



## ***Mayor's Letter***

March 15, 2017

*Hello Everyone,*

**FIRST, THE IMPORTANT STUFF.** The Halloween candy is long gone so its time that we replenish all our children's supplies. **The Lakewood Village Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, April 15th**, from 10:00-12:00. We will have free photos with the Easter Bunny, a bounce house, games, refreshments, a mini-petting zoo, and of course the "hunt" for about a thousand eggs. Remember, you can keep the candy, but you have to give us back the eggs.

**TOWN ELECTIONS.** This year we have two seats that are being contested. In Place #1, Councilman Ray Duff will face Elizabeth Shields, and in Place #5, Councilman Clint Bushong will face Paul Bowers. Mayor Pro-tem Ed Reed is unopposed and has been declared elected. A resident recently asked how write-ins work. Well, Texas has strict laws about write-in candidates. That's why "write-ins" have to file to run too. Even if you ask for a paper ballot, only candidates listed on the ballot or the official write-in list can receive votes. Official Information on elections can be obtained from the Texas Secretary of State website: [www.sos.state.tx.us/elections](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections) Early voting runs from Monday April 24 - Tuesday May 2 and election day is Saturday May 6. If you wish to vote by mail, and you qualify, you have two options: (1) you can send your request to Denton County and they will mail you all of the ballots for the next year (May and November elections) that you are eligible to vote in (town, school board, county, state, federal, primaries, run-offs, etc.), or (2) you can send the request to Linda, and she will mail you a ballot just for the LWV election. **The last day to submit an application for a ballot by mail is April 25<sup>th</sup> – it must be RECEIVED by noon, not post-marked.** So if you want to vote by mail, you need to get on it quickly. If you have any questions, Linda can help you.

**CITIZEN – CANDIDATE FORUM.** As in our last election, there will be a question and answer forum held at Town Hall. The date has yet to be finalized by the candidates, but we are trying to hold it on one night. The format last time was casual not confrontational, citizens anonymously filled out index cards with questions and turned them in to the moderator. Each candidate is given the opportunity to respond. The Village doctor, Carl Menckhoff, M.D. has agreed to repeat his role as moderator.

**SENATE BILL 2.** Last week I went down to Austin to testify against SB2. I think this bill is a good example of a worthwhile goal trying to be achieved in the wrong way. Who doesn't think there should be limits on taxes ? I pay a huge amount in property taxes each year – put me at the front of that line. The table below shows one criticism of SB2, the town taxes aren't the problem – they are relatively small, only 11.9% of our bill. **If SB2 were the law last year and our increase was capped at five percent** instead of the 7% home appreciation in LWV, your tax bill would have decreased by one-quarter of one percent (from \$2.102 to \$2.097).

**That's not tax relief.** If the cost of the hamburger is too high, you can't accomplish much by attacking the cost of the pickle slice. Look at the cost of the meat ! As you can see the savings on your average tax bill would be minuscule, and the big bad town would have decreased revenues by only about \$4,000.

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2016 (CAP)</b>	
<b>Little Elm ISD</b>	\$1.540	\$1.540	73.3%
<b>Denton County</b>	\$0.262	\$0.262	12.5%
<b>Lakewood Village M&amp;O</b>	\$0.250	\$0.245	11.9%
<b>Lakewood Village Debt</b>	\$0.050	\$0.050	2.4%
	<b>\$2.102</b>	<b>\$2.097</b>	
Taxes on \$200,000 Home	\$4,204	\$4,194	
Taxes on \$1,000,000 Home	\$21,020	\$20,970	

**OVER ▾**

A bigger problem is that the author of the bill mixes up relative measures like percentages and nominal numbers like expenses. **The City of Houston's general fund budget is 10,000 times the size of Lakewood Village's.** How can you have one tax law that puts us both in the same bucket ? So, if the houses in LWV appreciated six percent instead of five next year and we didn't lower the tax rate, SB2 would require that we have an election. How much is that one percent difference for LWV? Its about \$2,000. So, we would have to spend about \$4,000 for an election for an increase of about \$2,000. That makes no sense. **For Houston, that one percent difference is more than \$11 million.** So, for Houston to spend \$200,000 on an election it's a RELATIVELY small expense. For small towns, the cost is high. Think how dumb that is, if the orange tube on the playground urgently needed to be repaired for \$2,000 we would have to spend \$6,000 and wait three months for an election, even if every single person in the town was in favor.

**THE ISSUE WITH SMALL TOWNS IS THAT OUR EXPENSES ARE “LUMPY”** – that's an actual economic term. You can't buy 5 percent of a \$1200 street pole, or ten percent of a \$2000 swing set. It is impossible to buy playground equipment for \$100, your choices are to spend \$0 or \$2,000, that's it, you can't buy fractions. But \$2,000 is a lot of money **RELATIVE to our total, but it's small and easy to hit in nominal terms.** Think of all the possible unforeseen things that could happen in our town that would cost \$2000 or more – for us, this would mean an automatic election. That's one small road repair, one broken piece of playground equipment, a roof leak at town hall, or maybe our flag poles topple over in the wind, **we are a SMALL TOWN.**

## OUR MESSAGE TO DEVELOPERS:

NOT Lakewood Village



**Dr. Mark E. Vargus, Mayor**  
(cell) 214-558-6847  
[mark@lakewoodvillagetx.us](mailto:mark@lakewoodvillagetx.us)