

The FAIR OAKS Gazette

March 2017

Volume 7 Issue 3



NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF FAIR OAKS RANCH

From the Mayor's Desk

HOME RULE CHARTER MOVING TOWARD MAY 6 BALLOT

Last month I reported that the Home Rule Charter Commission would approve a final version of the Charter and present it to City Council for placement on the May 6, 2017 Special Election ballot. That step has been completed.

Between now and the election, the Commission members are staging additional meetings to discuss the Charter with citizens. Rich Nichols, who served as President of the Home Rule Charter Commission, has reported to me that Commission members are working with the leadership of the unit HOAs to set meetings to present the Charter to their residents.

As I did last month, I encourage all citizens to learn about the Home Rule Charter by reviewing material on the city's website. We have a copy of the Charter posted as well as some summarized material that explains the differences between operating as a General Law city and operating as a Home Rule Charter city. Both a copy of the Charter and a copy of the summary of differences will be mailed to all registered voters in the city. I also encourage all citizens to vote in the May election. Deciding whether to adopt a Home Rule Charter is a landmark moment in our City's history.

All Candidates Running Unopposed in May 6, 2017 Election

As of this writing, we are past the deadline for candidates to file an application to run for City Council Places 3, 4, and 5. The lineup of candidates for the General Election is:

- Alderman Steve Hartpence for re-election to Place 3
- Laura Koerner for Alderman, Place 4
- Alderman Snehal Patel for Place 5 (She was appointed to fill my unexpired term last year)

Mayor Pro-Tem Al Schmidt has decided to retire from council this year after 8 years in office, which created the opening in the Alderman, Place 4 position. Al will remain on council until the

new council member has been sworn in. I have also asked Al to stay close, because I have some other volunteer involvements in mind for him.

Next, a quick civics lesson on the mechanics of staging the election this year. Since we have no opposed races, I am anticipating that Council will choose to cancel the general election. There is no reason for a general election and it saves us about \$3,000 if we cancel. The three candidate's names will appear as "Unopposed Candidates" on the special ballot. The candidates will be sworn in to their respective offices around May 12th.

YOU STILL NEED TO VOTE! We will have a Special Election on Election Day (May 6) to vote on the proposal to adopt a Home Rule Charter. It is important that you vote on this significant proposal! The proposed Charter will be a straight "Yes" or "No" vote by the citizens. A simple majority is required to adopt the Home Rule Charter.

Early voting starts on April 24th and concludes on May 2nd. Visit the city website for specific days and times.

If the Home Rule Charter passes, the council will appoint a sixth Alderman in accordance with the structure established in the Home Rule Charter. This will be done as soon as practical after the election.

Meet the Candidates Night (Watch city website/FORHA website for time and place)

Carolyn Knopf, President of FORHA, reports that FORHA is planning to sponsor a "Meet the Candidates" night even though we do not have a contested election. This will give residents a chance to meet the candidates and engage in a question and answer session with them. We anticipate this will happen shortly before early voting starts on April 24th.

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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)

This event has been well attended the past two years. It is a great opportunity to interact with the candidates. Steve Hartpence has served on the council for the past two years. Snehal Patel was appointed to fill my unexpired term and she has been serving on the council for about a year. Laura Koerner is the newest face for the residents but she is not a stranger to people who attend council meetings. Laura has been a regular attendee at council meetings and has provided valuable service as a member of our city's Communications Committee for several months.

We will also have a presentation and Q&A session led by the Home Rule Charter Commission members. This will give citizens another opportunity to learn about the Home Rule Charter.

Time permitting, we will give a quick update on the foundational studies the city is undertaking in these areas:

- Master Drainage/MS4 reporting,
- Maser Water and Wastewater Planning,
- Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map
- Subdivision Regulations
- Zoning
- Annexation plan
- Master roadway/thoroughfare plan
- Handbook for pre-development procedures
- Capital Improvement Program

Stakeholder Involvement

In a previous article, I commented on the need for us to develop a stakeholder group for the foundational studies so that we can do planning with the residents rather than for the residents. I'm pleased to say that, as of the time I am writing this, we have most of that group in place. Once again, the residents of The Ranch have stepped up to lend a hand.

The voting members of the Stakeholder group will be the entire city council. It is our belief that the council should play this role since we are the group that is directly accountable to the residents. With the coming election, we will have a couple of council members (Patel and Koerner) who represent the new demographic of The Ranch which is younger families.

Another role we wanted to fill was a member with deep institutional knowledge of the original vision of Fair Oaks Ranch. In my opinion, no one can fill this role as well as Bob Weiss. I'm delighted that Bob said yes when I asked him to serve. Bob also has a background of experience serving on the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee (CIAC) which was another role we needed filled.

Fair Oaks Ranch Homeowners Association (FORHA) is another major institution within our city which should have a seat at the table. Since the Parks and Trails system is the largest interconnect with FORHA, I was very happy that FORHA's current "Trail Boss," Debra Grandjean, was willing to serve.

Another FORHA board member with deep roots in The Ranch is Al McDavid. Al serves as the head of the Municipal Development

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From the Mayor's Desk (Continued from Page 2)

District (MDD), has been a member of the FORHA board for years, and probably has more knowledge of subdivision restrictions than anyone on The Ranch.

We tapped a younger member of the community, Michael Rey, to help us represent real estate and construction interests. Michael is an architect who understands modern urban planning and also represents the new demographic of our city.

Paul Bimmler, General Manager of Fair Oaks Ranch Country Club, will represent that institution within our community.

We also felt that it was important to have representation from our neighbors at Camp Stanley/Camp Bullis since the development work we do affects them and vice-versa. We are pleased to have Jim Cannizzo, an attorney who is employed by and represents the interests of both of these facilities, on board to give us this representation.

Comprehensive Plan and Subdivision Regulations

Gap Strategies conducted a workshop for City Council at the February 2nd meeting to lay out the various components of the project and show some of the early work product from the team. The council was very engaged and the education component of the presentation was beneficial to the council.

Master Drainage Plan, MS4 Support

Last month, I commented that the next step is to enter into negotiations with the best-qualified firms to perform the work. On February 2nd, City Council approved a contract for \$269,467 with CDM Smith for creation of the City's Master Drainage Plan and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) services.

FEMA Audit

The Federal Emergency Management Agency audited our processes and records regarding the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The audit team was very complimentary of our work and records and will be closing out the audit in the near future. We had a good exchange of information with the audit team and the work was, in all respects, a very cooperative effort.

Road and Bridge Reconstruction

- The storm culverts have been installed on Intrepid Drive. We had three inches of rain one night at our house which is close to this location. I drove to the construction area the first thing the next morning and it was good to see a dry road with no standing water.

- The 12 inch waterline installation continues with Intrepid and Silver Spur sections being worked on in the next few weeks.

- By the time this article is published, we will have closed a section of Meadow Creek Trail near the Fire Station to install the Cross Culvert and perform road reconstruction. This section will be closed until around the end of March.

- Much of our work thus far has been putting things like water pipelines underground. In the next few weeks you will begin seeing more visible work on reconstructing streets. The group of roads in the north section of the city (Wembley, Scarteen, Sky Blue) will be the first areas impacted.

TxDOT is continuing their work on the bridge at IH10 and FOR Parkway. I will remind you that updates on this 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 this information and information about other city activities "pushed" to you electronically, you can sign up for updates and alerts at FairOaksRanchTX.org/list.aspx.

Public Safety

Chief Scott Rubin presented the 2016 Annual Report for the Police Department to the council at the February 16th meeting. You can find the report on the city's website. If you want to understand what is taking place on The Ranch related to public safety, this is a great resource.

Resident Volunteers at Work

Here are some updates on our ongoing initiatives staffed by a combination of residents and city staffers:

- The Communications Committee from the city has continued working collaboratively with representatives from FORHA's communication committee. The city staff has begun working with CivicPlus on the website redesign. The project is moving well but will require several months to complete. It is my understanding that in March, we will also begin establishing a Facebook page for the city.

- The Wildlife Education Committee conducted their first quarterly Town Hall on January 26th. The two-hour session provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife was attended by 51 residents. Those who responded to the survey gave the presentation high marks. The next quarterly Town Hall is planned for April 6th.

As you can tell, it is a very busy time around The Ranch. I appreciate the efforts of staff, council, and citizen volunteers as we continue building our "Hill Country Home Town."

Wishing you and your families all the best,

Garry Manitzas

Mayor – Fair Oaks Ranch

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Local Artist Produces Commemorative Art for HCPCC Corporate Partners



A signed and framed print by local artist Beth Coyle is being given to all Corporate Sponsors of the Hill Country Pregnancy Care Center. Beth has long been a supporter of the HCPCC and its mission. According to Beth, "It has been a joy to watch the HCPCC grow and to be involved in so many ways throughout the years. My twin daughters collected baby bottles of change on the BHS campus and donated diapers, my engineering firm

donated the design work for the new campus, and we have been supporting the ministry regularly for years. How awesome it for my artwork to partner now in this way.... God is so good."

Beth practices the art of Contemplative Photography, the art of SEEING: letting go of the activity that obscures natural insight and awareness. Beth works with the mind, eye and heart to produce her art and it resonates with many. She has accomplished much and received many accolades: 2016 voted best of the best photographer by readers of the Boerne Star, 2014 Woman's Leadership Award, 2013 Businesswoman of the Year, "People's Choice" artist at the 2009 and 2010 Hill Country Invitation Art Shows, the 2008 "People's Choice" artist at the Cibolo Fall Art and Music Festival, and many others.

When commenting on this particular piece of art Beth said, "When God allowed the sunshine to burst through the clouds and create that beautiful scene for me to capture, I had no doubt that He would someday use it for His glory."

The Hill Country Pregnancy Care Center is celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year and Corporate Sponsorship is one of a myriad of innovative programs which the Center has begun through the years. The HCPCC provides all its services for free. Six years ago the Center began its extensive individualized parenting classes, five years ago HCPCC began providing Childbirth classes at the Boerne YMCA, almost three years ago they began providing STD treatment, two years ago they began their Hispanic Services Department for those who speak Spanish only, and 18 months ago they began their men's mentoring classes. Last year the HCPCC opened offices in Comfort and in Bulverde/Spring Branch.

The Corporate Sponsorship Program seeks corporate partners who align with the HCPCC mission of providing free top quality pregnancy and sexual health services while sharing the tangible love of Jesus Christ. These partners help to underwrite various HCPCC activities and fundraisers, while supporting the Center in being able to continue to provide free services to the Hill Country Community. Anyone interested in finding out more about this program and the various levels and benefits of partnership is asked to contact Diana Anzollitto at danzollitto@lifesprecious.org or call 830-249-9717.



AERATION NOW CAN HELP YOUR SPRING AND SUMMER IRRIGATION

In order to prepare your lawn for a healthy spring growing season, you should employ basic lawn care practices at this time of year, which includes aerating your yard. It is important that nutrients reach the soil beneath your grass, and aeration can help you get that done.

Aeration involves making small holes in the soil to allow air, water and nutrients to get to the grass roots.

This helps the roots grow deeper and produce a stronger, more vibrant lawn.

Aerating helps alleviate soil compaction. Compacted soils have too many solid particles in a space, which prevents proper circulation of air, water and nutrients within the soil. Excess lawn thatch or heavy organic debris buried under the grass surface can also starve the roots from these essential elements.

So when is the right time to get this aeration done? These next six to eight weeks leading up to the spring season, when grass begins to grow again, is a good time to aerate.

The two main aeration tools are the spike aerator and a plug aerator. The spike aerator poke holes in the ground with a solid piece of metal. Plug aerators remove a core or plug of grass and soil from the lawn. Most landscaping companies and horticulturists recommend the use of the plug aerator. The machines can be rented or you can have a lawn care service aerate for you. After aerating, it's always a good idea to apply about a half-inch of compost over the aerated yard. The compost fills in the holes left by the plug aerator and brings organic materials into the root zone.

If you have noticed that your turfgrass isn't looking its best or that water has difficulty penetrating through the soil surface, it may be time to aerate your lawn. Lawns with clay soils that get a lot of foot traffic typically require aeration more often as they become compacted over time. Here's a great tip to check to see if your yard needs to be aerated.

Using a shovel, dig a square-foot section of grass about six inches deep and take a look at it. If the grass roots don't extend further than two inches deep into the soil, your lawn would benefit from aeration.

If you plan to aerate your own yard, here are a few helpful tips to get the job done.

- Before you get started, make sure the soil is moist enough. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to aerate soil that is bone dry. Aerating the day after a rain shower or watering your lawn

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the day before is advised.

- Most aeration machines cover only a small percentage of soil surface per pass, so make multiple passes over the most compacted areas. Save resources (and your energy) by leaving unaffected areas alone.

- The soil plugs can be left on the ground after aeration and allowed to decompose. Or, you can rake them into piles to throw in the compost bin. However, this isn't necessary as it should take about two to four weeks for the soil cores to break down naturally. Sprinkle compost (sand or peat moss can be used instead of compost) over the lawn to fill in the holes.

- An aeration myth is that if you apply a pre-emergent herbicide on your lawn in the spring, aerating your lawn will destroy the herbicide "barrier." This is not true — research shows that aeration will not affect crabgrass control or weed prevention.

After aerating, it's important to continue appropriate lawn care practices.

Aerating will help you save water over the spring and summer seasons. Instead of running off or only penetrating a few inches, water will be better absorbed in an aerated yard. That makes your entire landscape and your water bill happier.

Did you know...

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