

The FAIR OAKS Gazette

December 2016

Volume 6 Issue 12

NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF FAIR OAKS RANCH



FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Honoring Our Veterans

I would like to begin this month's article with a story that will make you very proud of our younger generation on The Ranch. I shared this story with our Intergovernmental Round Table group in Boerne recently and thought I would also share with you.

Alderwoman MaryAnne Havard and I attended a Veteran's Day ceremony at Fair Oaks Ranch Elementary School. The ceremony included traditional elements like presentation of colors by the Champion High School Air Force JROTC color guard, a concert by the FORES Mustang choir, and a fine speech by Commander John Peterson USN, Ret. At the end of the ceremony, Principal Jamie Robinson played a beautiful trumpet duet of "Taps" with his son, Sterling. At the conclusion of the trumpet duet, the entire student body filed out of the gym in total silence to show their respect for the veterans. I have no fears for the future of our country when I see the quality of the youngsters in our community. Congratulations to Principal Robinson and his staff and students for this quality observance of Veteran's Day.

Managing Growth

In our election this past May, 80% of you voted for a platform of managing growth in a way that is faithful to our mission statement to preserve the values that brought us all here in the first place. In terms of tools for managing growth, we are behind most cities our size who have already moved to a Home Rule Charter, have zoning in place, and have taken steps to manage their growth. The absence of these common tools creates a risk to our city's ability to manage its growth, protect our quality of life, and protect the investments we have all made in our homes. This risk is prompting us to move

quickly to catch up. Years of not addressing this need and the rapid growth that is upon us have created a situation where we do not have the luxury of moving slowly on developing these tools. In our budget process, we planned significant expenditures to address these issues. In the following paragraphs I will describe some of the action steps we are taking.

Strategic Planning

Last month I commented that we would be conducting a strategic planning session. We conducted that session, facilitated by Bill Nash, President of Endeavor Management. In this first phase of our strategic planning the council identified five primary goals:

- Achieve a self-governance model to control our future. We already have a Home Rule Charter Commission working very hard with weekly meetings over the last several months. It is composed of 11 volunteer citizens and advised by our City Attorney, Charles Zech. We anticipate holding some Town Halls to discuss the charter with residents early in 2017 with the goal of bringing it to the voters in May 2017.
- Provide for financial integrity into the future. This goal will include developing a comprehensive financial strategy and developing a rolling ten-year forecast.
- Plan with, not for our residents. This will involve engaging residents in the planning process.
- Update our comprehensive plan to manage growth. We will begin this effort, with consulting assistance, early in 2017. See comments below.
- Build and maintain the "spirit of a hill country home town." Our residents have articulated the desire for this type of city

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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)

to council members many times over. Making this vision a reality requires substantial planning, consulting expertise, and citizen input

The city will hold additional strategic planning meetings in early 2017. We will continue the process of formulating a vision statement for the city, reviewing and defining objectives and developing associated performance metrics.

Foundational Planning and Growth Management Tools

We can't build a strategic plan for our future without understanding what we want that future to look like. At the November 17 council meeting, we began the work to build the foundation describing our future by approving a professional services contract with Gap Strategies in an amount not to exceed \$327,011. This contract is the culmination of months of work by city staff and the council. Here is what we'll get for our investment:

- An update of our Comprehensive Plan and associated Land Use Map, including projections of future population and economic/market conditions
- An update of our subdivision regulations including a quick rewrite to fix basic problems identified in the review, followed by a total rewrite that will carry us into future years.
- Our city's first zoning guidelines utilizing existing HOA Standards where applicable
- An annexation plan reflecting established growth management objectives within land use plan and build-out scenarios
- A master roadway/thoroughfare plan
- Continuation of the very successful business model of FORHA owning and operating the parks and trails through seamless coordination with FORHA and inclusion of the FORHA park and trail master plans
- A handbook for turn-key predevelopment operational procedures that will benefit both developers and the city with a consistent methodology for development and growth management
- Project management services along with implementation and training
- A capital improvement program (CIP) based on our land use plan, build-out scenarios, bang for the tax payer buck, long term recovery and maintenance of our assets

Stakeholder Involvement

All of this work will be done through a partnership approach that creates community ownership of the vision. The basic approach is to do planning with the residents rather than planning for the residents.

We will define a group of stakeholders who will help with this planning process. One very good example of a major stakeholder is Fair Oaks Ranch Homeowners Association (FORHA). We have a unique relationship between the city and FORHA in which FORHA owns and maintains our parks and trails, making it possible for the city to avoid taxing you to fund a parks department.

This is one of our city's major strengths and we intend to continue and enhance the close partnering relationship we have had with FORHA for years. Our relationship is so close that FORHA offices

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From the Mayor's Desk (Continued from Page 3)

on our city campus in a city-owned building. FORHA will have a seat at the table as we move forward in the planning process which will help us ensure that our organizations' goals are aligned.

The Arbors Preserve

We are continuing our work with FORHA to complete a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the city and FORHA regarding ownership of The Arbors Preserve. You may recall that this is a 75 acre piece of property that the developer of The Arbors (across Ralph Fair Road from Fair Oaks Parkway) is offering to FORHA or to the city if FORHA does not accept the property. FORHA's board has conducted two meetings for citizen input.

At the November 17th meeting, the council reviewed our City Attorney's first drafting of the MOA. Following this review, our council instructed the City Attorney to move forward collaboratively with attorneys for FORHA and the developer to flesh out documents needed to complete ownership transfer, assuming the FORHA board votes to take ownership. Our investment in doing this legal work is another example of the mutual investments the city and FORHA make in each other's missions.

The most significant outstanding issue is the tax treatment of the property. We believe that the ultimate tax treatment will be similar to the minimal taxes (\$200 per year) charged on FORHA's existing 150+ acres. Our city attorney is also working with the developer's attorney to amend the Development Agreement to allow more time for the tax treatment to be resolved. More to come on this in future articles.

Road and Bridge Reconstruction

If you have driven through the intersection of Fair Oaks Parkway and IH10 or down Meadow Creek Trail, you already know that construction is in full swing on The Ranch. The TxDOT project to replace the bridge at Fair Oaks Parkway and IH10 is underway. We have already seen "The Boat" go away and lots of barrels and concrete barricades to guide the traffic. We have had a few calls about the construction but, overall, the project is moving smoothly.

We have started putting in new water lines on Meadow Creek Trail. This is very challenging work due to the narrowness of some sections of the roadway. We are trying to keep as much of the road open to local traffic as we can, but some full closures are necessary for safety. Please slow down if you are local traffic coming into this area. Be mindful that we have both our own employees and our contractor's

employees working very close to the local traffic that is being allowed on the road. Please follow the detour signs and the directions you get from the flagmen who will be working this construction area.

During December the primary areas of construction will be:

- Work on the Robin Dale/Intrepid drainage project
- Full depth reclamation of Wembley, Sky Blue Ridge, and Sunland

I will remind you that updates on the IH10 bridge construction can be found at <http://txdotsanantonio.blogspot.com/>.

Information on our road reconstruction project can be found at:

- The project website FairOaksRanchRoads.org
- The city website FairOaksRanchTX.org
- The Fair Oaks Ranch Homeowners Association website FORHA.org

If you would like to have information from this and other city activities "pushed" to you, you can sign up for updates and alerts at FairOaksRanchTX.org/list.aspx.

Resident Volunteers at Work

We are engaging residents in our ongoing initiatives and appreciate the time they are investing in our city. Following are a few updates:

- The Home Rule Charter Commission is nearing the end of their first full pass through the charter. Look for some opportunities early in 2017 for Town Hall meetings to discuss the proposed charter. The charter writing is fully under the control of the 11 residents who volunteered for this significant task, advised by our City Attorney, Charlie Zech. The Home Rule Charter is critical to facilitate growth management and self-governance.

- The Communications Committee, headed by Kim Stahr, our Human Relations Specialist, has done preliminary work to select a website tool. We have seen demos of the various products under consideration and I look for this committee to come to council in December with a recommendation for updating the website. The resident volunteers (Laura Koerner, Carolyn Knopf, Michelle Bliss, and Teal Harris) are all very talented in the media area. Carolyn is also serving as the lead person for FORHA's website re-design which is helpful since we want to ensure easy access and compatibility between the two websites. In December, I plan to ask council to approve a formal charter for this volunteer group, which will expand the scope of their work to include use of social media to reach more residents and enhance information transparency.

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• The Wildlife Education Committee (Dr. Bruce Nichols, Chris Cook, Teal Harris) has begun developing communication tools with signs and banners. The committee has also been working to plan resident participation events for 2017 and is doing presentations at HOA meetings. They have also established a city website link as a resident resource on wildlife and have done several newspaper articles. This committee is being assisted by Carole Vanzant, our Assistant City Administrator, and Dee Anna Manitzas, Educational Consultant. Alderwoman MaryAnne Havard is serving as council liaison for this group of volunteers.

Welcoming New Staff

In late November we welcomed Sarah Buckelew as our new Finance Officer. Sarah is a CPA and resides in our city in The Woods at Fair Oaks Ranch. She and her husband, Mike, have a child attending Fair Oaks Ranch Elementary School. We are delighted to have Sarah joining our city staff and look forward to working with her. We also want to express our appreciation to Ms. Linda Coones who has served as our Interim Finance Officer. We wish Linda all the best in her future work engagements.

My very best to you and your families as we enter the holiday season!

Garry Manitzas

Mayor - Fair Oaks Ranch

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