Walden's Ridge Civic League Report
to the Town of Walden August 17, 2026

Thank you for allowing us to report on recent developments at the Walden's Ridge Civic League (WRCL.)

An announcement that our property has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places was made on June 13 at *America 250/Birthday Bash,* celebrating the 250th birthday of the United States and the 105th anniversary of the construction of the auditorium. Historic records reaffirm the auditorium's roll in serving the needs of the mountaintop community from 1921 till today. In honor of its original purpose, the building is now officially recognized as the Walden's Ridge Civic Center. A new sign over the front door and a National Register plaque commemorate the name established by the Board of Directors and members at the Quarterly Membership Meeting on April 16, 2026.

Though the WR Civic Center and the WR Civic League seem almost synonymous, the League is a 501(c)3 charitable organization with a ten-member Board of Directors who oversee the 3.46-acre property with the Civic Center, Women's Guild building, Communications building, Pavilion, Boy Scout stage, soccer field, walking track, and playground. The Civic Center facilities are available for free use by the community and for rent to individuals. Rentals have increased this summer, providing welcome revenue.

America 250/*Birthday Bash* was quite successful and attracted a standing-room only crowd to the patriotic program and play by Peggy Douglass. Dignitaries from Walden, Hamilton County, TN Congress, TN Senate, TN Historical Commission, and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County America 250 Committee were honored. The double-birthday party generated some income which is badly needed to continue our programming and improvements to the facilities. We also appreciate a contribution of $5,000 from the Town of Walden.

In an important step toward archiving historical records of the Civic League, Reed Price, a graduate of SMHS headed to Chattanooga State, volunteered at WRCL as a TN Promise student through tnAchieves.org. He gave 14 hours to OCR scanning WRCL typewritten minutes dating from October 4, 1926, to November 8, 1979, and he invested 2 hours in keyboarding some handwritten minutes. These records are now electronically searchable and will be a boon to researchers. Plans are to provide the records to Chattanooga Public Library and to the University of TN at Chattanooga, since both institutions have requested access to the material.

Volunteers have almost finished installing new siding on the Civic Center south side and are ready to turn the corner and continue on the west side. We

continue to seek donations of white oak logs to cut and mill into lumber. We need boards 11' 6" long, and we would appreciate the Town's help in looking out for potential trees that might qualify.

John Stone's Boy Scout Eagle project to construct a floor over the old Boy Scout cabin foundation is complete. The new platform served as an excellent site for a musket firing demonstration at the *America 250* celebration. Axel Apablaza is working earnestly on his Eagle Scout project of landscaping using native plants. WRCL welcomes such services and encourages anyone who has an idea for a project to present it to the Board.

We are still asking for donations of woodworking equipment such as table saws, joiners, and planers for crafting Adirondack chairs this winter when the volunteer crew pauses siding installation. The chairs will be made from the white oak that is too short for siding, turning otherwise unusable lumber into another asset. Volunteers will build the chairs in the Communications building which on the Historic Register and was built in 1953. It served as the original Walden Town Hall when the Town took a ten-year lease from WRCL @ $1.00/year after the Town incorporated and before the current Town Hall was built in 1993.

We invite you to come and see, not only our new building sign and National Register plaque, but also our new flag pole and permanent installation of a replica of the Liberty Bell near the Civic Center front door. The bell, made by Siskin Steel, is a gift from the Chattanooga/Hamilton County America 250 Committee. In July, Rick Harris graciously donated the flag pole that now stands between the Pavilion and the Civic Center. Larson Mick gave us an American flag to complete the gift. These special symbols of America will always help WRCL remember this outstanding commemorative year.

Our next free community event is the BBQ Contest and Music Fest, *Smoke on the Mountain*, Saturday, October 3rd from 11:00 AM till 8:00 PM. Contestants vie to see who makes the best BBQ on Signal Mt., while others enter the Anything but …BBQ contest to see who can please the most taste buds with their tasty entries. Winners of both competitions are awarded prizes. This year, BBQ and Ribs can be pre-ordered for take home. Attendees can look forward to some great bands playing under the big tent loaned to us by Bachman Community Center. Please visit our website for more information.

The next Quarterly Membership meeting is also the Annual meeting, Thursday, October 15 at 7:00 PM in the Civic Center. Everyone is welcome. If you aren't already a member of the Civic League, you can join at the BBQ or at the quarterly meeting. Hope to see you there.