



Lakewood Village Update

May 15, 2015

Hello Everyone,

RECORD TURNOUT. Unlike elections for Federal or State office, the typical voter turnout for local municipal elections is very low - a turnout of 10 to 12 percent is considered good. In Lakewood Village we

Election Results - 2015		
Place 4		
Gary Newsome (unopposed)	160	100%
Place 6 - Mayor		
Mark Vargus	136	71%
Paul Bowers	55	29%

don't do "good" - we had a record turnout. If you exclude our registered voters who have moved, **our turnout was greater than 50 percent!** This is an unbelievable participation level and I don't know of any city in the metroplex that was anywhere close. As for the results, Gary Newsome held on to defeat "unopposed". With his 160 votes, Gary is now the the answer to the LWV trivia question, "Who received the most votes in our history?" I am honored to be elected to a fifth term on the council. I look forward to continuing to serve with an incredibly talented and dedicated Town council. Obviously, there

was great interest in this election. Let me reiterate, if you would like to become more involved in the Town, we have open positions on both our economic development corporations (EDC and MDD). Neither requires a large time commitment. You will have the opportunity to work with others in the community on new projects and promote and implement ideas that you are interested in. The organizations have funds available, we are looking for people with ideas and a desire to improve the LWV quality of life and participate in fulfilling the Town's strategic goals. If you have aspirations of serving on Council, our boards are great way to start and learn about municipal governance.

WE NEED YOUR HELP. We have a white board in town hall that lists our projects and tasks that the Town Council are working on. At one point last year, it had over forty items. If there is a good idea and it doesn't get done, it isn't because we decided NOT to do it; it's probably because we don't know about it. There are many things that don't get done simply because we don't have the manpower. For example, we could have a community garden - we have town property that could be used and we could provide funds to create it. Why don't we have a town composting facility? Wouldn't it make sense to collect our lawn clippings and the tons of leaves and give the compost to you free? We have the land and money to make it happen, what we need is **someone** to make it happen. These are not big-ticket items - but I think they would be nice to have. These are just two off the top of my head - there are lots of small victories that can really add up. We want to hear your ideas and want to encourage you to work with us and take ownership of the implementation. We don't have a lot of red-tape here, and it doesn't take months to get an approval. Remember, there are over 600 of us in the town, but only six of us on council.

DENTON COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT. I think I would prefer to get a letter and take my chances with the IRS rather than the annual appraisal letter from DCAD. I dread getting them (feel my pain, I get five of them!). Overall, the preliminary numbers show our tax base in Lakewood Village increased by a little over 10 percent. Based on our prior experience, after the appeals are concluded in July, I expect an average increase in the seven percent range. Because of our relatively small number of houses, and the fact that nearly all are custom built, our valuations are subject to significant volatility. The concrete roads themselves do not directly figure into the increase. The district uses transactions to estimate market value and there have been few transactions since the roads were constructed. Ultimately, the new roads will result in higher home sale values, but that will occur over time.

CITIZEN FORUM QUESTIONS. During the citizen Q & A sessions, the most frequent questions were about LandPlan Development. For those of you who couldn't attend, let me give you the latest information and my own beliefs. LandPlan bought the 78 acres you see in front of you as you enter the Town from Eldorado Parkway (other people own the 95 acres of undeveloped land between the entrance and the toll bridge). The

Lot Sizes in Lakewood Village		
<0.3 Acre	124	42%
0.3 - 0.5 Acre	50	17%
0.5 - 1.0 Acre	15	5%
>1 Acre	103	35%
	292	

property is zoned one-acre residential. Let me state the obvious. LandPlan bought the property in 2004, and how many one-acre homes do you see? None. They can build one-acre home sites anytime they want. Under Texas law, if they propose to do what we zoned it (i.e. one-acre), it must be approved by the Town - **it is automatic**. See any houses? So, what this means, is that LandPlan does not want to build one-acre homes. This is

obvious, and consistent with the one-half acre lots they proposed in 2007. They don't want to build what we already have (see table above).

I think it's no secret that we expect them to eventually request a zoning change. Let me tell you the process that will be triggered. When we re-wrote our zoning ordinance last year, we added many procedural hurdles that we felt were best suited for our small community. So, first, let's talk about the notice requirements. Under the state law, residents within 200 ft. of the zoned property must get individual notice. **That wasn't good enough for us.** We want everyone to participate - any development in Lakewood Village effects us all. So our zoning ordinance requires us to **mail notice to every landowner in the Town**. We also require a **minimum** of two public hearings and we can require more if we feel it is necessary. If you want to voice your views, you will have every opportunity to be heard.

The ultimate decision will depend on what LandPlan submits. They know some things are unacceptable - there will be no gated community and no private amenities. Facilities they construct will be donated to the Town and open to **all** LWV citizens. There will be many tradeoffs to consider - obviously if we wish for them to donate land for a lakeside park and nature trails, then its seems fair to allow for some reduction in lot size to make up for it. It will all depend on the details. Nevertheless, they have indicated that even if we agreed on every item in a proposed development **today**, the first home construction would not occur until 2017 at the earliest.

ON THE SUBJECT OF ZONING. Zoning - limiting what people can do with **their** land - is one of the most powerful tools that municipalities have. It is necessary so that towns can plan for the location of roads and utilities, and place schools in residential not commercial areas. You don't need a 16" water main to an area zoned for storage units. It is not a lucky coincidence that Legacy or Preston Road connects all the way through. However, a town's zoning power only applies to land inside the town.

At various times people have asked me about zoning in the county. Let me clear this up. Either you live inside a municipality, or you live in the county. That's it; you are one or the other. **If you live in the "county" there is no zoning.** So, if you live there, you can raise pigs and goats in your front yard and you can live in a pink polka dot colored house made out of recycled milk cartons. Of course, the bad news is so can your neighbor. So, when you decide to live in a city, you give up some of your rights (you are now subject to zoning) but you get more control and enforcement of community standards. You also have access to better quality infrastructure like roads and utilities, as towns have greater financial resources.

WHAT CONCERNS ME. I don't worry about the direction the town is going. We are doing well financially and we have infrastructure already installed to meet future demand. We are working hard to make your home in Lakewood Village the best real estate investment you will ever make in your life. However, we have little or no control on what happens in the "county" area around us. That's what I worry about. The LEISD property at the front of the town (14-acre triangle with the ball fields) is not in our town. So, for example, they could sell it to a car dealership that puts up lights, blasts music, and parks 500 cars on it for sale. Don't call LEISD - that was just an example. Across the street, on the north side of Eldorado, it is all in the county. So, someone can purchase land there and **it can be anything:** junked car recycling center, the world's largest donut shop, warehouses, weekend flea markets, **anything.** We are trying to work with various landowners, but it is the most challenging problem that the Town faces. We can all see it, development is happening all around us. Eventually Eldorado Parkway will be finished and we have to be prepared. **We're working really hard on this.**

AT OUR LAST MEETING, the Town Council approved a new fence replacement incentive program. The program runs from June 1 through August 31st. Under the program, all fence permit fees are waived. In



addition, we have teamed up with Allied to dispose of all of the old fences free of charge. **As part of our continuing commitment to sustainability**, we will recycle all of the wooden and metal fences. We can also provide you with a list of fence contractors that have recently performed work in the town. You will still need to apply for a permit, but the fee will be waived. During the application process we will give the fence contractor the details on where in LWV to drop-off the old fence materials. By avoiding all disposal fees, this should help you negotiate the best

possible price and make the repairs as economical as possible. Once the incentive program ends, we will be reaching out to those homeowners whose fences remain in a dilapidated or unsafe condition.

THE RECENT STORMS have caused havoc with broken limbs and branches all around the town. The next bulk trash pickup is in July. Rather than wait, the Town will be renting a large tree chipper, which we will position at the rear of the wastewater plant. We will have an operator man the equipment; we don't want you to have any accidents. **Once we have the equipment**, you can bring your brush and drop it off and we will chip it. The mulch will be free to anyone who wants it, and we will use some for landscaping around the wastewater plant. Because of the weather, I can't give you a date - **don't bring your brush there yet**. When the forecast is good and we can obtain the equipment for the weekend, we will post the date on the Town website and on the marquee and bulletin boards. We will try to do this as quickly as possible, keep your eye out.

THE NEXT REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING is on June 11th. We will be administering the oaths of office to Dave, Gary, Clint, Ed, and myself. Among the topics will be the preliminary discussions of the fiscal 2016 budget. And, there will be birthday cake (mine).

Final Notes:

- ★ Over the next month, you'll notice some minor construction at Town Hall. We are going to make some fixes to the front door entryway to make it more accessible. Technically, it is ADA compliant, but we can do much better.
- ★ On April 25th we hosted the annual fun run for the Oak Point / Chavez PTA 5K color run. There was a record turnout and it a fun time for all the children.
- ★ Lets all have a safe Memorial Day holiday and be really careful out on the lake. There are a lot of obstacles out there in places that aren't normally underwater.

The lake part of Lakewood Village just keeps getting bigger and bigger...

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