

## Walden's Ridge Civic League Report to the Town of Walden August 13, 2024

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

First in importance is to invite you and all your neighbors to come and learn who is the team with the Best BBQ on Walden's Ridge. The now famous *Smoke on the Mountain* BBQ Contest and Bluegrass Festival extends over two days – Friday, September 20, from 4 - 8 PM, and Saturday, September 21, from 11 AM - 8 PM. Murphy Ridge and Blue Cumberland are among those who will be playing bluegrass music both days.

There are two contests: First, entrants to our local BBQ Cook-Off have a chance to win prizes, earn bragging rights, and showcase their grilling skills to the community. Entry blanks and information are on our website [www.waldensridgecivicleague.org](http://www.waldensridgecivicleague.org). Registration opened August 1, and we hope to have a full line-up by September 1. All the first-place winners from the previous two years are participating, so the competition should be fierce and the BBQ outstanding. This year you can order Pork Butts in advance through the website and enjoy the specially smoked meat at home even after the weekend festival is over.

Second is the Anything but BBQ...Contest highlighting your best sides, dessert, or whatever you think deserves to be at a family cookout. Anyone can enter; no entry form is needed. There will be prizes for the winners who are chosen by festivalgoers who taste samples. Entries are accepted at 11 AM on Saturday.

At the Quarterly Membership meeting on July 18, members decided to begin a Membership Drive. Members help decide the policies, procedures, and future of the League. Back in 1929, membership dues were set at \$1.00 – when a dollar was a dollar. That same fee structure was retained for almost 100 years as a token to the founders. Today's members think it reasonable to set a more practical figure. They voted to increase dues to \$20.00 per voting member and promote membership in the Civic League by offering 25 free tickets for activities at the Birthday Bash on June 22.

Our Birthday Bash celebrating the 103<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Auditorium's construction was a success – even overcoming almost 100-degree temperatures that Saturday. The Signal Mountain Lions Club cooked great food, music continued through the day, and the kids really had a wonderful time on the six inflatables. We worried a bit because we had not promoted water features, but parents were kind and let their kids play on the water slides. There were many wet, tired, and happy youngsters, and we look forward to hosting everyone again next summer.

Thanks in part to the success of the Birthday Bash fundraiser, and our new membership drive, we are able to make some much-needed improvements to the property. We plan to have the south porch and ramp leading to the Mr. Opry annex completely reconstructed to proper building codes in time for our guests at *Smoke on the Mountain*.

Through the generous cooperation of Wayside Presbyterian Church and some local builders, WRCL is closing in on having enough white oak trees to saw into lumber for siding the Auditorium. This is a very exciting development. About three-quarters of the lumber needed is already in a controlled dehumidification kiln in the basement. We are being careful with donations by sawing our own lumber, encapsulating the drying area ourselves, and doing everything we can to conserve our resources. When the time comes, we hope volunteers can help with the siding installation too.

The pace of the project is controlled by consideration of our application for the National Register of Historic Places designation. No changes to the building will be made until that process is completed, even though the replacement siding will replicate the original siding which was board and batten.

Membership in the Walden's Ridge Civic League is open to all residents of Walden's Ridge. As a member you have a say in the direction and future of the League. We invite everyone to join and to volunteer. We need volunteers to help at *Smoke on the Mountain* and our three other seasonal events, and volunteering provides a great opportunity to make new friends and have fun while preserving and growing an important part of our community.

Karen Stone, WRCL Publicity & Membership Chair