

The FAIR OAKS Gazette

September 2017

Volume 7 Issue 9



NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF FAIR OAKS RANCH

From the Mayor's Desk...♦♦♦

SEPTEMBER 2017

Moving Forward on the Budget - Tools

Our City Manager and staff have been busily putting together our budget for the 2017-2018 budget year which begins October 1, 2017. Under our new home rule charter form of government, the City Manager is charged to "...prepare and administer the budget in accordance with state law." Tobin has been doing yeoman's work in carrying out that responsibility and our senior staff has been actively involved in planning and presenting the budgets for their respective areas of responsibility.

The quality of our budgeting tools has improved immensely over the past two budget preparation cycles. Our Interim Finance Officer, Linda Coones, began this improvement process in last year's budget cycle.

Our new Finance Officer, Sarah Buckelew, really stepped up the game this year by developing very sophisticated tools in Excel and implementing standard budgeting processes city-wide. Sarah was away for a couple of months delivering and caring for their family's beautiful new daughter, and, in her absence, our new accountant, Summer Fleming, stepped in to help complete the process. This was a great example of teamwork and it reflects the emphasis the council has placed on ensuring that we have the skills and staffing in place to run a city that has grown in size and in the level of sophistication required to be successful.

Public Hearings on Tax Rate and Budget

We will be holding public hearings on the tax rate and budget at 9:30 a.m. on September 7th and at 6:30 p.m. on September 21st as well as a special meeting to adopt the budget and tax rate on September 25th at 9:30 a.m. You are invited to attend these meetings at City Hall.

New Solid Waste Contract Yields More Services and Reduced Cost

At the August 17th Regular Council Meeting, the council took action on the second reading of an ordinance approving an exclusive franchise agreement with Republic Services for the collection, hauling, and disposal of residential garbage and refuse waste. Council authorized the City Manager to execute the agreement.

The new contract is for five years and provides for two extensions of two years each at the city's option. The garbage collection days are the same as we currently have, so this change will be mostly transparent for our residents. What will change is that the monthly fee for service for one rolling cart and recycle decreases from \$27.00 to \$20.05. Additionally, we will be moving to a 96 gallon rolling cart for recycle. The recycle cart will have instructions on the lid identifying what can be recycled. The 30% of us who have a second waste cart will see an increase of \$6 per month (\$6.00 to \$12.00) for the second cart but that will still result in a small decrease of about a dollar per month from current rates.

Included in the price is a new service for household hazardous waste disposal. One time per year, the vendor will stage an event when you can get rid of household hazardous waste like paint. The vendor will publish a list of what can be collected in advance of the event and will advertise the upcoming event in time for all of us to get our hazardous household waste together.

Brush collection will still be two times a year at the same times you are used to. Republic will also continue the service of picking up old Christmas trees once per year.

Congratulations to Assistant City Manager Carole Vanzant and citizen volunteer Peter Mendez, Jr. for putting together a good deal

(Continued on Page 2)

FAIR OAKS RANCH

ADVERTISING INFO

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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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Ambulance 911
Fair Oaks Ranch Police Department.....210-698-0990
Animal Control.....210-698-0990

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Fair Oaks Ranch Elementary210-698-1616

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CPSEnergy.....(new service) 210-353-2222
.....(service trouble or repairs) 210-353-4357
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(Continued from Cover)

for all of us. Carole has been involved in managing our solid waste contract for years and did a great job on this project. Many of you know "Pete," who had more than a 40 year career managing solid waste for the City of San Antonio. Pete is one of our residents and frequently serves our city as an election judge as well as volunteering his time for this project in his area of expertise. Pete is a good example of the spirit of volunteerism in our city.

We also express our appreciation to Tom Armstrong from Republic. It takes good partners to provide good services to our city and Tom certainly was a good partner in the negotiations to renew this contract. The new contract commences on October 1, 2017.

IMPORTANT: Please be a good citizen in getting your rolling carts out of the street and out of sight. As much as we admire Republic's royal blue corporate colors, most of us would prefer to not have to see our neighbors' garbage carts except on collection day.

Extra Territorial Jurisdiction and Annexation

At the August 17th council meeting, City Manager Tobin Maples brought a discussion to council regarding what strategy we should follow on potential annexations in the wake of the adoption of Senate Bill 6 in the Special Session of the Texas Legislature. During the regular and special sessions, Tobin, Councilwoman Laura Koerner, and I called on several legislators to point out the unintended consequences of Senator Campbell's bill on a semi-rural city like Fair Oaks Ranch with an undeveloped ETJ.

The three of us are generally supportive of providing a more democratic annexation process to deal with the egregious annexations we have seen from some of the larger cities. The problem we had with the legislation was that its "one size fits all" approach throws us in the same pool as the large cities like San Antonio when we have a completely different set of circumstances. San Antonio's focus is on annexing developed areas in its ETJ. Our ETJ is almost entirely undeveloped, or as I pointed out to Senator Campbell, the residents of our ETJ are primarily cows and goats.

I am personally sympathetic to property owners' rights discussions as I have been a real estate investor for many years. The problem with Senator Campbell's "one size fits all" approach is that while it secures the rights of owners of undeveloped land, in our case, it disenfranchises our 2,600 households who, on average, have invested almost half a million dollars in their homes in expectation of a certain quality of life. They are property owners too, which some of the legislators don't seem to comprehend. The approach this legislation took also diminishes the city's ability to have a "seat at the table" in working with property owners to plan city services.

Although the Governor has signed SB6, no one is sure exactly how it is going to be interpreted. There are provisions regarding proximity (5 miles) to a military installation that has an active training mission that may be helpful, but we do not know how those provisions will be interpreted. This uncertainty is a risk to our city in our desire to plan for growth responsibly.

One approach to manage this risk, is to move forward with the rights of pro-active annexation we have as a Home Rule City prior to

(Continued on Page 3)

FAIR OAKS RANCH

(Continued from Page 2)

the December 1, 2017 implementation date of the new legislation. This would set the stage for the city to set zoning for this property, which we cannot do when it is in our ETJ. Council has directed the City Manager to develop options for discussion relating to our ETJ, including pro-active annexation or creating development agreements with existing property owners in the ETJ to allow the city to effectively manage growth.

Foundational Studies Work and Stakeholder Involvement

We are continuing the foundational studies work with consultants, engineers, the Stakeholder group and other residents.

- August 10: GAP Strategies presented information showing a comprehensive plan update, information from Town Hall #2, and presented a framework for “form based design standards.” This is the early stages of land use and zoning design. Gap Strategies also reported back on their meetings with TxDOT regarding Ralph Fair Rd. These are very preliminary discussions but it is important for us to be in on the early planning. Some of the design standards used by TxDOT were developed by Gateway Planning, one of our main consulting groups.
- August 17: CDM Smith presented the next level of information on Policy and Design Criteria for shaping our Stormwater future. The discussion introduced the concept of level of service which is a critical assumption in designing a stormwater plan. The Stakeholder group made some basic decisions that the consultants will use in developing the next stage of the master plan.

Road and Bridge Construction and Water/Wastewater Improvements

- Information on our road reconstruction project can be found at:
 - o The project website FairOaksRanchRoads.org
 - o The city website FairOaksRanchTX.org
 - o The Fair Oaks Ranch Homeowners Association website FORHA.org
- Our full depth reclamation work is basically complete. Our engineering staff will be conducting walk throughs of the completed work during September and building punch lists for the contractor.
- As of this writing, the water line work on the Parkway is almost complete.
- Starting in mid-September, you will see a lot of mill and overlay work (tearing up the road and redoing it in layman's terms) being done on Dietz-Elkhorn and Fair Oaks Parkway. This work is likely to be pretty disruptive to traffic so be prepared for some inconvenience. We have some serious work left to do, but we are going into one of the last big pushes to complete our project.
- As always, we appreciate everyone's patience and caution in driving through the construction zones to keep our employees and our contractor's employees safe.

Golf Carts - Fake News Alert

Some of my associates who spend more time on social media than I do told me there was a conversation thread that the city was planning to “take away the golf carts and every one should call the mayor.” This comment is PURE BALONEY!

Golf carts are part of our culture in Fair Oaks Ranch. In our foundational studies we have directed our consultants that golf carts are one of the modes of transportation that must be included in the planning.

Our city has grown and the assumptions we were working under in allowing golf carts in the first couple of decades are no longer appropriate. The goal is to make the minimum changes needed to make the use of golf carts in conformance with state laws and safety regulations. If you have opinions or suggestions, please contact council members or city staff to share your views.

Water Rates

Council did a first reading of a proposed interim change in water rates at the July 20th meeting and did a second public reading and approval of the interim rates at the August 3 meeting. We are planning a comprehensive review of our water rates as part of ongoing studies, but will not have done that by the time we adopt a budget. The proposed increase is an interim measure based on first passes through the Enterprise Fund budget. We will mail the updated water rates in the next water bill in early September.

Resident Volunteers/City Staffers at Work

Here are some updates on the work being done by a combination of city staffers and volunteers:

- Facebook page continues growing! We currently have 414 people following our Facebook page. We have had 1,085 visitors as of this writing. If you are a Facebook user you can find us at City of Fair Oaks Ranch, TX. Our page is for sharing information about the city, but it is not a public forum. The page is monitored and objectionable or off topic material will be removed.
- The vendor for our new website is completing navigation design. Our staff will begin training on this new tool near the end of August. Stay tuned for a launch in the next couple of months.
- With support from Mayor Pro-Tem MaryAnne Havard and Chris Cook from the WEC committee, I made a presentation to an Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) group on August 10th to solicit partnering on dealing with feral hogs. We don't have the hogs in The Ranch yet, to the best of our knowledge, but they are close by at Camp Bullis. I discussed the partnering we have been doing with Camp Bullis and offered to host a meeting in October for brainstorming opportunities to collaborate. Several groups came forward after the meeting indicating interest.
- As a reminder from the WEC, we are heading into the annual “rut” season for the whitetails. Be careful around our friends with horns!

(Continued on Page 4)

FAIR OAKS RANCH

(Continued from Page 3)

Call for Volunteers

Both the Wildlife Education Committee and the Communications Committee could use another volunteer or two. If either of these activities interest you, please contact Carole Vanzant at CVanzant@fairoaksranchtx.org for WEC or Kim Stahr at kstahr@fairoaksranchtx.org for Communications to let them know of your interest. You can also call them at 210-698-0900 or drop by City Hall to let them know of your interest.

It's time to send the kids back to school and start following our favorite sports teams again. Dedie and I have a granddaughter on the Reagan varsity volleyball team this year and a grandson who will be playing for one of the Reagan basketball teams, so we have already started the cheering from the stands. We hope that all of you parents and grandparents are having as much fun doing that as we are!

Respectfully yours,
Garry Manitzas
Mayor – Fair Oaks Ranch

PERSONAL CLASSIFIEDS

Personal Classifieds (one time sell items, such as a used bike...) run at no charge to City of Fair Oaks Ranch residents, *limit 30 words*, please e-mail fairoaksranch@peelinc.com.



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CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S JOB CORPS

2017 Style Show & Luncheon

On October 16, 2017, the Christian Women's Job Corps will host the 5th Annual Christian Women's Job Corps Style Show & Luncheon at the First Baptist Church of Boerne (Family Life Building).

Guests will have the opportunity to browse and bid on various donated items in our silent auction. Afterwards, student alumni will model attire from local Boerne businesses while guests enjoy a catered lunch.

Event Details:

Silent Auction: 11:00am - 11:45am

Style Show & Luncheon: 12:00pm - 1:30pm

Registration: www.cjcboerne.org/news-events/2017-style-show or call (830) 331-9916 ext. 2

Come join us for an afternoon of fun, fashion, and friends! Your participation will raise money to offer local women the job and life skills training they need to succeed in today's job market.

CWJC's mission is to equip local women with the skills and confidence necessary to seek and obtain the best fit employment for their God-given talents. We support these women with spiritual guidance, one-on-one job coaching, computer training, and resume / interview preparation. Over the years, we have helped over 150 women with a 95 percent success rate for participants seeking employment after graduation.

With generous donations, fundraising, and volunteer staff, we are able to offer these programs free of charge to our women. The cost of running the program for one woman is \$2500, which includes 2 paid program directors, facilities, computer/software, curriculum, bibles, Max Lucado bible study, notebooks, and supplies. We absolutely could not do this without the support of our community and for that we are forever grateful.

Please join us in October and help us continue to change lives!

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Stage 1 Water Restrictions

With the scorching heat, little to no rain and continuing decline of water levels across the Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District's (TGR) monitoring well network, TGR declared STAGE 1 water restrictions in compliance with the District's drought contingency plan effective Tuesday, July 18th.

According to the current US Drought Monitor, northern Bexar County is categorized as experiencing "abnormally dry" and "moderate drought" conditions. The Drought Monitor is one measure used to determine the need to move from one drought stage to another. Additionally, the District may choose to initiate drought stages corresponding with the major public water systems serving residents within the District boundaries.

Stage 1 conservation measures include:

- Non-exempt users shall reduce water usage by 5% over prior year.
- Non-public swimming pools covered a minimum of 25% by evaporation screens.
- Water wasting, including washing impervious cover (ex. driveways), prohibited.
- Hand watering with hose or bucket on non-designated watering days is allowed.
- Reduce landscape watering to once per week on designated watering day which is determined by the last digit of your address:

*Monday - 0,1 *Tuesday - 2,3 *Wednesday - 4,5

*Thursday - 6,7 *Friday - 8,9

"We can help slow that drop of Trinity Aquifer levels and protect the aquifer by imposing drought conservation measures, of which the main feature is limiting irrigation by sprinkler systems to one day per week based on address," said TGR General Manager George Wissmann. "The best thing about a drought management program based on lawn irrigation is that it significantly reduces water use, but it does not reduce water availability for beneficial use."

While one day per week sprinkling limits watering flexibility, in most cases lawn appearance and health is not greatly affected. Most lawns prosper on once per week irrigation. The only exception would be lawns planted on less than six inches of soil. They will live with the once a week watering but do better on more frequent irrigation. In fact, even St Augustine grass will survive with once every two week irrigation. Bermuda, zoysia, and buffalo grass will turn brown with no irrigation but will quickly recover when the rains resume.

Research conducted in San Antonio in the early 2000's showed that lawn grass can prosper with once a week irrigation. The response to the restrictions since has verified those conclusions. Every lawn is different, however, and the drought management rules recognize

that by allowing the use of hand watering any time.

That means if you have an area that is especially prone to dry out because of a slope, sun reflection or shallow soil you can supplement the regular sprinkler irrigation with hand-watering as needed.

In the short term, compliance with drought management rules will help protect aquifer levels. Supplement the once/week rule with hand-watering as necessary. In the long term, convert high water demanding lawns to more drought tolerant ground covers, perennials, shrubs, mulch and hardscape.

Need Help? - Contact the Trinity Glen Rose District - If you think a landscape water audit might be helpful to you, we can help. Email us at: info@TrinityGlenRose.com. Also, take a look at SAWS landscape rebate programs to help you save water and money (www.saws.org/conservation/outdoor).

Did you know...

Droughts can have a major impact on local and state economies. How does that happen? Extended dry weather drains aquifers and surface water reservoirs, fuels wildfires, ruins crops, and puts a real strain on the state's electric grid. For example, drought fueled the Bastrop fires in 2011 scorching 34,000 acres and 1,300 homes.

Corporate Partners Invest in Community Services

The Hill Country Pregnancy Care Center proudly welcomes a new Corporate Partner. Matt Nelson and Taylor Knopf of Prime Capital Investment Advisors (formerly Lawing Financial) present a check in support of the Hill Country Pregnancy Care Center. Receiving the check are HCPCC Executive Director, Diana Anzollitto, LMSW, and Kimberly Siess, HCPCC Community Relations Director.

By becoming part of the Corporate Partnership Program of the HCPCC, they are helping to strengthen this community through the free services being offered at the HCPCC.

Their partnership and financial support allows the HCPCC to provide FREE pregnancy services (pregnancy tests, prenatal vitamins, ultrasounds), FREE STD/STI services (testing, treatment and education), and FREE educational classes on an individual and group basis (prenatal, childbirth, and parenting).

Anyone interested in knowing more about the services of Prime Capital Investment Advisory should contact Matt Nelson or Taylor Knopf at 830-816-5131. Anyone interested in the services of HCPCC or in learning more about the Corporate Partnership Program should contact 830-249-9717.

NATURE WATCH

THE VALUE OF VIPERS

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Throughout human history, fear of snakes has been one of our most common phobias, arising from our learned ability to detect threats to our survival in the wild. While most snake species are relatively harmless to humans, those in the Viper Family can pose a serious danger. Vipers are defined as venomous snakes with large hinged fangs, a broad head, and a stout body with a darker pattern on a lighter background. While vipers are venomous and must be treated with proper respect and caution, it is important to understand that they also exhibit many useful characteristics and are vital to keeping a healthy ecosystem in balance.

Vipers that can be found in Central Texas include the Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*), Broad-banded Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix laticinctus*), and Western Cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus leucostoma*). By far the most abundant and widespread viper, the Western Diamond-back

stout-bodied and marked with wide, reddish-brown crossbands that alternate with narrower tan to pale brown crossbands. A heavy-bodied snake with a stubby tail, the Western Cottonmouth is named for the bright-white skin lining its open mouth, but it is also known as 'water moccasin.' It is generally restricted to the woodland borders of rivers such as the Colorado, but can be found in cool, shallow springs a short distance away from main waterways. This snake averages 2 to 3 feet in length, and typically appears almost all black with a bit of brown, but ill-defined grayish-brown crossbands can sometimes be seen, especially on the sides.



Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake

On average, this snake grows between 3 and 4 feet long, and can be found in the wooded hills and plateaus north and west of Austin.

The Broad-banded Copperhead found in our area is an uncommon subspecies in Central Texas, occurring near woodland streams in live oak-juniper forests in the west to Blackland Prairie and Bastrop in the east. Growing 2 to 3 feet long, this snake is

Rattlesnake exhibits a considerable color diversity from chalky gray to dull red, but always displays a row of dark, diamond markings down the middle of its back, and has a prominent black and white banded tail.

On average, this snake



Western Cottonmouth

All of these vipers eat rodents, so they are beneficial in keeping rat and mice populations down, which is often the reason they can be found around homes and yards. They will also eat birds found on the ground, as none are very good climbers. As snakes that live in or near water, the copperhead and cottonmouth will also consume amphibians and fish. Vipers can also be prey for other animals such as owls, hawks, and even other snakes. Finally, chemicals found only in viper venoms have a distinct value to humans, as they are used to treat many serious health ailments such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, Parkinsons, and many more. Now that's the value of vipers!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, *Nature Watch Austin* and *Nature Watch Big Bend* (both published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.



Broad-banded Copperhead

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NEW TEXAS LAWS TAKING EFFECT SEPTEMBER 1



The Texas Legislature recently passed several new laws that will go into effect on

September 1st. The most publicized of these laws is the ban on texting while driving. The law prohibits drivers in any area of Texas from using a hand-held phone to "read, write or send an electronic message" of any kind, which includes texts, emails, or, presumably, any kind of social media communication (such as Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, etc). Offenders are ticketed and

required to pay a fine ranging from \$25 for the first offense, up to \$99. Note that activities such as using satellite navigation systems or music control apps are exempted from the ban.

Additionally, the state has lowered the license fee for concealed firearms from \$140 to \$40 (new users). The renewal fee for licenses will be lowered from \$70 to \$40.

The state has also addressed the issue of Good Samaritans having to break into a car to help a person believed to be in distress. Existing laws prevent Good Samaritans from being subject to criminal charges as a result of damage to vehicles, but the new law protects them from being sued in civil court for the damage caused to the vehicle.

Finally, the Texas Legislature has passed a law that provides a grace period for lunch payments in public schools. Previously, if a student did not have sufficient funds in his or her lunch account, the student would be denied any lunch (known as "lunch shaming"). Now, if funds have not been added to the account, the student will be provided with a cold sandwich in lieu of a hot meal for a period of time in order to give parents the opportunity to add funds to their student's lunch account.

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