



Mayor's Letter
September 15, 2017

Hello Everyone,

OUR WATER AND SEWER OPERATOR is responsible for the monitoring of our facilities and performing certain daily and weekly routine tests such as measuring the chlorine levels of our water and the pH levels of our wastewater that we discharge into the lake. However, Patterson Professional Services personnel only come to Lakewood Village on Monday through Friday, typically around 8 am. That means **we have a 72 hour window** from Friday morning until Monday morning when there is no operator coverage (it's up to us), and, the time also coincides with our maximum water usage.. That's why you often see my golf cart on Saturday and Sunday mornings and evenings at Town hall, as I check on the water levels and the operating status of our wells throughout the weekend (insert joke here about how I really have to get a life).

Last month on a Saturday afternoon I discovered that one of our deep wells had malfunctioned - the breakers had tripped and the well was not operating, thus removing about 1/3 of our water production. In prior years, when we have a big well inoperable we would have immediately declared a level yellow or possibly level red water emergency and signs would have gone up around town. **But not this time.** Earlier this year, we rushed to get our new ground storage tank operational by the start of the summer and it paid off - the tank increased our water storage by over 60 percent. So, while Sam Morgan and I worked to trouble shoot the problem and get the well operating, even with only two wells working, we had ample water supply and I did not declare an emergency. We were able to get the well operating satisfactorily until we could replace the controls later in the week. As I hung out and monitored the well the rest of the weekend, I located our water emergency signs. They were stacked in a pile and had a lot of spider webs all over them. **They still do.** I'm good with that.

YOU MIGHT WONDER why don't we have some monitoring system on the wells. We tried several years ago and purchased equipment to "auto-dial" if there was a low-water alarm. However, we could never get a phone line from town hall to work at the pump-house, in fact we are having difficulties just keeping all of our phones operational at Town Hall. Councilman Clint Bushong has spent the last several months researching and evaluating various telemetry systems for our wells, lift stations, and wastewater plant that are very promising. However, as you know, our cell service can drive you crazy - I'm on my fourth provider and sometimes I can go from four bars to zero reception if I sneeze. I love the technology, I am a strong believer in working smarter and more efficiently, however, in this case our location is limiting us. Clint, Sam, and I have had several meetings on this and I am confident that with Clint leading the effort we'll get it done in time for next summer.

MAKE THE CALL. As things bake out and rain is nowhere around, our wonderful clay soil will be on the move, which means this is when we get our water line breaks. Two weeks ago I received a call from Linda Loudon about a potential leak as she had noticed that there was water in her bar ditch and it appeared to be flowing from up the street. I was able to quickly determine that there was indeed a break on a city service line (fortunately not a main line) on Hillside Drive. **Great Job Linda !** Little Elm services repaired the leak. This past weekend I received a call about a potential leak on Woodcrest as again, the homeowners noticed standing water in the bar-ditch. In this case the culprit was not a water line but a neighbor's malfunctioning sprinkler line. Don't worry about a false alarm, we need you to make the call. Whether you're walking the dog, riding the golf cart through town, or mowing your lawn, if you see unusual water, **make the call.**

ENGINEERING FOR THE ROADS Over the last year, Clint Bushong and I have had several meetings in McKinney with the Town Engineers from Kimley-Horn to discuss our infrastructure needs moving forward. One proposal that we had asked the engineers to do was to come up with the task list, timing, and probable costs of the engineering support (surveys, geotechnical analysis, road design, quality control and inspections) that are required for the final phase of the concrete road reconstruction. In our first concrete road project, we paid for all of these services out of our reserves - we only borrowed what we needed for the actual construction. So, even though we are likely three to four years away from the project, it makes sense to see what is involved.

Another task that we had the engineers look into was the probable costs of drilling a new deep well. Currently we do not need another well, however, under our long-range master plan ultimately when there is more development we will need one. Complicating the matter is the possibility that the legislature or the North Texas Groundwater Conservation District could place a moratorium and prohibit new wells in the aquifer. Based on my conversations with various people, a prohibition is appears unlikely in the immediate future. However, as there is some concern that it is probable at some point, **we must be prepared** to respond quickly if the need arises. It is important to note that any new well would be for future development, so **the Town would be reimbursed through impact fees paid by the developer**. We need to get the project shovel ready and the permit paperwork ready to go now in case we need it. Getting the cost estimates, the scheduling, and understanding the permitting process are the first pro-active steps. The crystal ball is still a bit murky, so don't look for any drilling rigs soon.

SOME QUICK NOTES. The Town Picnic celebrating our 40 year anniversary is on Saturday, October 14th from 5 o'clock until 11. The event is sponsored by the Lakewood Village Municipal Development District. See the attached flyer for more information

► **Recently I met with the new LEISD superintendent** and the School Board President Melissa Myers. We discussed many LWV related issues and it was a very enjoyable and constructive meeting. Among the many things that I learned was that the explosive growth in Little Elm is projected to translate to a future doubling from the current 7,400 to 15,000 students. The district has placed a bond issue on the November ballot that will, among many needs, include funds for the purchase of new land for schools. I urge everyone to attend one of the many information sessions to equip yourselves to decide on this important election. More information can be obtained from the LEISD website.

► Last month the Council approved the replat and sale of the town-owned lot on Melody Lane. The replat allowed the town to strategically carve out the necessary land for the Stowe Road extension and leave 1.02 acres untouched. Councilman Gary Newsome handled the sale and we had an offer within 12 hours of him placing the sign on it. The paperwork is at the title company and we will close by the end of the month. For those keeping score, we still own the land for the future road and we sold the remaining part for 20 % more than we bought it. **Nice ! You can't lose investing in Lakewood Village and it's getting better each day.**

► Earlier this week I met with our financial advisors from Southwest Securities to get an update on municipal bond market conditions and long-range trends in borrowing costs. We talked about credit scoring and ratings and various strategies. As in the previous road project, optimizing our accounting and financial ratios are critically important and take years of planning prior to the bond issuance. We already look great now and it will only get better.

Council Actions. The council approved the Town Budget (you have to vote on it twice) as well as approving continuing our current tax rate of \$0.30. The council voted down a proposal by Gary Newsome and seconded by Clint Bushong to perform road repairs on Carrie Lane and Highridge Drive.

KEY FIGURES: For the first 15 days of September:

Average daily water production was 105,200 gallons or 36% of our maximum production.

At the sewer plant, the average daily flow was 31,640 gallons or 31.6% of our capacity.

It's never been a better time to be in Lakewood Village.

Dr. Mark E. Vargus
Mayor



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