

CITY OF LAUREL
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



CRAIG A. MOE
MAYOR

Executive Order No. 2023-04

Subject: Display of Flags Policy

Effective Date: October 1, 2023

The City of Laurel desires to establish clear guidelines regarding the outdoor display of the United States Flag, the Maryland State Flag, and the City of Laurel Flag at City facilities, City-owned and or City-maintained flagpoles, and the display of flags at the City of Laurel Municipal Center and, Mayor & City Council Chambers.

In adopting this Policy, the City desires to reflect the dignity of the flags placed on flagpoles or displayed at City-owned or City-maintained facilities as an inclusive gathering location and local symbol of government and democracy.

The City of Laurel Display of Flags policy attached shall be followed starting from the effective date mentioned above.

A blue ink signature of Craig A. Moe, written in a cursive style, is positioned above a horizontal line.

Craig A. Moe
Mayor

Attachments: City of Laurel Display of Flags Policy

Received and filed September 27, 2023

A blue ink signature of Sara A. Green, written in a cursive style, is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sara A. Green, CPM, CMC
City Clerk

CITY OF LAUREL DISPLAY OF FLAGS POLICY

I. Purpose

A. The City of Laurel desires to establish clear guidelines regarding:

- The outdoor display of the United States Flag, the Maryland State Flag, and the City of Laurel Flag at City facilities, City-owned and or City-maintained flagpoles; and
- The display of flags at the City of Laurel Municipal Center and, Mayor and City Council Chambers.

B. In adopting this Policy, the City desires to reflect the dignity of the flags placed on flagpoles or displayed at City-owned or City-maintained facilities, as an inclusive gathering location and local symbol of government and democracy.

C. The City declares that flagpoles owned or maintained by the City of Laurel are not intended to serve as a forum for free expression by the public, but rather as a non-public forum for the display of the United States, State of Maryland and City of Laurel flags. Any commemorative flag to be flown over 30 days shall be authorized by resolution of the Mayor and City Council as an expression of the City's official sentiments.

II Policy

- A. Conformance with Federal and State Regulations. Flags shall be displayed in accordance with Federal and State statutes and regulations, including, but not limited to, United States Code, Title 4, Chapter 1 and Maryland Government Code, Public Safety Article, §1-202(e) *Annotated Code of Maryland.*, and this Policy.
- The Maryland State Flag Protocol states that the Flag of the United States and the Flag of the State of Maryland shall be prominently displayed upon or in front of public buildings; in this case it would be City of Laurel buildings.
 - The United States Flag may only be flown at half-staff in accordance with the guidelines set forth at www.usa.gov/flag. The City of Laurel Flag shall be flown at half-staff if the United States Flag or State of Maryland is flown at half-staff or on order of the President or Governor.

B. City Facilities and properties owned or maintained by the City of Laurel where there may be flagpole(s) where Flags are, may be flown as described in Section II.

III. Commemorative Flag

a. As expression of the City's official government speech, the Mayor and City Council may authorize the display of a commemorative flag to fly at any City facility by way of a City Resolution if it is to be flown longer than 30 days.

b. The Mayor and City Council shall only consider a request to display a commemorative flag if the request is made by a member of the City Council, an organization or member of the general public. The City Council President agrees to place the discussion to authorize such display on the agenda for a regular or special City Council meeting.

c. At a City Council meeting, a majority of Council Members must agree to display the commemorative flag by way of adoption of a Resolution.

d. The Mayor may approve a commemorative flag be displayed for a period of time that is reasonable or customary for the subject that is to be commemorated, but no longer than thirty (30) consecutive days.

e. Commemorative flags must be either purchased by the City or temporarily donated for the City's use and must be clean, without holes and tears, and be made of an all-weather fabric. Commemorative flags must be the same size or smaller than the United States and Maryland flags that are flown. The City will not be responsible for the condition of the commemorative flag once flown.

f. If any other flag is flown at half-staff, the commemorative flag will also be flown at half-staff.

g. The commemorative flag shall be flown on the flagpole in front of the Municipal Center only. The commemorative flagpole is the pole shorter than the other two flag poles.

g. A "commemorative flag" as defined in this Policy shall mean a flag that identifies with a specific historical event, cause, nation or group of people that the City Council chooses to honor or commemorate consistent with the City's mission and priorities. The following are not allowed as Commemorative Flags and will not be considered by the City Council:

- i. Flags of a particular religious movement or creed to avoid the appearance of City government endorsing religion or a particular religious movement or creed shall not be displayed;
- ii. Flags of a political party to avoid the appearance of City government endorsing a political party; and
- iii. Flags advocating a certain outcome in an election.

IV. Procedures

A. No other flag shall be placed above the United States Flag and no other flag shall be larger than the United States Flag. Other flags may be flown at the same height and in the same size, in accordance with this Policy. Where both the United State Flag, Maryland State Flag, and the City of Laurel Flag are flown, they shall be of the same size.

B. Flags should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously. The United States Flag should be hoisted first and lowered last.

C. Flags shall be displayed during operating hours on all days on which the City is open for business, and on national and State holidays. Flags may be displayed twenty-four (24) hours a day as long as they are illuminated during darkness.

D. Flags shall not be displayed during inclement weather unless all-weather flags are used and are illuminated during darkness.

E. When flags are displayed on a single pole, the order from top to bottom shall be the United States Flag, the Maryland State Flag, and the City of Laurel Flag.

F. When the flags are flown from adjacent flag poles, the United States Flag shall be flown at the highest point of honor, which is the furthest point to the left from the standpoint of the observer ("the flag's right").

G. When a flag is displayed at half-staff, it shall first be hoisted to the peak for a moment and then lowered to half-staff position. Before being lowered at the end of the day or when taken down, the flags shall again be hoisted to the peak for a moment and then fully lowered.

V. Exempt Commemorative Flag

A. The City has days throughout the year that are official City of Laurel sponsored events/celebrations/special events where a Flag may be flown on these planned occasions.

B. These occasions include PRIDE Day Celebration, Independence Day Celebration, POW/MIA, or other similar types of events.

C. The City Administration is authorized to approve other events that are either sponsored or co-sponsored by the City.

D. These Commemorative Flags shall be flown on the City Commemorative Flagpole.

VI. Council Chambers

A. The Flags in the Council Chambers shall be in proper condition and held on proper flag poles.

B. All Flags shall be in proper order and follow the flag protocol for each.

C. The Flags to be displayed shall be the United States of America flag, the State of Maryland Flag, Prince George's County Flag, the City of Laurel Flag, the Blue Star Military Flag and the Maryland Municipal League's Banner City Flag.

D. From time-to-time other flags may be added or removed but that will be the decision of the Mayor or the City Administration.