



**LIVING IN  
MT LAUREL  
HANDBOOK FOR RESIDENTS**

*Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association  
Homeowners Advisory Committee  
2022*





# LIVING IN MT LAUREL

## HANDBOOK FOR RESIDENTS

Nestled beside Double Oak Mountain in the Dunnivant valley, Mt Laurel was planned by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, the originators of the New Urbanism movement, and developed by EBSCO Development Company. It has been crafted to preserve the beautiful landscape of the area with tree-lined streets, numerous green spaces, common areas, and hiking trails. Mt Laurel was designed to foster community by having a town center, wide sidewalks and front porches.

## INSIDE THE HANDBOOK

### THE MT LAUREL STORY

#### WHAT MAKES MT LAUREL SPECIAL

- The Character of Mt Laurel*
- The Commons: Amenities, Parks & Natural Areas*
- Mt Laurel's Town Center*
- Dunnivant valley: Greenway & Small Area Plan*
- The Streets of Mt Laurel – What's In A Name?*
- Did You Know? Fun Facts About Mt Laurel*
- Events, Gatherings & Groups*

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION & CONTACTS FOR MT LAUREL & THE AREA

#### WHAT EVERY HOMEOWNER NEEDS TO KNOW

- Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Management*
- Homeowners Advisory Committee, Covenants, Design Review*
- Website, Vehicle Registration, Amenity Keys*
- Frequently Asked Questions, Homeowner Alerts*
- Contacts For Water, Gas, Electric*
- Schools, Emergency and much more*



## THE MT LAUREL STORY

Although Mt Laurel is a town of buildings, roads, sidewalks, and natural beauty, its most important component is the civic infrastructure that fosters strength of relationships among its residents.

Great communities don't just happen. They are the direct result of traditional town planning principles. The vision of Mt Laurel's founder was to create a Traditional Neighborhood Development with a core value of walkability to promote a community spirit. Another core value envisioned by the founder was a respect for nature in the town planning and building practices and in safeguarding the existing trees.



Rip Weaver, Mt Laurel's original Town Landscape Architect, played an integral part in the early days of planning, creating, and building the Town of Mt Laurel. He currently serves on Mt Laurel's Design Review Board. The following is Rip's recollection of some of the earliest days of design & construction in Mt Laurel.

### DESIGNING A NEW TOWN IN CONCERT WITH NATURE RECOLLECTIONS FROM RIP WEAVER

In the summer of 1998, Elton Stephens, Jr., son of EBSCO founder, Elton B. Stephens, brought together the world-renowned planning firm Duany, Plater-Zyberk (DPZ), along with prominent local architects, engineers, landscape architects, planners, arborists, scientists and other interested individuals for an intensive design session called a charrette. Their assignment was to design a new town on 6000 acres of EBSCO property on the slopes of Double Oak Mountain in Shelby County. During that two week charrette, the team created the Town Plan for Mt Laurel on a model reminiscent of Birmingham suburb Mountain Brook.

Mt Laurel was to be a "Traditional Neighborhood Development," following concepts DPZ was developing at the time. Like the Birmingham communities we studied, the plan provided for a town center of commercial and civic buildings serving the broader Dunnivant Valley community, but within walking distance of the town's residential districts. It also included a system of parks and recreational amenities interconnected with the residences by broad sidewalks and woodland trails. Homes were set close to sidewalks and always had porches to encourage conversations and promote a sense of community. Mt Laurel was planned to be a walkable community before that phrase became commonplace.

The public's response to the Town Plan for Mt Laurel was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. After presenting the vision DPZ and the charrette team created, founder Elton Stephens, Jr. assembled a design and construction team and charged us with the following set of 'Guiding Principles.' The founder's directions are still alive today in the form of the Mt Laurel Design Code. Here is what we were asked to accomplish.

*Continued on next page*



## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE MT LAUREL PLAN**

- Protect the land AND implement the Town Plan. The two work hand in hand.
- Make the new town “look like it has always been here,” in terms of both the built and the natural environments.
- Look to Redmont, Southside and Mountain Brook for patterns we can apply in the planning, site development and architecture of the new town.
- Keep Mt Laurel IN Mt Laurel. Utilize the rich resources of stone, trees, and native plants present on the site to build the new town.
- Make the houses look as if they’ve fallen from the sky. Adapt the architecture of individual houses to fit the site (rather than the other way around).
- Save as many trees as possible. Use existing trees and native plant materials to preserve and then to reinforce the natural landscape as the last step in construction.

## **COLLABORATIVE DESIGN PROCESS**

The collaborative design process is shown in the attention to the unifying details of site and home. The English Arts and Crafts architectural style was selected for Mt Laurel, as were options for elements such as masonry, siding, roofing, windows and doors which would reflect as “authentic.” The exterior color palette was selected to offer color combinations that exist naturally on the site including leaves, lichen, ferns, colorful rocks, twigs, even soil found on the property by the design team.

The accumulated effects of careful site planning, traditional architectural character, native materials used to build walls and foundations, the colors chosen for the architecture, and the native landscape planting all combined to make the design successful. There is even an engineering marvel in the form of the large Keystone retaining wall that holds beautiful Spoonwood Lake on the side of Double Oak Mountain. As a result, the Town of Mt Laurel is one of the most awarded developments ever in Birmingham real estate. It was unique upon conception and remains unique today.

## **THE VOCABULARY OF TOWN PLANNING**

**CHARRETTE** - an intense design process held over a short period of time, in the presence of those affecting and affected by the outcome.

**DESIGN CODES** - guidelines that delineate the architectural and landscape elements allowed in the overall master plan.

**PUBLIC REALM** - the environment you experience and see as you walk, often described as an outdoor room with the streets as a floor, the buildings as walls, and the tree canopy as the ceiling.

**TRIP CAPTURE** – decreasing automobile trips by creating walkable neighborhoods and communities that incorporate shopping, recreation, jobs, schools, churches and entertainment.

**SENSE OF PLACE** - a feeling created by the assemblage of a set of elements. These include building types and functions and streetscapes. The design codes of Traditional Neighborhood Developments are conceived towards the creation of a sense of place.





## THE CHARACTER OF MT LAUREL

### SIDEWALKS, PORCHES AND DESTINATIONS



Wide sidewalks, front porches, small yards and neighborhood “destinations” make Mt Laurel a very special place to live. There are no expansive grassy lawns and long driveways to isolate people from one another. And there are places to go, usually by foot or golf cart. Neighbors see neighbors every day.

What are the destinations in Mt Laurel? The naturally beautiful ones are scattered all over – Spoonwood Lake, Bryson Square Arboretum, Abbott Square, Turtleback Park, Olmsted Park, the community garden and Maverick’s Dog Park, to name a few. The pool, racquet courts, Mt Laurel Library, two schools, a church, shops, restaurants, and businesses are popular destinations, also. Mt Laurel’s designers planned it this way, so neighbors would cross paths frequently and become a community. There’s a destination within a five-minute walk from every house.

### IN CONCERT WITH NATURE

Mt Laurel was also created to be “in concert with nature” to reflect the characteristics of the Appalachian foothills flora. With its location in the Dunnavant Valley at the foot of Double Oak Mountain, the Mt Laurel landscape features native plants and trees in a relaxed woodland setting, rather than a structured design of grass and formal plantings. It’s the perfect setting for a walkable community.

### A COMMUNITY SPIRIT

#### A LIBRARY, A DOG PARK, A GARDEN

A community spirit has been present in Mt Laurel since its founding in 1998. Dedicated Mt Laurel residents have enhanced the neighborhood with a library, a dog park, and a community garden. A grassroots effort (that later expanded to include nearby Dunnavant Valley area residents) raised funds to build the Mt Laurel Library on property donated by EBSCO Development. Landscape and design services for the library were donated by Mt Laurel residents.

The Maverick Dog Park, named in memory of one of Mt Laurel’s early furry residents, is another labor of love established by Mt Laurel neighbors, led by Ted Kluz. The Mt Laurel Community Garden was originally founded by a group of Mt Laurel residents and eventually moved to its current location on Kessler Avenue on property provided by EBSCO Development, where it is maintained by community volunteers.

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

#### GATHERINGS, NEWSLETTER, HOAC

Mt Laurel residents love to be outdoors, so festivals and community events are a special part of life in Mt Laurel. Spring and Fall Festivals with arts, crafts, music and food, a July 4 parade, Easter egg hunts, and lake activities are Mt Laurel traditions. The lighting of the outdoor Christmas tree and Santa’s arrival, followed by treats at the library has been another long-time Mt Laurel happening.

Residents can read all about these and other activities in *The Mt Laurel Connection*, a bi-monthly newsletter “for and about the Town of Mt Laurel.” It was established in 2009, to feature news, events and personal stories about Mt Laurel and its residents. The newsletter is funded by Mt Laurel Homeowners Association funds.

The Homeowners Advisory Committee (HOAC), made up of homeowner representatives, meets regularly with the Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association Board and has an advisory role in helping manage the affairs of Mt Laurel.



## **THE COMMONS: AMENITIES, PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS**

### **ABBOTT SQUARE**

The park, which is enclosed by Abbott Square, Hawthorn and Burnham Streets, is named for Stanley William Abbott who designed the Blue Ridge Parkway that connects the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Shenandoah National Park.

Two semi-circular arbors form a giant sundial enveloped with muscadine grape vines and shade trees. Chairs and tables provide a perfect place for relaxation and small group activities. The design received a Merit Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

### **BURNHAM WOOD**

Starting at the corner of Olmsted and Burnham Streets, Burnham Wood is a pathway to Mt Laurel Avenue. The area is a good example of the natural landscape of the Dunnavant Valley/Double Oak Mountain ecosystem.

### **SPOONWOOD GLEN**

This is a lovely area located below the spillway of Spoonwood Lake Dam. It's accessible from the lake area and also from various walkways on Mt Laurel Avenue. The area extends on either side of Spoonwood Creek in the flood plain leading to County Road 41. Mountain laurel grows throughout the area.

### **COMMUNITY GARDEN**

The Mt Laurel Community Garden, located on Kessler Avenue, features a combination of vegetables and native plants. Volunteers plant and maintain the garden each year for the benefit of residents.

### **TURTLEBACK PARK**

Turtleback is one of the few "man made" areas in Mt Laurel. It is bordered by Nolen and Burnham Streets and L'Enfant Way. The grassy hill was created using soil excavated from road construction. The western side of Double Oak Mountain, which is a double ridge mountain forming one of the southernmost foothills of the Appalachian Mountain range, is a beautiful backdrop for events at Turtleback. Adjacent to this area is a trailhead for the Mt Laurel Nature Trail that connects to Spoonwood Lake.

### **CONCRETION MEWS – "DINOSAUR EGG PARK"**

Concretion Mews, informally named Dinosaur Egg Park by residents, is a natural area between Nolen and Hawthorn Streets. The stone gardens were created from unusual rocks found in Phase III. The stones have large streaks of iron ore running through them. Concretions are naturally smoothed – perfect for climbing.

### **CAIRNS (JOURNEY MARKERS)**

Cairns, or journey markers, in Mt Laurel designate common walkways through the neighborhood. Traditionally, cairns are piles of rocks used to pass along information. They've been found on every continent and have been used for centuries. Usually, they are found in multiples, as they are in Mt Laurel where they connect pedestrian ways between homes, as well as Spoonwood Lake and the Mt Laurel Nature Trail.

### **BLUEBIRD TRAIL**

Bluebird houses were first installed throughout Mt Laurel in 2011 as a project of the Mt Laurel Garden Group. Additional houses have been added through the years. There are several around the lake road, near Turtleback, and in almost every area of the neighborhood.





## **THE COMMONS: AMENITIES, PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS**

### **SPOONWOOD LAKE**

“Spoonwood” is a nickname that Native Americans gave to mountain laurel, a broadleaf evergreen shrub they used for making spoons. The lake was created in a 13-acre valley by constructing a dam. A hiking trail with fitness stations surrounds the lake. Mt Laurel invests more than \$12,000 a year to maintain the lake, beach, and surrounding area.

The lake is a private keyed amenity for residents and their accompanied guests.

Hours are dawn to dark.

Homeowners’ boats must display a registration sticker. Gasoline powered boats are prohibited.

Fishing guidelines are posted.

Complete Rules and Regulations may be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).

### **MT LAUREL POOL**

The pool is a private keyed amenity for residents and their accompanied guests.

Pool hours are 8 AM to 8 PM.

Pool rules are posted on the bulletin board inside the gate.

### **MAVERICK’S PARK – MT LAUREL’S DOG PARK**

Mt Laurel’s dog park is named after Maverick, the beloved dog of the park’s founder Ted Kluz.

The dog park is a private keyed amenity for residents and their accompanied guests.

Waste receptacles are provided, along with a water source.

### **TENNIS & PICKLEBALL COURTS**

Tennis and pickleball courts are located on Kessler Avenue, near the community garden and dog park.

### **MT LAUREL BASKETBALL COURT**

The basketball court is a private keyed amenity for residents and their accompanied guests. Rules for use of the court are posted.

### **BRYSON SQUARE AND ARBORETUM**

Bryson Square is a gathering place in the town center for residents. Bryson Square Arboretum, which features native plants, is located behind the square’s rock wall. In 2019, the Bryson Square Arboretum was dedicated to the memory of John Freeman who served for many years as Mt Laurel Town Manager and Vice President of EBSCO Development. The arboretum is cared for and maintained by the Mt Laurel Garden Group.

### **OLMSTED PARK**

Olmsted Park and Olmsted Street are named for Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of landscape architecture in America and the designer of New York City’s Central Park. The park features a tot play area, an all-ages playground and a large sports field.

### **OLMSTED WETLANDS**

This area is located behind Olmsted Park and the dog park and extends along the north side of Olmsted Street to a common area between Hawthorn and Burnham Street bridges. This wetland plays a vital ecological role as a natural filter for water that runs off community streets and parking areas.

# Mt Laurel's Common Spaces Pedestrian Paths and Markers



Common Spaces  
Pedestrian Paths  
Markers (Cairns)



## Common Spaces

- |                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Town Square                 | 6 Abbot Square                        |
| 2 Arboretum                   | 7 Olmsted Park                        |
| 3 MT Laurel Ave Natural Areas | 8 Burnham Wood                        |
| 4 Spoonwood Glen              | 9 Concretion Mews (Dinosaur Egg Park) |
| 5 Spoonwood Lake              | 10 Turtleback Park                    |



## MT LAUREL'S TOWN CENTER

Mt Laurel's Town Center offers retail shops, restaurants, professional services, a fire and rescue station, a church, two schools and a library – all within walking distance from Mt Laurel homes.







## DUNNAVANT VALLEY AREA



### DUNNAVANT VALLEY GREENWAY AND PARKS

The Dunnavant Valley Greenway Trail runs 1.8 miles along Yellow Leaf Creek – just a short drive down Highway 41 from Mt Laurel. The trail is accessible from a parking lot on Highway 41 or at the Sports Blast soccer fields on US-280. Hikers cross two pedestrian foot bridges near the beginning of the trail and then pass several rapids and cascades. Sandy areas are found in a number of spots along the trail where visitors can diverge from the trail and into the stream. The trail ascends and descends a number of small hills, most of which are covered in large rocks. The trail area is filled with mountain laurel blooms in the spring.

The Greenway was developed through the cooperative efforts of the Friends of Dunnavant Valley Greenway and Shelby County. The Friends organization worked with the County to conserve the natural rural beauty of the Dunnavant Valley and encourage responsible development based on the values of Traditional Neighborhood Development, smart growth and a respect for nature. Mt Laurel residents Ward Tishler and Scott Prescott have been instrumental in the development of the Greenway.

Shelby County has two beautiful parks in the area, close to Mt Laurel: Dunnavant Valley Park on 10 acres with a playground and Double Oak Park, which spans 750 acres with trail running, walking, hiking, biking and back-country horseback riding trails.

### DUNNAVANT VALLEY SMALL AREA PLAN

The Dunnavant Valley Small Area Plan, completed in 2013, is an outcome of Shelby County's innovative Comprehensive Plan, A Path to the Future. The Small Area Plan represents a centralized support hub for residents of Mt Laurel, Dunnavant Square, Village at Highland Lakes, US Highway 280/County Road 41 and State Route 25/County Road 41. The Plan addresses current and foreseeable issues facing the Valley by formulating a vision and a list of goals, objectives, and implementation strategies intended to benefit residents, businesses, stakeholders, and visitors of Dunnavant Valley.

A steering committee for the Plan was established representing members from throughout the Valley, from U.S. Highway 280 to State Route 25. Community workshops were held where attendees identified issues they considered the main concerns. The committee drafted goals, objectives and strategies to address the results of public input and community issues. The County has worked with the community to guide implementation of the Plan in the Dunnavant Valley. The Plan will be reviewed periodically to update and determine the effectiveness of strategies.

The Dunnavant Valley Small Area Plan can be found on the Shelby County website:  
[www.shelbyal.com/Departments/Development Services/Partnerships and Planning Projects](http://www.shelbyal.com/Departments/Development%20Services/Partnerships%20and%20Planning%20Projects).



## THE STREETS OF MT LAUREL

### What's in a name?

Do you know the history behind the name of the street where you live? Mt Laurel's streets, in most cases, honor a great person of American city planning or architecture.



**ABBOTT SQUARE** is the namesake of William Stanley Abbott, the landscape architect who designed the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Parkway is a 469-mile National Scenic Byway connecting the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina to Shenandoah National Park in Virginia.

**BURNHAM STREET** honors Daniel Burnham, an urban planner and architect who designed the plan for the city of Chicago, and worked with Frederick Olmsted on the 1893 Columbian Exhibition.

**CROFT STREET'S** name was inspired by the word "croft," which is defined as a small enclosed plot of land that is worked by a farmer or family who lives in an adjoining dwelling. Mt Laurel designers named Croft Street to reflect the live/work units that are located in the town center.

**DOWNING DRIVE** recognizes Andrew Jackson Downing's influence on American landscape and design. He was the editor of *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*.

**DOGWOOD COURT** is a cluster of Southern Living designed cottages. Four Hillstone Cottages form the center and four Woodbury Cottages surround them. The courtyard is filled with dogwoods, native blueberries and mountain laurels.

**ELYTON DRIVE** is named in honor of the Elyton Land Company, which founded the city of Birmingham on June 1, 1871, during the period of post-Civil War reconstruction.

**HAWTHORN STREET** is named after the hawthorn tree, a beautiful shade tree with showy flowers, which eventually produce an apple-like brilliant red pome fruit in fall that is enjoyed by a variety of animals.

**KESSLER AVENUE** was named after George Kessler, who was a pioneer in city planning and landscape architecture. His work can be found in 23 states, including Kansas City's Hyde Park.

**L'ENFANT WAY** is named after Pierre Charles L'Enfant who designed present day Washington, D.C. He planned the capital city so that important buildings are placed in locations of prominence based on the topography of the land.

**MANNING PLACE** is named after Warren H. Manning, one of the founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects. In 1919 he came to Birmingham and created a new design for the Mountain Brook area that emphasized parks and town centers or villages. The Birmingham plans became English Village, Mountain Brook Village, and Crestline Village. The Town of Mt Laurel reflects many of these ideas.

**MT LAUREL AVENUE** is named after mountain laurel, a native broadleaf evergreen shrub in the blueberry family. Its lovely bell shaped blossoms, which can vary from white to deep pink, appear in late spring.

**NOLEN STREET** gets its name from John Nolen, a noted landscape architect and city planner. Nolen approached projects with a desire to blend urban life with the beauty of nature.

**OLMSTED STREET** is named for Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of the profession of landscape architecture in America. He is best known for creating Central Park in New York City and other urban parks. He also worked to protect wilderness areas such as Yellowstone.

**PERRY PLACE** bears Clarence Arthur Perry's name, an American urban planner. Perry was known as the "Father of the Neighborhood Unit" concept.



## **DID YOU KNOW?** *Fun Facts About Mt Laurel*

### **STREET LAMPS POINT DOWN**

It's dark here at night – and that's on purpose. Mt Laurel enjoys a star-filled sky, free from light pollution because the street lights face down to illuminate the walkway, not the sky. The lamp posts are prominent and vintage in style with special glass globes to produce a soft light. Try the lake or Turtleback for stargazing.

### **NATURAL LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVE PLANTS**

Mt Laurel is designed to be “in concert with nature.” The homes and yards of Mt Laurel are designed in a natural setting, and all landscaping visible from the public way is required to be native. The Mt Laurel Landscape Regulations may be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com). Also, the Mt Laurel Library has an outstanding Native Planting and Landscape Book Collection available for checkout. Interested in learning more? Join the Mt Laurel Garden Group.

### **HOW MT LAUREL FOSTERS A SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

The design of the Mt Laurel neighborhood fosters a sense of community by providing many opportunities for residents to meet neighbors. This is done through wide sidewalks and small yards with no long driveways; front porches, green spaces and pocket parks; the town center with shops and restaurants; and the library, church and schools. It's easy to meet and greet in Mt Laurel!

### **AGES AND STAGES**

Mt Laurel has houses of many different sizes which results in having families of different ages and stages living in the neighborhood. Many residents are in their second or third house in Mt Laurel – upsizing and/or downsizing. There are many multigenerational families living in Mt Laurel.

### **THE MT LAUREL LIBRARY IS A BRANCH OF THE NORTH SHELBY LIBRARY.**

It was built by private donations from area residents on land donated by EBSCO Development.

### **STONEWORK IN MT LAUREL**

Mt Laurel harvests stone from its mountain area to construct the stone walls throughout the neighborhood.

### **HILLTOP MONTESSORI SCHOOL HAS BEE HIVES.**

The students have won awards for their honey.

**THERE ARE MANY BIG FISH IN SPOONWOOD LAKE.** Mt Laurel invests over \$12,000 a year to maintain the lake and surrounding area. The lake is scientifically managed to grow trophy-sized bream and large mouth bass, some over 10 pounds.

### **MT LAUREL COOKBOOKS ARE FOR SALE AT THE LIBRARY.**

### **TURTLEBACK IS A GREAT PLACE FOR SLEDDING IN THE SNOW.**

**MT LAUREL WAS DESIGNED BY THE SAME FIRM THAT DESIGNED SEASIDE, ALYS BEACH AND ROSEMARY BEACH.**







## EVENTS, GATHERINGS AND GROUPS



### **SPRING FESTIVAL – APRIL    FALL FESTIVAL - OCTOBER**

Festivals for residents and visitors that fill the streets with arts, crafts, food and music have been a long-standing tradition in Mt Laurel.

### **INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE AND CELEBRATION**

Mt Laurel residents decorate bikes, strollers, and golf carts, or simply don their celebration attire for a parade through the Town Center. The festivities usually include a picnic at Olmsted Park.

### **FARMERS MARKET**

A Saturday farmers market and craft fair is held on Manning Place from 8 AM until noon during the spring, summer, and early fall months.

### **LAKE EVENTS**

Crawfish boils, fishing contests and other events are frequently scheduled at Spoonwood Lake.

### **CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING AND TREATS IN THE LIBRARY**

Neighbors gather in Bryson Square on an early December Sunday for the lighting of the Mt Laurel Christmas tree and Santa's arrival, followed by hot chocolate and treats at the Mt Laurel Library.

### **MONDAY MIXER**

Monday Mixer is an informal gathering of neighbors every Monday morning at 9 AM. Come socialize with your neighbors and get updates on what's happening in Mt Laurel. If you would like to be on an email list to receive info on special plans and meeting locations, email Vicki Balogh at [vickibalogh@gmail.com](mailto:vickibalogh@gmail.com).

### **MT LAUREL GARDEN GROUP**

The Garden Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month at various locations in the interest of learning about native plants and landscaping and serving Mt Laurel through various projects. The group meets around town and often off-site in gardens or places of interest in the area. Some of the ongoing activities of the group include maintenance and care of the Bryson Square Arboretum, establishing and caring for the Mt Laurel bluebird houses and assisting with the Community Garden. If you would like to be on an email list to receive information about upcoming meetings and activities, contact Cathy Murphy at [cathlourmur@aol.com](mailto:cathlourmur@aol.com).

### **LADIES NIGHT OUT**

Ladies Night Out meets once a month in residents' homes. Times and locations are listed in the newsletter and on Nextdoor.

### **MT LAUREL BOOK CLUB**

The Mt Laurel Book Club is based at the Mt Laurel Library and is open to all residents of the Dunnavant Valley area. Guys and gals who love to read meet on the first Thursday of the month. The reading list for the club may be found at [www.mtlaurellibrary.org](http://www.mtlaurellibrary.org). Contact Emily at the library at 205-991-1660 if you would like to receive email reminders and updates about the group's activities.



## **AT WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY**

### **EBSCO DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**

EBSCO Development Company (EDC) is the developer of Mt Laurel, and has developed both the Mt Laurel Town Center and the residential phases, as well as the common areas, amenities, and infrastructure. As developer, EDC manages the Design Review Board, facilitates home site sales, represents the Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association Board, and implements the Mt Laurel Master Plan and future development.

### **MT LAUREL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

The Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association (MLNA) supports a range of services and activities for the community and funds a deferred maintenance reserve. The areas of Mt Laurel designated as the “The Commons” are maintained by the association for the benefit of all homeowners. These include amenities, parks, and natural areas.

Prior to the start of each year, the MLNA estimates the expenses for carrying out its responsibilities, which the board then adopts as an annual budget. More details about the association’s functions and financials are listed at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).

### **NEIGHBORHOOD MANAGEMENT, LLC.**

The Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association has engaged Neighborhood Management, LLC to provide management services for Mt Laurel. This includes administration of the association’s finances, collection of homeowners’ dues, disbursement of funds according to the annual budget and maintaining contracts reflected in the monthly balance sheet and income statement. Neighborhood Management, LLC is the first line of contact for residents regarding covenants and restrictions, reporting concerns about the common areas, complaints, questions about dues, keys for amenities, and vehicle registration.

205-877-9480  
[mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org)

### **HOMEOWNERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Homeowners Advisory Committee (HOAC) exists to enhance communication between the developer and property owners and to create a forum for exchanging ideas and information. The HOAC meets monthly with the MLNA Board and has an advisory role in helping manage the affairs of Mt Laurel.

The HOAC is made up of representatives who chair the following subcommittees: Amenities, Landscape, Covenants, and Outreach (Events and Communication). These representatives together serve as the Budget Committee.

*The current members of the HOAC are listed on [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).*



## LIVING IN MT LAUREL HANDBOOK FOR RESIDENTS

### CODES, COVENANTS AND RESTRICTIONS

In an effort to preserve the character of Mt Laurel and protect the aesthetic appeal of properties in Mt Laurel, we have the Codes, Covenants and Restrictions (CCRs), Landscape Regulations, a Design Code and a Design Review Board in place. Property owners should familiarize themselves with the CCRs and Landscape Regulations before beginning any exterior changes to a home, structure or yard and contact the Design Review Board for approval.

*Access the full Covenants and Landscape Regulations on the neighborhood website at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).*

*An overview of the Rules and Regulations is included in this handbook.*

### MT LAUREL DESIGN CODE

The Mt Laurel Design Code prescribes the pattern of design and construction that characterizes our Traditional Neighborhood Development. All new homes and all exterior improvements to existing homes must be approved by the Mt Laurel Design Review Board (DRB).

*Access the Design Code, Color Manual, Fence Regulations, Private Pool Regulations, Landscape Regulations, Approved/Prohibited Plant List, Design Review Forms on the neighborhood website at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).*



### LANDSCAPE REGULATIONS

The Landscape Regulations direct residents in using native plants as the primary landscape palette for Mt Laurel in order to preserve and protect the natural landscape and topography of the Double Oak Mountain ecosystem. All landscape plantings visible from the public way are required to be native.

Access the complete Landscape Regulations on the neighborhood Website at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com). A list of approved and prohibited plants is included on the site.

The Mt Laurel Library has an outstanding Native Planting and Landscape Book Collection available for checkout.





## LIVING IN MT LAUREL HANDBOOK FOR RESIDENTS

# MT LAUREL NEIGHBORHOOD WEBSITE

## A RESOURCE FOR ALL THINGS MT LAUREL

[www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com)



### **LIVING IN MT LAUREL**

*Handbook for Residents includes information on amenities, groups, activities and events, and important contact information.*

### **NEWSLETTER**

### **CALENDAR**

### **COVENANTS**

*Overview of Covenants*

*Full Covenants*

### **DESIGN CODE**

*Design Code Summary*

*Design Review Forms*

*Color Manual*

*Fence Regulations*

*Private Pool Regulations*

*Landscape Regulations*

*Approved/Prohibited Plant Lists*

### **MLNA FINANCIALS**

*General Information*

*Annual Budget*

*Financial Statements for Members*

*Proposed Budget for Upcoming Year*

### **VEHICLE/BOAT DECAL REGISTRATION**

### **PAY DUES**



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT LANDSCAPE, EXTERIOR COLORS, FENCES, POOLS?**

Visit [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com) to find links regarding these details.

### **HOW DO I REGISTER MY CAR OR BOAT?**

Registration forms are available online:

Visit [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com) to download the form.

Email or mail form to Neighborhood Management at [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org)

Neighborhood Management, 2700 Highway 280, Suite 425W, Birmingham, AL 35223.

Call 205-877-9480 with questions.

### **WHOM DO I CALL TO VOICE CONCERNS OR MAKE SUGGESTIONS?**

Neighborhood Management, LLC is the first line of contact regarding codes, covenants and restrictions, reporting concerns about the common areas, keys for amenities, vehicle registration and questions about association dues. Neighborhood Management is available at 205-877-9480 or [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org).

The Homeowners Advisory Committee (HOAC) is your link to the Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association. Questions or suggestions? Contact your HOAC representatives. Contact Information for the HOAC representatives may be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com). The HOAC Committees include the following:

- Landscape Maintenance
- Amenities
- Outreach: Events/Communications/Welcome
- Covenants
- Budget

### **HOW DO I SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THE EBLAST NOTICES AND NEWSLETTER?**

To receive eblasts Submit your email address to [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org).

The Mt Laurel Connection is delivered to your home bimonthly. It's also available online at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com). Send news and information to [mtlaurelnews@gmail.com](mailto:mtlaurelnews@gmail.com).



## HOMEOWNER ALERTS

*From the Design Review Board*



### DESIGN REVIEW FORMS

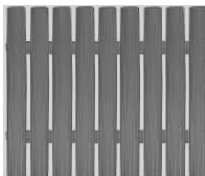
Mt Laurel's Design Review Board (DRB) exists to protect the aesthetic appeal and character of properties in Mt Laurel. Property owners should familiarize themselves with the design code (CCRs) of Mt Laurel before beginning any changes to a home, structure or yard. Examples include painting, adding a new fence, deck, porch or patio, or changing the exterior appearance of your home.

The Mt Laurel Design Code, Landscape Regulations, and Design Review Forms may be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com). Contact Neighborhood Management at 205-877-9480 or by email at [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org) with questions or concerns.



### TREE REMOVAL RESTRICTIONS

Landscaping and trees are a large part of the charm and history of Mt Laurel. Trees should only be removed if absolutely necessary. The removal of trees on any resident's property must be approved by the Mt Laurel Design Review Board (DRB). ***Trees removed without the DRB's approval could result in the owner being fined.***



### FENCE CONSTRUCTION, REPLACING, STAINING

Want to construct, modify or replace a fence at your home? Residents must be granted approval to do so by the Mt Laurel Design Review Board (DRB). For new fences, a site plan must also be submitted showing the location of the proposed fence. If needed, a member of the DRB may be available to meet on site to help identify the best fencing solution for your home.



### SIGNS IN YARD

No signs or advertising posters are permitted (except for one "For Sale" sign of approved style) without express written permission.



### EXTERIOR PAINT COLORS

Homeowners or builders wishing to paint the exterior of their homes must submit the intended color to the Design Review Board for approval. A color manual may be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com). **DO NOT ASSUME** that just because an existing home has been painted certain colors that those colors will be approved for future use.







# CONTACTS

FOR MT LAUREL

&

THE DUNNAVANT VALLEY AREA



# LIVING IN MT LAUREL HANDBOOK FOR RESIDENTS

## KNOW YOUR MT LAUREL ABCs

EDC	Mt Laurel's Developer	HOAC	Homeowners Advisory Committee
NHMLLC	Neighborhood Management	CCRs	Codes, Covenants & Restrictions
MLNA	Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association	DRB	Design Review Board
ARC	Mt Laurel's Real Estate Team	LR	Landscape Regulations

## MT LAUREL CONTACTS

### NEIGHBORHOOD MANAGEMENT

Neighborhood Management is the first line of contact regarding covenants and restrictions, reporting concerns about the common areas, keys for amenities, vehicle registration and questions about association dues.

Neighborhood Management 205-877-9480 [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org)

### MT LAUREL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

205-877-9480 [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org)

### HOMEOWNERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This committee, made up of Mt Laurel residents, meets regularly with the Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association Board and has an advisory role in helping manage the affairs of Mt Laurel. Contact information for the committee chairmen may be found at [mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://mtlaurelneighborhood.com). The committees include the following:

- LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE
- AMENITIES
- OUTREACH/EVENTS/WELCOME
- COVENANTS
- BUDGET

### NEIGHBORHOOD WEBSITE [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com)

By creating a user name and password, residents have access to homeowner documents, such as Design Review Board (DRB) forms, Covenants and Restrictions, Rules and Regulations, and Landscape Guidelines. Homeowners may also access the Condo Café to pay homeowner dues by hitting the "Pay Dues" button on the website.

### CODES, COVENANTS AND RESTRICTIONS

Complete Codes, Covenants and Restrictions (including Rules and Regulations) governing Mt Laurel are available online at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com). A summary/overview highlighting the most common areas of concern to homeowners is also available online and may be found in this handbook.

### LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

All Mt Laurel home landscaping that is visible to the common roads must be native species. Any site improvements or changes must be approved by the Design Review Board. The Landscape Guidelines may be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).

### EBLASTS AND NEWSLETTER

Eblasts from the Town of Mt Laurel are sent periodically by email as special announcements for residents. To receive Eblasts, submit (or update) your email address to Neighborhood Management at [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org). *The Mt Laurel Connection* is a bi-monthly newsletter for residents. Send news and photos to [mtlaurelnews@gmail.com](mailto:mtlaurelnews@gmail.com).



## LIVING IN MT LAUREL HANDBOOK FOR RESIDENTS

### *Mt Laurel contacts – continued*

#### **DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

The DRB exists to protect the aesthetic appeal and character of the properties in Mt Laurel. Changes to a home, structure or yard – including fences, paint colors, adding a deck porch or patio - must be approved by the DRB.

Design Code and Forms [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com)

Questions Neighborhood Management [mtlaurel@nhmlc.org](mailto:mtlaurel@nhmlc.org) or 205-877-9480

#### **AMENITY KEYS, CAR, GOLF CART AND BOAT REGISTRATION**

The pool, basketball court, racquet courts, Spoonwood Lake and dog park have keyed entrances for Mt Laurel residents and their accompanied guests. Questions about vehicle registration, decals, and keys should be directed to Neighborhood Management 205-205-877-9480 [cbooth@nhmlc.org](mailto:cbooth@nhmlc.org).

### **OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS**

<b>EMERGENCY</b>	911
<b>SHERIFF</b>	Non-Emergency 205-670-6000
<b>FIRE</b>	911 Cahaba Valley Fire District
<b>GARBAGE</b>	Waste Management 855-852-7110

#### **YARD DEBRIS COLLECTION** First and Third Mondays

Landscape Workshop Questions – Neighborhood Management 205-877-9480

Limbs: Cut 4 feet long or less & 6 inch diameter or less. Place plants, leaves & small sticks in bags.

#### **SHELBY COUNTY SERVICES BUILDING HWY 280/DUNNAVANT VALLEY ROAD**

Provides access to drivers license, sheriff, water department, Shelby 911, and more.

[www.shelbyal.com/481/280-Shelby-County-Services-Building](http://www.shelbyal.com/481/280-Shelby-County-Services-Building)

**ELECTRIC** Alabama Power - Report an outage 800-888-2726

**SHELBY COUNTY WATER SERVICES** 205-670-6540

**GAS** Spire Energy 800-292-4008

**VOTING SITE** Shoal Creek Subdivision

#### **SHELBY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

205-682-7000 [www.shelbyed.k12.al.us](http://www.shelbyed.k12.al.us)

**HILLTOP MONTESSORI SCHOOL** 205-437-9343

**DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH** 205-995-9752

**MT LAUREL LIBRARY** 205-991-1660 [www.mtlaurellibrary.org](http://www.mtlaurellibrary.org)





# OVERVIEW

## MT LAUREL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Mt Laurel Covenants, Codes and Restrictions (CCRs) protect the value of our homes and community by preserving the town’s character and promoting the quiet enjoyment of our unique neighborhood. This overview provides a guide to some of the most common areas of concern. The complete CCRs, including the Rules and Regulations, the Design Code, and the Landscape Regulations can be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).

### THE MT LAUREL LOOK

The Mt Laurel Design Code and the Landscape Regulations apply to existing homes and yards to help preserve the character of Mt Laurel and maintain “the Mt Laurel Look.” These documents set standards for maintaining property in an “attractive and safe condition.” The Design Review Board (DRB) is in place to administer these requirements.

### EXTERIOR APPEARANCE OF THE HOME

*A homeowner must obtain DRB approval before beginning any work that alters the exterior appearance of the home.*

DRB approval is required prior to beginning any maintenance work or improvement that alters the exterior appearance of an existing home. Even if exterior finishes are replaced with matching products, DRB review is advisable because the existing products may not comply. Examples include the following:

EXTERIOR PAINTING	NEW DOORS AND WINDOWS	AWNINGS OR SUNSCREENS	ANTENNAS OR SATELLITE DISH
REROOFING	REPLACEMENT SIDING	ADDITIONAL HVAC EQPT.	WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS PROHIBITED
ADDITIONS OF ANY SORT	REPLACEMENT TRIM, RAILINGS	GENERATORS	ANY OTHER EXTERIOR ALTERATION

### YARDS: FRONT, SIDE AND BACK

*DRB approval is required for any work that substantially alters the appearance of an existing yard: front, side, or back.*

**TREES** DRB approval must be secured prior cutting any tree with a trunk diameter of two inches or more.

**FRONT AND SIDE YARDS** must be landscaped and maintained in a loose, natural style using only native trees and other plant materials listed in the Landscape Regulations. Examples of alterations that are acceptable in front and side yards with prior approval from the DRB:

SIGNIFICANT RE-GRADING, REPLANTING, OR RE-LANDSCAPING	NEW OR REPLACEMENT FENCES AND GATES
ALTERATIONS/ADDITION OF STONE WALLS OR RAISED PLANTERS	ALTERATIONS/ADDITION OF WALKWAYS, STAIRS, HARDSCAPES

**REAR YARDS** requirements are less restrictive and certain non-native plants listed in the Landscape Regulations may be used. When properly screened from street views, the following types of work may be acceptable in rear yards only. Prior approval from the DRB is always required.

SWIMMING POOL, HOT TUBS, FOUNTAINS	PATIOS & DECKS WITH OUTDOOR FURNISHINGS
TURF GRASSES	OUTDOOR KITCHENS, BBQ GRILLS, FIRE PITS
VEGETABLE AND HERB GARDENS	DOG HOUSES AND DOG RUNS
PLAY EQUIPMENT	YARD ORNAMENTS, BIRD BATHS, SCULPTURE

**CONTAINER PLANTINGS** Non-native plants are acceptable in front or rear yards when planted in a loose, natural style, and only when confined to pots or raised planters.

**INVASIVE PLANTS** listed in the Landscape Regulations are prohibited anywhere and must be removed.

**YARD SIGNS/SEASONAL DISPLAYS** Yard signs of all types are prohibited. American flags are acceptable. Spirit banners may only be displayed during game weekends. Seasonal holiday decorations may be displayed for a maximum of 30 days after the holiday.

**EXTERIOR LIGHTING** No exterior flood lighting of structures or landscaping is permitted. String lights are permitted only in rear and side yards. Residents are encouraged to turn off string lights when outdoor spaces are not in use.

*Continued on next page*



## MT LAUREL STREETS, COMMON AREAS, AMENITIES RESPECT FOR NEIGHBORS

*The Mt Laurel Rules and Regulations have provisions on how residents use the common areas and interact respectfully with their neighbors. This Overview highlights some of the most common areas of concern. The complete Rules and Regulations can be found at [www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com](http://www.mtlaurelneighborhood.com).*

### SPEED LIMIT AND PARKING

**SPEED LIMIT** The speed limit in Mt Laurel is 15 MPH. Residents must observe the traffic laws as well as other government regulations. Golf carts may be operated in Mt Laurel by drivers 14 years or older.

**ON-STREET PARKING** On-street parking is permitted except where prohibited by yellow “No Parking Fire Lane” pavement markings. There are no assigned on-street parking spaces. Recreational vehicles, boats, trailers, machinery and inoperable vehicles may not be parked on the street and must be stored in an enclosed garage. Overnight parking for golf carts must be in a garage or rear yard.

**MT LAUREL VEHICLE DECALS** Residents’ autos, light trucks, and golf carts must display a Mt Laurel decal issued by the Mt Laurel Neighborhood Association (MLNA). Contact the property manager to obtain a decal. *Off-road three and four wheelers, dirt bikes and go-carts are prohibited.*

### PETS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Residents are limited to a maximum of three dogs or cats. Dogs must be kept on a leash and may not roam freely. Poop must be scooped. Dogs must not be allowed to make an unreasonable amount of noise.

### NUISANCES: TRASH AND DEBRIS, NOISE

Yard or construction debris must not be allowed to accumulate. Noise (music, etc.) may not be audible outside of homes between 10 PM and 9 AM. Noise-producing yard and construction equipment may not be operated before 8 AM.

### MT LAUREL’S LOCKED AMENITIES

*Mt Laurel’s locked amenities are for the exclusive use of residents and their guests. All others, including guests not accompanied by a resident, may be asked to leave. A copy of a rental lease must be filed with MLNA in order for a renter to use the amenities.*

**SPOONWOOD LAKE, SWIMMING POOL, RACQUET COURTS, BASKETBALL COURTS, AND DOG PARK** may only be accessed using a key issued by the MLNA. Residents must follow the rules posted at each amenity. Spoonwood Lake is open from dawn until dark and the pool from 8 AM until 8 PM. Lifeguards are not provided, so residents swim at their own risk. Lake users under 14 and pool users under 12 years must be accompanied by an adult. Boats at the lake must display a MLNA decal, which can be obtained from the property manager.

### NOTES ON COMPLIANCE

Mt Laurel Town Management conducts regular inspections to check for compliance with the CCRs. Homeowners will be notified of any violation in writing and asked to correct the problem. Shelby County Sheriff’s deputies conduct patrols to monitor the common areas and amenities during certain periods. Residents with questions or concerns should contact the property manager, Catherine Booth, at [cbooth@nhmlc.org](mailto:cbooth@nhmlc.org) or call 205-910-6598.