28, 2025 Regular Meeting
4. Report of the Mayor and City Council
5. Mayoral Reappointments

• Marcio Da Silva	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/2025-09/08/2028
• Danielle Delgado	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/2025-09/08/2028
• Ebony Lockwood	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/2025-09/08/2028
• Jaya Persaud	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/2025-09/08/2028
• Joanne Ricketts	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/2025-09/08/2028
• Arthur Thompson	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/2025-09/08/2028

6. General Public Hearing
7. Bid Recommendation- LPD- Purchase of Tasers
8. Bid Recommendation- LPD- Handgun Replacements
9. Bid Recommendation- DPW- Snowden Place, Ward Street, and Northview Court Road Improvements
10. 2025-2030 Open Ended Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Services Contract Recommendation
11. Introduction and First Public Hearing 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."
12. Introduction and First Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2044- (Text Amendment No. 268)- 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," Article 1, "Zoning," Division 2, "Administration and Enforcement," to Add Section 20-3.7, "Validation of a Permit or License Issued in Error."
13. Introduction and First Public Hearing 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.
14. 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 5.

Keith R. Sydnor
Mayor

August 18, 2025

MEMORANDUM

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

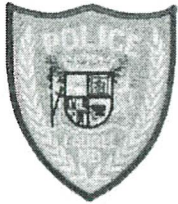
I plan to make the following appointments at the September 8, 2025, Mayor and City Council meeting.

APPOINTMENTS

Ebony Lockwood	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/25 – 09/08/28
Jaya Persaud	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/25 – 09/08/28
Danielle Delgado	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/25 – 09/08/28
Joanne Ricketts	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/25 – 09/08/28
Arthur Thompson	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/25 – 09/08/28
Marcio Da Silva	Multicultural Advisory Committee	09/08/25 – 09/08/28

I look forward to your confirmation of these appointments.

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



LAUREL POLICE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

Russell E. Hamill, III
Chief of Police

811 Fifth Street, Laurel, MD 20707-5103 • Phone: 301-498-0092
www.cityoflaurel.org/police • lpd@laurel.md.us • Fax: 410-880-0817

August 13, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Keith R. Sydnor
Council President Kyla M. Clark
Laurel City Councilmembers

Via: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator
Nekesa Matlock, Deputy City Administrator

From: Russ Hamill, Chief of Police *REA*

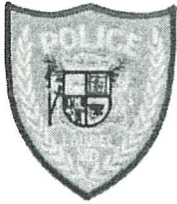
Subject: Approval Request – Taser 10's from Axon

The Laurel Police Department(LPD) respectfully requests approval for the purchase of the new model Taser 10's for use by our officers.

Project Scope:

The Laurel Police Department has been utilizing different variations of the Taser, created by Axon Enterprises Incorporated, for over 15 years. The most recent LPD contract for the Taser 7 model expired in August 2025 and we are transitioning to the most updated model, the Taser 10. This Taser 10 is the latest version of AXON's less lethal weapon platform and is an operational upgrade from our current Taser as it holds ten taser darts that can be deployed separately, greatly reducing the likelihood of our officers having to use lethal force. The taser darts can be accurately deployed at nearly twice the distance as previous Taser models (45 feet) which will allow our officers to deploy the Taser 10 from a much safer distance and position than in the past. This provides officers with more time and space to de-escalate situations before possibly resorting to higher levels of force, including lethal force. Additionally, Taser 7 and other previous models operate at 50,000 volts while the Taser 10 uses only 1,000 volts to achieve similar neuromuscular incapacitation. This reduction in voltage allows for a smaller wire and cartridges which allows for enhanced accuracy and performance.

With this new contract, The Laurel Police Department will also be receiving four Virtual Reality (VR) trainers for the Taser 10. These virtual reality trainers will be



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utilized by our training staff to conduct scenario-based training with the Taser 10. The VR trainers come with built-in scenarios and will significantly reduce the amount of live fire training that officers will need to conduct with their Tasers. The scenarios are recorded, so that when an officer completes the training, an LPD trainer can review each scenario with the officer in order to critique and improve their future performance.

Since the current contract expired in August 2025, this purchase will be made as soon as practical, if approved.

Recommended Purchase:

The Laurel Police Department respectfully recommends approval to purchase the Taser 10 and VR trainers, as noted above, for the members of the Laurel Police Department. This will be a 5-year contract that will expire in 2029. The purchase would be for 78 Taser 10 weapons as well as four VR trainers. The total cost of this agreement will be \$469,638.00, broken down in yearly payments of \$93,927.60.

Funding:

Funding for this project is available via the LPD approved budget and by transferring additional funds approved for other purchases, due to the needs and urgency noted above.

Recommendation:

It is recommended at this time that the Laurel Police Department purchase 78 of the Taser 10 from Axon Enterprise, Inc., 17800 N 85th Street, Scottsdale, Arizona for a price of \$93,927.60 per year as part of a five-year agreement. The grand total of the agreement is \$469,638.00

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please contact Chief Russ Hamill at 301-498- 0092. Thank you for your kind consideration of this matter of mutual importance.

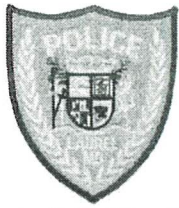
Reviewed:

S. Michele Saylor

S. Michele Saylor, Director
Department of Budget and Personnel Services

8/18/2025

Date



LAUREL POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

Russell E. Hamill, III
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August 13, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Keith R. Sydnor
Council President Kyla M. Clark
Laurel City Councilmembers

Via: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator
Nekesa Matlock, Deputy City Administrator

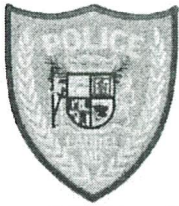
From: Russ Hamill, Chief of Police *REH*

Subject: Approval Request – Handgun(s) Purchase

The Laurel Police Department(LPD) is respectfully requesting approval for the purchase of a new handgun for use by our officers as the new standard issue sidearm for the department.

Project Scope:

LPD command staff directed Department subject matter firearms experts to conduct a review of the usefulness and effectiveness of the current department issued handgun, as well as a study for a possible replacement handgun depending on the outcome of the first step noted above. These studies have led us to the conclusion that the LPD should change to a different platform as our standard issue weapon. We also believe that prudence and safety require that this change be made in a timely manner, as soon as reasonably practicable, which leads to this current request. The study as to which new weapon platform should be adopted led to a final recommendation to consider a number of handguns, with the Walther PDP Professional Full Size 9mm Pistol, 4.5", with Dynamic Trigger, Magwell, three magazines, and ACROP2 direct mounted optics, being the preferred choice by the consensus of our subject matter experts. The preferred handguns (as outfitted above) retail for \$1,749.00 per weapon, but the manufacturer recommended dealer has agreed to sell each weapon to our department for \$933.90 per weapon.



LAUREL POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

Russell E. Hamill, III
Chief of Police

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Recommended Purchase:

The Laurel Police Department was directed to Eagle Point Gun of Thorofare, NJ, as a salespoint for the selected weapon by the manufacturer (Walther) representative. As noted above, the cost of each weapon, outfitted as noted, is \$933.90 per handgun. We respectfully request approval for the purchase of 90 of the recommended handguns at a total cost of \$84,051. It should be noted that another vendor LPD was directed to, could not supply the requested handguns in a timely fashion, leading to the recommendation of this vendor for this purchase.

Funding:

Funding for this project is available via the LPD approved budget by transferring funds approved for other purchases due to the needs and urgency noted herein.

Recommendation:

It is recommended at this time that the Laurel Police Department purchase 90 of the Walther PDP Professional Full Size 9mm Pistol, 4.5", with Dynamic Trigger, Magwell, three magazines, and ACRO P2 direct mounted, from Eagle Point Gun at 1707 Third Street, Thorofare, New Jersey, for a current purchase price of \$933.90 per handgun and a total price of \$84,051.00

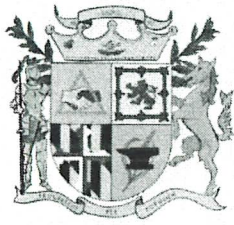
Should you have any questions or desire further information, please contact Chief Russ Hamill at 301-498- 0092. Thank you for your kind consideration of this matter of mutual importance.

Reviewed:

S. Michele Saylor, Director
Department of Budget and Personnel Services

8/18/2025

Date



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Item 9.

305-307 First Street • Laurel, Maryland 20707 (301) 725-0088

<http://www.cityoflaurel.org> • email – dpw@laurel.md.us Fax (301) 498-5266

August 15, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Keith R. Sydnor
Council President Kyla M. Clark
Laurel City Councilmembers

THRU: Nekesa Matlock, Deputy City Administrator

FROM: Timothy Miller, Director, Public Works

SUBJ: Bid Recommendation LA 26-001 Snowden Place, Ward Street & Northview Court Improvement Project

The Department of Public Works is requesting approval for awarding the contract for Snowden Place, Ward Street and Northview Court Improvement Project (LA 26-001).

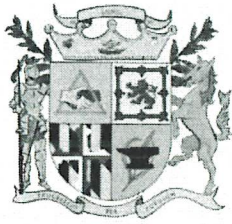
Project Scope

This project includes the construction and repair of concrete sidewalks, ADA ramps, concrete curbing, roadway markings, sign relocation and asphalt resurfacing of these streets in their entirety.

Bid Results

The Department of Public Works has solicited public bids for this project, resulting in the receipt of seven (7) submissions. A formal bid opening was conducted on August 14, 2025, at Laurel Municipal Center. The submitted bids, ranked from lowest to highest, are as follows:

1. VMP Construction, Inc.	\$202,397.00*
2. Calvert Ready Mix & Concrete Supplies LLC	\$227,355.00
3. E&R Services, Inc.	\$243,116.00
4. SFMS, LLC.	\$244,001.38
5. Espina Paving, Inc.	\$276,733.61
6. Vino Construction Group, LLC.	\$484,084.51
7. MRB Enterprise, Inc.	\$595,034.66



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL
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*Apparent Low Bidder, and the firm is a certified Minority Business Enterpriser (MBE).

Funding:

Funding for this project is available through the Adopted FY2026 Capital Improvement Program – Snowden Place, Ward Street and Northview Court Improvement Projects.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the contract for this project be awarded to VMP Construction, Inc. of Lanham MD, a certified Minority Business Enterprise, for their bid of **\$202,397.00**, with the contingency of an additional **\$20,239.00** for a total of **\$222,636.00**.

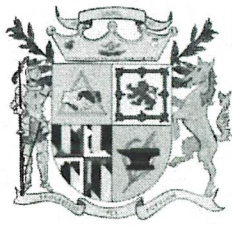
Should you have any questions or desire further information, please contact Timothy Miller at (301) 725-0088, extension 3206.

Reviewed for funding:

S. Michele Saylor, Director
Department of Budget and Personnel Services

Date

cc: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Item 10.

305-307 First Street • Laurel, Maryland 20707 (301) 725-0088

<http://www.cityoflaurel.org> • email – dpw@laurel.md.us Fax (301) 498-5266

August 15, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Keith R. Sydnor
Council President Kyla M. Clark
Laurel City Councilmembers

THRU: Nekesa Matlock, Deputy City Administrator

FROM: Timothy Miller, Director, Department of Public Works

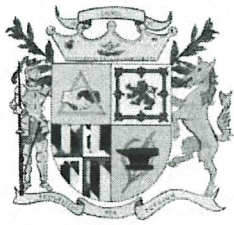
SUBJ: 2025-2030 Open Ended Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Services
Contract Recommendation

Background

The City's current open-ended A&E consultant contracts have expired as of July 1, 2025, and an A&E Selection Committee has concluded an American Public Works Association (APWA) Red Book, Fifth edition Qualification-Based Selection (QBS) for new/renewal of A&E consultants to represent the City. QBS in compliance with the Brooks Act Public Law 92-582 means that the qualifications of architect/engineer consultants are the primary determining factors in consultant selection. This has been a two-part selection. Part 1 included a request for interested A&E firms to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) Proposal that identified key staff that would work on a City contract along with their qualifications and summaries of their work. Each member of the committee reviewed their Expression of Interest Proposals from the competing firms with resultant ratings identifying a short list of five (5) candidate firms from the Fourteen (14) submissions. Part 2 included each of the five firms on the short list providing a formal presentation to the A&E Selection Committee followed by a Q & A (Questions & Answers) session resulting in the selection of the top three (3) A&E firms.

A&E Selection Committee Comprised of the following:

1. William Bailey, Director, Department of Parks & Recreation
2. Thomas Helms, Assistant Director, Department of Public Works
3. Arman Safakhah, City Engineer, Department of Public Works



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Item 10.

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Evaluation Results

Part 1 Short List with interviews:

1. KCI Technologies, Inc., Fulton, Maryland
2. Century Engineering, LLC., Hunt Valley, Maryland
3. Daniel Consultants, Inc., Columbia, Maryland
4. Brudis & Associates, Inc., Columbia, Maryland
5. A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc., Rockville, Maryland

Part 2 Top Three Selections (Final Selection):

1. KCI Technologies, Inc., Fulton, Maryland
2. Century Engineering, LLC, Hunt Valley, Maryland
3. Brudis & Associates Inc., Columbia, Maryland

Funding

All funding for the A&E Consultants will be associated with tasks assigned to each A&E Consultant and will come from the designated design/engineering portion of funds previously approved by the Mayor and City Council or from specific project funding that will be considered and approved by the Mayor and City Council prior to authorization.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Mayor and City Council of Laurel award Open-End Contracts to the top three A&E firms as selected in Part 2 above. These contracts will be for a period of four (4) years with possibility of a one (1) year extension, unless canceled by either party.

CC: Christian L. Pully, CPM, City Administrator
S. Michele Saylor, Director, Budget and Personnel Services
Danny Selby, Director, Department of Fire Marshall and Permit Services
William Bailey, Director, Department of Parks & Recreation
Monta Burrough, Deputy Director, Economy and Community Development
Thomas Helms, Assistant Director, Department of Public Works



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

ORDINANCE NO. 2044

TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 268

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," ARTICLE 1, "ZONING," DIVISION 2, "ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT," TO ADD SECTION 20-3.7, "VALIDATION OF A PERMIT OR LICENSE ISSUED IN ERROR AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

Sponsored by the President at the request of the Administration.

WHEREAS, the City of Laurel issues building, use and occupancy, and sign permits, as well as apartment licenses, for buildings and uses within the City; and

WHEREAS, all applications for said permits and licenses are evaluated by City Staff for compliance with the City's Unified Land Development Code, to assure compliance with all applicable zoning requirements and subdivision regulations; and

WHEREAS, in any such evaluation, mistakes may occur, resulting in the erroneous issuance of a permit or license; and

WHEREAS, if a mistake in the issuance of a license or permit occurs, and said issuance is not caused by fraud or misrepresentation by the applicant, the applicant has expended funds in good faith based on the erroneously issued license or permit, and certain other requirements are met, it would be inequitable to invalidate the license or permit based upon the City's error; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council has determined that in any such situation, it would be fair and appropriate for the applicant to have an opportunity to validate said license or permit, upon proof of certain requirements, as may be determined by the City Council after a public hearing on the matter; and

WHEREAS, the City's Unified Land Development Code does not currently allow for such a process, but the Mayor and City Council have determined that such a process should be included within said Code; and

WHEREAS, the Annotated Code of Maryland, Local Government Article, Title 5, Section 5-213 authorizes a municipality to enact zoning provisions within its Code; and

1

Underlining indicates new language added.

~~Strikethroughs indicate language deleted.~~

* * * Asterisks indicate intervening language and section unchanged.

WHEREAS, the Laurel City Charter, Section 316, states that the City Council has the power to “pass all ordinances, resolutions or regulations not contrary to the constitution and laws of the State of Maryland or this Charter as it may deem necessary for the good government of the city and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED, by the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland that the following sections of the Unified Land Development Code for the City of Laurel, Chapter 20, “Land Development and Subdivision Regulations,” Article 1, “Zoning,” Division 2, “Administration and Enforcement, Section 20-3.7 “Validation of a Permit or License Issued in Error” be added, as follows:

Sec. 20-3.7 Validation of a Permit or License Issued in Error.

- (1) A building, sign or use and occupancy permit, or an apartment license, issued in error may be validated by the City Council in accordance with this Section.
- (2) An application for the validation of a permit or license shall be filed with the Department of Economic and Community Development and shall contain the information which the Director of that Department deems necessary to meet the provisions of this Section. Along with the application, the applicant shall submit the following:
 - (a) A statement listing the names, business addresses and residential addresses of all individuals having at least a five percent (5%) financial interest in the subject property. If any such owner is a corporation, it shall submit a statement listing the officers and Board Members of the corporation, their business addresses, and dates of their terms, but this will not apply to any corporate owner which is listed on a national stock exchange. The above-listed requirements for owners of the subject property shall also apply to any contract purchasers of said property.
 - (b) A copy of the zoning map of the subject property and surrounding properties.
 - (c) A site plan, signed and sealed by a licensed engineer or land surveyor licensed in the State of Maryland, showing all existing improvements upon the subject property, as well as a schedule showing the number of required and provided off-street parking and loading spaces, with the location of said spaces shown on the site plan.
- (3) The Department shall transmit said application to the Planning Commission for a public hearing to be held regarding the application, along with the following:
 - (a) all materials submitted for the validation application, and all materials submitted for the permit or license at issue.

Underlining indicates new language added.

~~Strikethroughs indicate language deleted.~~

* * * Asterisks indicate intervening language and section unchanged.

- (b) A written statement explaining the facts and circumstances resulting in the erroneous issuance of the permit or license at issue.
 - (c) A copy of all relevant plans and other documents in the Department's possession regarding the permit or license at issue, and any other materials related to the property for which the permit or license was issued, e.g. permit history, land use decisions, etc.
 - (d) A copy of the zoning map of the subject property and surrounding properties.
- (4) The Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing on said application, with notice of the hearing as set forth in Section 20-4.5 of the City's Unified Land Development Code.
- (5) The Planning Commission shall render a decision as a recommendation to the City Council, upon the Commission's determination of the following criteria:
- (a) No fraud or misrepresentation was practiced in obtaining the permit or license.
 - (b) At the time of the issuance of the permit or license, no appeal or controversy regarding the issuance was pending before anybody.
 - (c) The applicant acted in good faith, expending funds and/or incurring obligations in reliance on the issuance of the permit or license.
 - (d) The validation will not be against the public interest.
- (6) The Planning Commission's recommendation, upon a majority vote taken in a public session, shall be transmitted to the City Council within five (5) working days of the date that the hearing concluded.
- (7) Upon receipt of the Planning Commission's recommendation on the application, the City Clerk shall schedule a hearing before the City Council at a specified date, time and place, and shall cause the notice of same to be published once, at the
- (8) expense of the applicant, in a paper of general circulation in the City, with said notice to include the application number; date, time and place of the hearing, a summary of the facts involved in the requested validation, and the location of the subject property. Said notice shall also be sent by the Department of Economic and Community Development to all owners of record of real property immediately adjacent to the subject property, as well as directly across any public right-of-way from the subject property. Failure of any property owner entitled to receive such mailing shall not constitute a reason to prevent or nullify the hearing on said

application. The hearing shall be scheduled at least fifteen (15) days following the date of the newspaper publication of the hearing notice.

(9) Any interested person shall have the right to submit oral or written testimony at or before the hearing; no testimony or other evidence shall be permitted to be entered into the record after the hearing is closed.

(10) After the hearing is closed, the City Council shall vote on the application in open session, and the decision shall be that of a majority vote of the City Council.

(11) The decision of the City Council may be appealed to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland.

(12) Any building, structure or use for which a permit issued in error has been validated by the City Council shall be deemed a nonconforming building or structure, or a certified nonconforming use, unless otherwise specified by the City Council when it validates the permit. The nonconforming building or structure, or certified nonconforming use, shall be subject to all provisions of Chapter 20, Article 1, Division 11 of the City's Unified Land Development Code

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

PASSED 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

____ Underlining indicates new language added.

~~Strikethroughs~~ indicate language deleted.

* * * Asterisks indicate intervening language and section unchanged.



CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

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.