



Mayor's Letter
July 15, 2015

Hello Everyone,

ONE ADVANTAGE of being in a small town is that we have the ability to customize or create new services we can provide our citizens. For example, you may not know that the Town has building packets for many of the houses in Town. These packets may include the original house plans, inspection tickets, engineering letters, and in some cases cd's with photographs of the inspections. These are all available for you to inspect and make copies if you wish. To see if we have information for your house, as part of a new service, we have posted a list on the Town website, www.lakewoodvillagetx.us under the "**Building**" tab. Currently, only the addresses are listed, we are in the process of going through the packets and updating the file with individual specifics such as whether the packet includes plans, photos, pool permits, etc. There is one limitation, under Texas law, these files are confidential, therefore **only the current owner** can examine files for a particular property.

Along a similar line, you may not know that we have individual folders (in the file cabinet, not electronic) for all 222 houses in Town. These individual folders contain paperwork such as your utility account application and various Town correspondences, such as permission letters to draw water from the lake. You may find this folder useful as a place to store a copy of particular house related papers just in case you are trying to sell your house and you have misplaced the originals. For example, my folder contains a copy of my agreements with the Army Corps of Engineers relating to my house construction. Other examples might include if you have foundation repairs, you could place a copy of the lifetime warranty, or an additional copy of your survey, termite inspection, LOMA letters, permits from the Army Corps of Engineers, etc. **No mortgage papers** - we don't have a warehouse - keep those at home. It is strictly voluntary. If you are like me and terrible at filing papers, (for my important papers I make five copies and put them in five different drawers somewhere in my house) you may find the folder helpful. But, only papers that may be useful to a buyer if you should sell your house, no wills or secret family recipes.

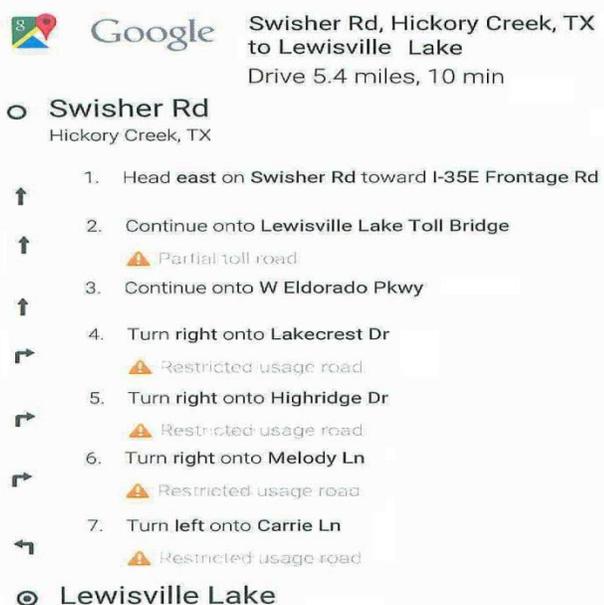
WE ALL LIVE IN LAKEWOOD VILLAGE. When I go through the utility payments each month I cringe when I see the home addresses on the checks showing 123 Carrie Lane, LITTLE ELM, or 234 Peninsula Drive LITTLE ELM. As we all know, we share the 75068 zip code with Little Elm and Oak Point. You may not know that residents who live in the county, outside of a town, use the name of the nearest post office. They can't just use 300 Shady Lane, TEXAS. This means that all of our surrounding county area (south Sunrise Bay, Rocky Point, north side of Eldorado) also use Little Elm for their address. Thus, based on population, about 95 percent of the 75068 area code is truly Little Elm. This means that unless you are vigilant, most businesses and creditors will just plug in Little Elm - why bother figuring it out, the odds on someone in 75068 NOT being in Little Elm is only 1 in 20. **Well, it does matter.** In May, we received over \$8000 from a state audit because our sales tax had been collected, but the business told the State the wrong town.

Last year we collected \$30,096 in sales tax. Several times, I have asked all of us to be diligent in making sure merchants record Lakewood Village as our location. **It really does matter.** So far this year we have collected \$54,202 and are on pace to collect \$69,900 in sales tax. That's more than double the previous year, and almost four times the amount we collected in 2013. If you recall, the \$0.05 increase in our tax rate only covers about 25% of our bond payment. We count on these other revenue streams to make up the difference and allow us to keep our tax rates as low as possible. You're doing a great job and it shows in the numbers,

WE'RE MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO TOWN HALL. This last week technicians installed a series of video cameras around the Town Hall facilities. The Town Council approved the project submitted by Mayor Pro-tem Carl Menckhoff and he has been managing the project. By the time you receive this, the project will be substantially complete. The system will provide 24-hour coverage of the Town Hall interior, entrance, and exits; the playground; the mailbox facility; and the marquee. And, importantly, Carl has brought the project in under budget. We will also be posting appropriate signage.

Speaking of signs, Councilman Ed “the miracle worker” Reed managed to pull off a feat we have been trying to do for several years. TxDot has agreed to put up **Lakewood Village** directional signs at the intersection of FM 720 and Eldorado on the north and southbound sides. Several years ago we had a sign that was removed and ever since we have been trying unsuccessfully to have it put back. Until now. My next challenge for Ed is the US Postal Service as we have been, so far, unable to get a blue mailbox to deposit our outgoing mail in.

WHERE IS LEWISVILLE LAKE is a question we get asked a lot by confused drivers. It turns out that if you go to google maps and type in your destination as “Lewisville Lake” it takes you to Carrie Lane here in



Lakewood Village. It’s really interesting to see just how much faith people put in their GPS directions as they head down Highridge, then Melody and then wander up and down Carrie. While on the plus side, it does make for a neat way of giving driving directions to a party on Carrie, however, it has lead to people driving through lots and yards and damaging property. Once I had to get off my mower and explain to a carload of people that, no that wasn’t a clubhouse (?), that is Sam and Janet’s HOUSE. To alleviate this problem, Ed Reed has been leading a cooperative venture between LWV and Little Elm on a project to improve directional signage to Little Elm Park. You should soon see the new signs between the toll bridge and the Town entrance on eastbound Eldorado. We shared the costs, with the Town’s portion paid for by the Lakewood Village Municipal Development District.

The 2015/2016 Budget. As part of the new budget, the Town Council approved several adjustments to our utility rates. First, the household garbage rates we pay Allied Waste will increase to \$19.50 per month. This is the first increase since 2011. Actually, there was a small increase previously, which the Town Council did not pass through, bur rather chose to absorb. The increase includes a franchise fee of \$2.00 which will be paid back to the town and which can only be used for road repairs. This is one part of the funding mechanism that we will use to repair the non-concrete roads in Town. In addition, the monthly fixed rate for wastewater will be increased by \$1.00. This increase is necessary to pay for infrastructure upgrades as we move from mechanical floats to electrical sensors and digital control systems for our lift stations. This will lead to better motor efficiency and a significant increase in reliability.

We made several changes to the water rates. First, our rate structure was unnecessarily complicated, so we reduced the number of tiers from four to three to better align with the practices of the surrounding communities. Under Texas law (TAC §291.32 (b)) a town’s rate structure can not encourage usage by having declining rates the more water you use. This was a problem for us since that is exactly what our rates did. So, here is how we addressed the issue. We lowered the charge for the monthly minimum, and we created a new tier for up to 20,000 gallons, which we also slightly lowered relative to the previous rate. We created a new tier from 20,000 to 50,000 gallons where the rate was higher than previously.

In our minds, the minimum usage is necessary for typical household use, it is unavoidable. We all have to bathe and use the bathroom, so we lowered the monthly water minimum from \$25.00 to \$21.00, a decrease of 16 percent. So, adding it all up, if you use the minimum, the decrease of \$4.00 will more than offsets the \$3.50 total increase in the garbage and wastewater rates. Your bill actually will decrease. We thought that was a very fair and equitable thing to do. So, in Lakewood Village sometimes an “increase” actually means you pay less.

To determine the effect of the new rates, we looked at our neighbors for comparison, and we ran a series of simulations. We set up a spreadsheet which had the actual monthly usage for every house in Town for both August (peak period) and January (off-peak). Assuming everyone behaves exactly the same as before, under the new rate structure the effect on our water bills will be:

Peak period: 55 percent of residents will have a lower bill; 45 percent will have increase.

Off-Peak period: 91 percent of residents will have a lower bill; 9 percent will have increase.

Comparison of Water Rates				
	LWV	Lake Cities	Little Elm	Oak Point
Monthly Minimum	\$21.00	\$36.00	\$39.86	\$119.43
Up to 20,000 gallons	\$3.70	\$4.00	\$5.72	\$7.95
20,000 to 50,000*	\$4.00	\$6.40	\$6.27	\$9.00
* - Lake Cities and LE tier ends at 45,000 gallons. LE monthly minimum for 1" line.				

As a comparison I have included the new rates as they compare with our neighbors to the north, south, and east. Several points are noteworthy. First, as you can see our monthly minimum is significantly lower than our peers. For our citizens on a fixed income that should be helpful. Second, our new

lower rates for the first 20,000 gallons are lower than all our peers. And finally, although we increased our rates for the 20,000 to 50,000 tier, our increased rates are still **35 to 55 percent lower** than the surrounding towns. We could have used the other towns as justification for significantly raising our rates to match theirs. We did not, instead we carefully studied our rates and made changes that will lead to overall lower bills for those who use less while imposing slightly higher costs on those who choose to use more than 20,000 gallons. I think the Town council should be commended for bringing our rates into regulatory compliance in a way which will result in lower bills for the vast majority of our citizens.

THE NEXT REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING is scheduled for August 13th. Several council members have August travel plans, so check the Town web page for updates.

Summer is here, lets all get back to the lake,



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