



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: July 2, 2019

Contact: Morgan Lasater, Community Engagement Manager

mlasater@BurlingtonNC.gov

(o) 336.222.5073 (c) 336.693.2964

Burlington Arboretum at Willowbrook Park Veterans Overlook Sculpture is Underway

BURLINGTON, NC — As our nation is celebrating its Independence Day this week we are excited to announce that renderings are complete and fabrication has begun of a sculpture for the Burlington Arboretum Veterans Overlook. This sculpture will honor the five major military branches. This Overlook will stand on the site of the former American Legion Building on the corner of West Willowbrook Dr. and South Church St. and will serve as the entrance to the new Burlington Arboretum.

In 2017 New Leaf Society purchased the American Legion property, Walther B. Ellis Post, to be included in the arboretum design. The arboretum is being developed in partnership with City of Burlington and New Leaf Society and will feature paved walking trails, a children's garden, restrooms, new noble trees and plant collections covering 11 acres. This is a \$2.5 million project that will be gifted to the City of Burlington upon completion.

Col. Wm. V. Copeland, then a first lieutenant, was with Sgt. Ellis when he died. He described "Our calm, courageous leader and mold of men died as he had lived: facing the enemy as he had faced all the obstacles of life—a soldier among soldiers and a man among men." Sgt. Ellis was the first casualty from this area in WWI and our Legion Post 63 is named in his memory.

New Leaf Society wishes to retain the history of the former American Legion Post that occupied this site since 1931. Therefore, a committee of local veterans was charged with assisting in the design of this space to be a suitable tribute to all service members. The group determined that this project would not be a memorial to the fallen or of past wars. Instead, it would be designed as a tribute to honor and recognize all military service, past, present and future.

Randal Romie, Landscape Architect, worked with the committee to create a design that is uplifting and one that would serve as the entrance to and a focal point for the arboretum. The Plaza is to be constructed on the highest elevation in the park. [Ed Walker](#), CEO of Carolina Bronze Sculpture and a Burlington native, was commissioned to design a sculpture that would instill a sense of pride among veterans and the public. As a result, the bronze sculpture to be placed in the plaza will stand 7 1/2 feet tall with an American eagle in full flight, lifting an American flag and has a wingspan of 7'. It will stand on an 88" foot hexagon base that has a bronze seal representing each of the five major military branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. Mr. Walker recently produced the Elon University Phoenix Sculpture located at the Schar Center.

The New Leaf Society is proud to add this addition to Willowbrook Park and the Arboretum. It is our hope it will remind all visitors of the men and women that answer a call of duty to their county. Rett Davis, President New Leaf Society.

The Veterans Overlook will feature the sculpture in the center of a large patio with the flags of the United States and North Carolina on each side. Seating will surround the patio. Visitors will enter the arboretum through the Veterans Overlook from the adjoining parking lot which will be handicap accessible.

New Leaf Society is a private, non-profit organization focused on beautification and community partnerships in Alamance County. Currently, their highest profile project is the partnership with the City of Burlington to create the Burlington Arboretum at Willowbrook Park. Fundraising efforts are ongoing for the Veterans Overlook. Individuals wanting to learn more about New Leaf Society's fundraising initiative can contact Janice Burgess, New Leaf Treasure, at 336-264-6287. For more information about the project, go to <http://burlingtonnc.gov/willowbrook>.

ATTACHED: Rendering of the plaza and sculpture

###

Our Mission:

"The City of Burlington is dedicated to providing high quality municipal services within our diverse community in a friendly, professional and efficient manner in order to promote the safety, health, and quality of life of residents and employees."

Burlington Municipal Building • 425 South Lexington Avenue, Burlington, NC 27215
www.BurlingtonNC.gov • www.Facebook.com/BurlingtonNC • Twitter [@BurlingtonNC](https://twitter.com/BurlingtonNC)
www.Flickr.com/BurlingtonNC • Instagram [@BurlingtonNC](https://www.instagram.com/BurlingtonNC)