

ORDINANCE NO. 1791-2026

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF LAUREL CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 8.3 CEMETERIES, PROHIBITING THE BURIAL OF HUMAN REMAINS ON PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY; ESTABLISHING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS; AND PROVIDING FOR RELATED MATTERS

WHEREAS, the City of Laurel has a compelling interest in protecting public health, safety, and the welfare of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the unregulated burial of human remains on private property poses risks of groundwater contamination, soil degradation, and potential public health hazards; and

WHEREAS, the City finds it necessary to regulate the disposition of human remains within its jurisdiction in a manner consistent with state law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAUREL THAT CHAPTER 8.3 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF LAUREL IS HEREBY AMENDED BY ADDING A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER 8.4

PROHIBITING BURIAL OF HUMAN REMAINS ON PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

SECTION 1. PURPOSE AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this Ordinance is to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of City of Laurel by prohibiting the burial of human remains on private property within the City limits.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Ordinance:

(a) "Human remains" means the body of a deceased human being, including cremated remains (ashes) unless stored in a sealed container above ground.

(b) "Private property" means any parcel of land within the City limits that is not designated, licensed, and operated as a cemetery under applicable state law.

(c) "Burial" means the interment or disposition of human remains in or on the ground.

(d) "Licensed cemetery" means any cemetery duly established, licensed, and operating in compliance with Mississippi law and applicable regulations.

SECTION 3. PROHIBITION

(a) No person shall bury, inter, or cause to be buried or interred the human remains of any deceased person on any private property within the City limits.

(b) This prohibition applies to all private property regardless of zoning classification, including but not limited to residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial parcels.

SECTION 4. REQUIRED DISPOSITION

All human remains of persons dying within the City, or brought into the City for disposition, shall be interred, entombed, or cremated only at a licensed cemetery, mausoleum, crematorium, or other facility lawfully authorized under Mississippi law.

SECTION 5. EXCEPTIONS This Ordinance shall not apply to:

(a) Burials in licensed cemeteries located on property that was historically used as a cemetery prior to the effective date of this Ordinance, provided such operations remain in compliance with state law.

(b) The scattering of cremated remains on private property by the owner of said property, provided such scattering does not constitute interment in the ground and is otherwise lawful.

(c) Archeological or forensic activities conducted under the authority of a governmental agency or court order.

SECTION 6. EXISTING UNLAWFUL BURIALS

Any person with knowledge of a burial on private property made in violation of this Ordinance, or any predecessor regulation, shall report such burial to the City within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Ordinance or within thirty (30) days of discovery, whichever is later. The City may, at its discretion, require the lawful disinterment and reburial of such remains at the expense of the responsible party.

SECTION 7. ENFORCEMENT

(a) The City's Code Enforcement Officer, Health Officer, or their designees are authorized to enforce this Ordinance.

(b) Upon reasonable cause to believe a violation has occurred, the City may seek an inspection warrant, issue a notice of violation, or pursue any remedy available under law.

SECTION 8. PENALTIES

(a) Any person who violates any provision of this Ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be subject to a fine not to exceed \$100.00 per

ATTESTED AND SUBMITTED TO THE MAYOR BY THE CLERK OF THE COUNCIL
ON

JULY _____, 2026.

COUNCIL

CLERK OF THE

APPROVED () DATE _____

VETOED ()

DATE _____

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

Min. of 7/21/2026; Min. Book No. 105, Page _____; Agenda Item No. 4F