



Mayor's Letter

December 15, 2019

ROAD UPDATE. At our December 12th Council Meeting, Andrew Friedman of SAMCO Capital provided the Council with information on our upcoming bond issuance. In January we will take the first step in the process and pass a resolution declaring our intent to issue debt. The actual bond issuance will not occur until we open the sealed bids and award the construction contract at our March 12th Council meeting. A year ago, when I designed our initial financing plan, to construct the pro-forma financials I used an interest rate of five percent. Currently, after consulting with SAMCO on market conditions in the municipal bond market, in my latest financial projections I am using 3.25 percent. Our market timing is perfect, as the Federal Reserve has now adopted a neutral to accommodative stance on interest rates, with little to no changes expected.

The Town Council will be meeting with Kimley Horn engineers later this week. We will be reviewing the thirty-percent schematic design. This is the first time we will see the design in three dimensions - the elevation of the road (vertical displacement) along with the location horizontally for the entire length. Along with the intersections, we are spending significant effort designing drainage improvements for Carrie and Highridge.

The revised OPCC (Opinion of Probable Construction Costs) is currently \$4,310,000. This number will decrease as we finalize the design and make various tradeoffs. By way of comparison, **in 2014 the OPCC was \$1,600,000 and our final construction costs were \$1,551,418.** At the end of the project, after change orders and value engineering, we were **\$41,371 under budget.** We have identified several cost saving opportunities already, and I expect the new project to be under budget just as the earlier one. Personally, it's nice to get back to my engineering days and participate in evaluating the various design options.

WHERE'S THE MAIL ? As you all know by now, the Highridge mailboxes have been moved. A new resident asked me why. The primary reason is obviously the new roads are coming in the Spring, and the facility was located too close (actually inside) the new road. One of the many construction issues we face is that we don't have curbs, which I think is a really good look, however, it creates a problem. Drivers have no curb to hit to warn them they are drifting off the side of the road into the grass. For this reason, we need to follow TXDOT design rules and remove any obstacles within 10 feet of the edge of pavement.

Another reason is that it is likely we will have to put in a temporary road bypass in that area. A design error in the Shores meant that all traffic must drive on Highridge between Green Meadow and Melody Lane. There is no alternative route. If you parked your car sideways where the Highridge mailboxes were located, you would shut-off access to the southern two-thirds of Lakewood Village. We are going to have to shut down each lane of Highridge when we pave it and with a pond on one side of the street, we have no other room.

The Package Boxes are being renumbered 1-24 and the keys will be blue. Because we can't go inside your mailboxes and get the old keys, we have to wait and change them as they show up. As of today, 19 of the 24 old keys have turned up, and I expect the change-over to be complete by the end of the week. We are also expanding the parking lot in the next week and grading the area. Can you put a sticker on your mailbox ? Yes of course, just as long as there are **no Philadelphia Eagles logos.**

Ultimately, the mailboxes will be part of a future new Town Hall. I would expect them to occupy one wing of the building, inside the air conditioning. For additional security, that part of building will be locked, you would have to use your key to enter. And since we will build it, your mailbox will be much much much bigger.

TRASH. Your new trash calendar is included. At our November meeting, the Council unanimously approved a new five-year contract extension with Republic Services. **The number of trash cans (three) and the collection day (Monday) remain unchanged.** Although the standard contract calls for annual increases in rates due to CPI levels and changes in landfill fees and fuel costs, we have adopted a **fixed rate of \$22.50 for the next five years.** As has been our policy in the past, we will absorb the annual rate changes so that we do not have to increase our billing rates to you each year.

The most significant operating change relates to bulk trash. We have moved the pick-up days away from the holidays (hooray !). Unfortunately, in the past, we would "trash up" Lakewood Village just before visitors would arrive for holidays like July 4, Labor Day, Christmas and New Years, and Halloween. Now bulk pickup will be quarterly; the four dates are : **February 8, May 9, August 8, and November 14th.** In addition, for those with real trees, there will be one special Christmas Tree (only the tree) pickup on January 6th.

WINTER PREPARATIONS. The current long-range weather forecast calls for an ENSO neutral



condition - this means there is neither an El Nino nor La Nina weather pattern. Since these phenomenon usually dominate all of the other weather patterns, their absence means that smaller meteorological events will now have a much bigger effect. Thus, it is likely to be a very variable Winter and Spring with wide fluctuations in temperature and precipitation. Several years ago, we purchased a high-speed spreader and over 1000 pounds of special snow/ice melt. As we do each year, last week we tested the equipment in preparation for this winter. Should an icing event occur, the Town has in place a snow/ice removal plan that prioritizes and sequences the effort. In keeping with our commitment to the environment, we use

specialized melting compounds that are biodegradable, non-harmful to fish and wildlife, and are safe to discharge into the lake. We are prepared.

TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN INFORMATION. Over the next several months the Town Council will be finalizing the new road construction project, water and sewer expansions, a new town entrance, and evaluating several new residential developments along Eldorado Parkway both inside and outside our Town boundary. **To provide our citizens with the most accurate, timely, and unbiased information,** we have begun installing high resolution cameras and recording equipment at Town Hall. Starting in January we will be recording all Council meetings and posting the **unedited video and audio** on the Town website. There's a lot to get done. The new year will bring an exponential increase in the Council's workload and we will be meeting several times a month.

There's a lot of serious work to be done. We're committed to getting it done right. There's never been a better time to be in Lakewood Village.

Dr. Mark E. Vargus
Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark E. Vargus".

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