



Lakewood Village Update

August 17, 2014

Hello Everyone,

Next month we will celebrate one of the longest running activities in the Town, our annual Pet Day. This year, Pet Day will be on Saturday, September 27th at Town Hall. Among the numerous services provided will be pet registration, grooming, and vaccinations. You can find detailed event information on the town webpage www.lakewoodvillagetx.us. While on the subject of pets, most owners are terrific, however, by far the largest volume of complaints that we receive relate to dogs. Dogs loose, dogs barking, dogs chasing runners/walkers, dogs not on a leash, dogs, dogs, dogs. I like dogs, **but I hate writing about dogs**. I am not going to take a broad swipe at all our dog owners. While 95% of our pet owners are responsible, this is a great example of how a very small subset of owners can cause problems for everyone (the tail wagging the dog ?) The number of complaints regarding loose, aggressive dogs has reached unacceptable levels. Unfortunately we must take immediate action. The budget is tight due to our new roads, and I do not want to spend money on animal control, but reluctantly we will. There will be sweeps done in the mornings and at other random times. The rules are very basic - your animal must be under control at all times. You made the choice to own a dog, you are responsible, no excuses. "Under control" can be having the dog confined to your yard, or with you as you walk it around Town. It is simple, if the dog is not on your property and you are not with it, you are in violation. Nobody wants to have to pick up your dog, and we don't want any harmed. So, just in case, it is important that you make sure that your pet has the proper identification, so that, if it is picked up, you can be notified. It is not fair to everyone that we have to waste money that could be used for the playground or town events, so the sooner the problem is fixed, the better for us all. **I really hate writing about dogs**.

Now, lets talk about the roads. The construction is currently several weeks behind schedule due to the weather and a slow start. However, Jagoe is picking up momentum and catching-up with concrete pours scheduled for two times a week, Wednesdays and Fridays. Current plans have Lakecrest being finished in the next two weeks followed by Hillside. The engineered design for the roads calls for 4000 psi at 28 days, last week we received the 28-day break for the first portion of Lakecrest and it averaged 4800 psi. It will continue to strengthen over time, far exceeding the design standards, so our quality control looks good.

During the road construction, LEISD has moved the bus-stops from Shoreline Drive to Highridge. Please be careful with the new driving patterns and be aware that early in the morning **schoolchildren may not be where you are used to seeing them**. Please observe the one-way designations and watch your speed on the new road. Everyone in the construction zone has been really great about not complaining about the inconveniences, and we appreciate it. But, if you have an issue, don't try and deal with the construction crews, instead contact us at Town Hall, we can get it addressed quickly. We are the customer. When we call, they come running.

At our August 14th Council meeting we adopted the 2014-2015 budget. This is the first budget which includes the bond payments on the road debt. The entire budget including the cash forecasts and CAPX projects are available online at the Town website. The challenge of this year's budget was, of course, the road payments; we are required to pay \$ 166,526 in 2015. The budget I submitted to the Town Council took a very conservative approach, I did not assume that LandPlan would suddenly break ground and build 50 houses. Balancing the budget is easy if you want to make crazy assumptions that don't materialize and then you just kick the can down the road and leave it for another year. So how will we find an additional \$166,526 this year ? The easiest thing is to do what most other cities do and raise taxes to cover the payment. But, that isn't the Lakewood Village style.

		TOTAL TAX
	Denton County Entity	RATE 2013
1	City of Lake Dallas	0.7019
2	<i>City of Denton</i>	0.6898
3	<i>City of Pilot Point</i>	0.6800
4	<i>City of The Colony</i>	0.6775
5	<i>City of Sanger</i>	0.6650
6	Town of Little Elm	0.6650
7	<i>City of Justin</i>	0.6600
8	<i>City of Krum</i>	0.6339
9	<i>City of Aubrey</i>	0.6211
10	<i>City of Corinth</i>	0.6049
11	City of Oak Point	0.5730
12	<i>City of Highland Village</i>	0.5696
13	<i>Town of Ponder</i>	0.5389
14	<i>Town of Trophy Club</i>	0.4993
15	<i>City of Hackberry</i>	0.4627
16	<i>Town of Flower Mound</i>	0.4497
17	<i>City of Lewisville</i>	0.4402
18	<i>Town of Hickory Creek</i>	0.4169
19	<i>City of Krugerville</i>	0.4000
20	<i>Town of Argyle</i>	0.3975
21	<i>City of Roanoke</i>	0.3751
22	<i>Town of Shady Shores</i>	0.3146
23	<i>Town of Copper Canyon</i>	0.2975
24	<i>Town of Northlake</i>	0.2950
25	Lakewood Village	0.2500
26	<i>Town of Double Oak</i>	0.2248
27	<i>Town of Dish</i>	0.1954
28	<i>Town of Bartonville</i>	0.1929
	Average	0.4819

The budget includes a proposed tax increase, but only by \$0.05. This will raise \$38,600 in additional revenue. We will find the remaining \$128,000 (or about 80% of our payment) in our existing revenues, through cost cutting, greater efficiencies, and as a last resort, tapping into our reserves. The additional \$0.05 property tax increase would be collected by Denton County and deposited into a separate special purpose bank account. If there is no debt, there is no \$0.05 tax - it cannot be used for street lights, Linda's pay, or water leaks, etc. it must be used only for debt payments. I remember growing up in Florida, we had a bridge to the beach that was 50 years old and we were still paying tolls, even though it was fully paid for ten times over. That can't happen here, once our debt is paid off, the \$0.05 must be removed - it cannot be retained.

While no one likes a tax increase, as you can see from the Table to the left, we have very low taxes compared to all of the other towns in Denton County. Out of 28 towns we are 25th lowest - I have also highlighted our neighbors to the north, east, and west. Direct comparisons are tricky, as obviously, many factors determine tax rates such as size, growth, facilities, and infrastructure, however, we are committed to keeping our property taxes as low as possible. If your property is appraised at \$150,000, then the effect of the \$0.05 increase is that your total tax bill (including LEISD and Denton County) will increase from \$3,112 to \$3,187 or about \$6 per month (or \$0.20 per day or less than a penny per hour). Our base \$0.25 maintenance and operations tax rate has not increased in the Town's 37 year history, and we are proud to maintain that tradition.

One way that we keep our property taxes low is through collecting other revenues like sales tax. I recall that when I proposed that we adopt a sales tax back in late 2009, people wondered why, as we did not have any commercial business in Town. Trusting us, voters overwhelmingly approved our first sales tax, and since 2010 we have collected \$98,972 in the Town and ETJ. So far this fiscal year, the Town has collected \$26,800. Despite the tire tracks into the woods, there isn't a hidden Sonic drive-through on the LandPlan property, our sales tax revenues predominantly come from online purchases and cell phone bills. **What is critical, is that, you are paying the tax anyway, so make sure that it goes to Lakewood Village !!!** We all know that our 75068 zip code is shared with Little Elm, Oak Point, and Lakewood Village. And, since Little Elm has the post-office, and they are the biggest, the default setting that appears to retailers is Little Elm. Please make sure that you insist on your address as Lakewood Village. You cannot avoid paying the sales tax - you might as well pay it to the town where you live. Personally, I often don't open mail I get from businesses that use 831 Carrie Lane, *Little Elm* as my address. I don't have any problems with Little Elm, they are a good neighbor and we work well together. I wouldn't recommend this to everyone, but I am on the Town Council of *Lakewood Village* (and truthfully, my bills are all ebills, so nearly all of my mail is junk). You may have to be persistent. As I recently found out, if you enter 75068 as your zip code with American Airlines, it will over-ride what ever you type for the city and replace it with "Little Elm". So if you try and change your address to "Jerry World, Texas, 75068" it will be replaced with Little Elm. You have to call American on the phone and talk to a human. That's OK, I don't fly AA because they have a great IT department, I fly them because I need the legroom.

		AVERAGE
	Denton County Entity	HOME VALUE 2014
1	<i>Town of Bartonville</i>	\$418,042
2	<i>Town of Double Oak</i>	\$367,067
3	<i>Town of Copper Canyon</i>	\$341,343
4	<i>Town of Trophy Club</i>	\$331,053
5	<i>Town of Argyle</i>	\$325,474
6	Lakewood Village	\$317,979
7	<i>Town of Flower Mound</i>	\$313,142
8	<i>City of Highland Village</i>	\$307,783
9	<i>Town of Northlake</i>	\$275,201
10	<i>Town of Shady Shores</i>	\$250,310
11	City of Oak Point	\$234,135
12	<i>Town of Dish</i>	\$216,795
13	<i>Town of Hickory Creek</i>	\$201,466
14	<i>City of Corinth</i>	\$200,981
15	<i>City of Roanoke</i>	\$198,034
16	Town of Little Elm	\$189,397
17	<i>City of Krugerville</i>	\$187,433
18	<i>City of The Colony</i>	\$175,981
19	<i>City of Denton</i>	\$173,285
20	<i>City of Lewisville</i>	\$168,884
21	<i>City of Justin</i>	\$148,317
22	<i>Town of Ponder</i>	\$143,928
23	City of Lake Dallas	\$132,644
24	<i>City of Krum</i>	\$132,405
25	<i>City of Aubrey</i>	\$120,386
26	<i>City of Pilot Point</i>	\$118,824
27	<i>City of Sanger</i>	\$117,526
28	<i>City of Hackberry</i>	\$83,091
	Average	\$221,104

One of the great advantages of our lakeside location is that we enjoy some of the highest average property values in all of Denton County. Examining the same list of all of the towns in the county, you can see that we are number 6 out of 28 (Argyle, you're next). When LandPlan develops, we should become number one.

Several people have asked me if the appraisal district will raise their home values because of the new roads. I have talked to DCAD and the answer is no, not right away. The value is based on market prices - sales of homes in LWV. What we can expect, is that the new roads will lead to higher prices for home sales and then this will lead to *future* higher valuations.

Another road related question that I have been asked several times is "can we gate our roads?" The answer is no. Our roads are public, they are owned by the Town, and are open for everyone to travel. So, the good news is that Lewisville can't gate I35E and Lake Dallas can't gate Swisher (and then give you a ticket for an illegal U-turn). In some places, an HOA will own the roads and as a private road, they can control access. However, the HOA is also responsible for the costs of maintaining the roads.

If you have questions about any topic relating to the Town, just send me an email or drop by Town Hall. Next month I will provide further details on our new

capital improvement projects for the upcoming year.

And one final thing. For those of you wondering why, the answer can be found at: http://www.dirtdoctor.com/Haint-Blue-Paint-Newsletter_vq2290.htm

Lets all have a safe start to the new school year. Our town is *Lakewood Village*



Dr. Mark E. Vargus
Acting Mayor
Mark@lakewoodvillagetx.us