

The FAIR OAKS Gazette

May 2016

Volume 6 Issue 5



NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF FAIR OAKS RANCH

From the Mayor's Desk...

"Every Day is a Good Day in Fair Oaks Ranch"©

This May issue reminds us that one-third of the calendar year has passed...quickly I might add. The rains of April were plentiful and often difficult. The City police and public works department took quick actions to ensure safety of our residents with appropriate road closures. Hail of various sizes left its mark in Fair Oaks Ranch as well as the San Antonio/Boerne areas. Yes, the rains feed the groundwater resources that you and I use on a daily basis.

COUNCIL ACTIVITY

The search for a permanent City Administrator is moving through the process toward a final decision soon. The recruiting firm brought seventeen good candidates out of forty five applicants for the open position. The seventeen were reduced to eight strong potential applicants. After reviewing additional information, Council again reduced to four for personal interviews on a Friday with two invited back the following Saturday. At this time, serious discussions and negotiating with one of the two is occurring. The upcoming May 5th Council meeting will go into Executive Session to discuss the contract with City Attorney.

Council approved the Tree Preservation Plan for Schott's Country Store commercial development at IH 10 and Leslie Pfeiffer as well as approved the sign variance request to install a 45' sign on access road of IH 10. In addition, the final plat was also approved.

City Administration and Council want to move forward with an experienced professional consultant to evaluate and re-evaluate the City's Land Use Plan/Map, Comprehensive Plan as well as associated planning and development initiatives for zoning, subdivision regulations updating, utility extension policies, assessment of water and wastewater infrastructure, etc. No final action taken yet. Cost is anticipated at \$130,000.

Council approved a \$500 donation to the 201st Military

Intelligence Battalion for its 2016 holiday party.

Council approved a Resolution adopting a Citizen Volunteer Wildlife Education Committee Charter and appointing committee members to the Wildlife Education Committee. The committee will need some time to develop educational curriculum with white-tail deer its initial goal.

Council also approved amending current ordinance to now have "no feeding" of deer at any time and that becomes effective October 1, 2016. (The Ordinance was "no feeding" when city management activities were active, such as trapping when permitted by Texas Park and Wildlife.)

Council approves Resolution authorizing a Home Rule volunteer opportunity announcement, establishing a Home Rule commission volunteer application and setting an application submission deadline. The plan is to mail out the application to the residents.

Reminder: there are now two monthly Council meetings – 1st Thursday of each month at 9:30am and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00pm. Also, all Regular Council meetings are recorded.

Other Activities

Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) did approve TXDOT's project to expand Ralph Fair Road/3351 within the next 4 years. The expansion area is from IH10 up to Old Paso Rd. on 3351 and will expand the road to 4-lanes. There was no financial contribution on this section from the City. I anticipate TXDOT will enter another portion of Ralph Fair next year when AAMPO is accepting new projects.

Early May, Texas Forester/Certified Oak Wilt Mark Duff will do a visual inventory of the City for oak wilt issues. He is very familiar with our City's concerns, previous oak wilt findings, etc. In addition,

(Continued on Page 2)

FAIR OAKS RANCH

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ARTICLE INFO

The Fair Oaks Gazette is mailed monthly to all Fair Oaks Ranch area residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the Fair Oaks Gazette, please email it to fairoaksranch@peelinc.com. The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

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From the Mayor's Desk (Continued from Cover)

there is a potential Oak Wilt Educational Town Hall scheduled for June 30, 2016 in the evening.

Not only is "election" a hot topic on the national level, it is in Fair Oaks Ranch as well. The only contested race for this year's election is the Mayor's seat. For those of you who receive the FO Gazette on-line, early voting continues May 2nd and 3rd with Election Day, May 7, 2016 at City Hall.

This may be my last writing as your Mayor, and if it is...please know that serving you, the residents of Fair Oaks Ranch, is a special privilege that you, the voters, entrusted me with for many years. I strive to treat everyone with respect whether it is a complaint or a complement.

You deserve such. I strive to see a topic from many sides and how it affects the residents as a whole. You deserve such. I strive to keep our City as one that continues to achieve versus one that decides to stand still and implodes. You deserve such. Do not accept anything less...it is your investment at stake.

Respectfully,

Cheryl Landman, Mayor

210-698-0900

mayor@fairoaksranchtx.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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COMMUNICATIONS

CEDAR MYTHS DEBUNKED

I am frequently hired to help clients approach development of their raw tract of land they recently purchased. Without exception, I encounter surprise and curiosity when I strongly discourage removal of all the cedar (correctly called Ashe Juniper – it is not in the cedrus family). The most common misconceptions I encounter go as follows:

1. Cedar isn't a native tree right?

Ashe Juniper is actually a Texas native tree, which was found mostly in mountainous rocky areas (i.e.: the common name Mountain Juniper). Also, it was found in locations where natural fires or fires ignited by the Native Americans did not spread to.

2. Cedar is a very invasive tree!

Ashe Juniper is a successful native plant that is unchecked in reproduction, when the natural cycle (which includes fire) is significantly altered by human efforts. The reasoning of this argument would also conclude that Live Oaks are also invasive. Due to the lack of fires and the avoidance of removing any oaks during clearing of land, we now have the catastrophic consequence of interconnected roots across the entire hill country and the capacity of the oak wilt fungal virus wiping out the vast majority of our Live Oak trees. Historically, our oak motts were much fewer and mostly separated from one another preventing the devastation we now experience.

3. Cedar is a water hog and is sucking all the water out of my land.

Ashe Juniper is actually one of the most efficient water users in our entire cadre of native trees. It is usually the last species to die in a drought. It grows very successfully in places like Junction and Rock Springs, where few other species are able to grow. It is true they are evergreen, but the amount of water they require per diameter inch is less than a Live Oak. I say this not to advocate for the removal of all Live Oaks by any means, rather to show the reasoned conclusion of removal of Live Oaks will also decrease significantly the absorption of water from the ground by a tree species! The fundamental fact behind the shade value of trees to land is this: the Sun exponentially more than any amount or type of plant, causes the desiccation of the soil. Use of a tension-meter in an Ashe Juniper copse and then outside in a neighboring field will substantiate this.

4. Cedar will turn my land into arid, infertile land.

Ashe Juniper significantly minimizes erosion of topsoil. Watch a slow motion video of the effects of a full-speed rain drop on soil. By contrast, Ashe Juniper slowly drips the rain onto the ground. It is a fact that the topsoil under a cedar is deeper. Not only that, it is nutrient-rich humus. The dead needles condition the soil where beneficial bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi populations thrive; the berries and needles significantly help lower the alkaline soil ph.

5. All cedars around good trees should be removed though right?

Actually, Ashe Junipers situated around the perimeter of other trees help buffer them from winds minimizing erosion plus cool the micro-environment (soil temperature, cambial tissue in trunk, canopy of tree near Ashe Juniper) significantly around the tree. In addition, it reduces the loss of moisture of that tree as a result of the effects of the sun to its root system outside its own canopy.

Summary

Generally, my initial approach to Ashe Juniper removal on raw land is a 60% removal and 40% retention. With time, more removal is often warranted. Obviously, Ashe Juniper in a field for grazing or for growing coastal hay is a negative value. But even for livestock, a mature Ashe Juniper can offer excellent shade. Also, raising the Ashe Juniper canopy to 3' or 4' can allow for grass to grow underneath it. Furthermore, wildlife absolutely needs Ashe Juniper as well as highly desirable rare natives such as the Texas Madrone.



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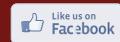
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TENNIS TIPS

*By USPTA/PTR Master Professional - Owner, Manager and Director of
Tennis, Grey Rock Tennis Club, Austin, TX*

How to execute The Overhead "Smash"



In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to hit a forehand groundstroke, a two-handed backhand, one-handed backhand, forehand volley, the two handed backhand volley, the serve, the forehand half-volley and the one-handed backhand volley. In this issue, I will offer you instructions on how to execute the overhead "smash" when players get a high ball and hit the ball above their head. In the illustrations, Matilda O'Connor, player at the Grey Rock Tennis Club, shows the proper technique to execute this stroke. Photos by Charlie Palafox.

Step 1: The Back Step: When Matilda realizes that a ball is high enough to hit the overhead, she takes a step back on the side to hit the ball. The upper body turns, the racket starts the backwards motion by keeping the elbow at a 90-degree angle and the left hand is pointing towards the ball. Notice that her head is looking at the ball and she is keeping her chin up.

Step 2: The Point of Contact: As Matilda prepares to hit the ball,

her racket begins accelerating from the back position. She is making perfect contact on the upper part of the racket and the right wrist is "snapping" to get on top of the ball. Her left arm is still pointing to the ball to assure a direct hit on the "sweet spot" of the racket. Her weight has shifted from the back foot to the front foot.

Step 3: The Follow Through: After the ball has been struck by the racket, Matilda will continue the swing across the left side of her body. Her eyes are now focused on the path of her stroke. The left arm is at her left side. Her right foot still keeps her toes on the court to allow for maximum balance of the stroke.

Step 4: The Ready Position: Even though the overhead "smash" is a powerful weapon, many times the opponents will return it back to the players. Here Matilda is ready for the next ball coming back towards her. By the looks of her smile, it appears that her overhead stroke was a success and that won the point.

Look for in the next Newsletter: The Forehand Service Return



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