



Mayor's Letter

March 15, 2018

Hello Everyone,

THE EASTER EGG HUNT IS MARCH 31ST, and we've added some new activities this year. We will be setting up a laser tag course and have added carnival games and a bounce house. **The fun starts at 10 am with The Hunt starting at 11.** As always we will have two egg filled areas – one for the smallest villagers and another for those a little older. Of course there's always the special appearance by the Easter Bunny who will stick around to take free professional photos with all our little villagers. Kids, candy, lasers, should be a lot of fun, and you'll probably see the Mayor on the losing end of laser tag to a team of five year-olds.

LEWISVILLE LAKE MASTER PLAN UPDATE. As I discussed in a previous Mayor's letter, the US Army Corps of Engineers is undertaking a comprehensive update to the 1985 Master Plan. I heard some concerns from residents so I thought I would comment further. First, the shoreline of the lake is **233 miles long** – along those 233 miles, essentially there are only two classifications – wildlife or recreation. Last week when I was at Whataburger I counted **eight different types of hamburger I could buy.** Yet, the entire area surrounding the lake is broken down into only **two categories and all of LWV is one category – wildlife.** Look at the picture on the left. It is the Corps property along Peninsula drive. Wildlife habitat? For Chiggers? It looks better than the golf course I played in



Florida last month. Now look at the picture on the right, which is the Corps land behind my house on Carrie. This is true wildlife habitat, and the deer and foxes around my house at night prove it. Yet **the current rules** treat both of those areas the same. **They aren't the same**, so let's admit that, and classify them what they are. I know some of you may be skeptical when the government says they are going to do something that makes sense. But they are adding more categories to acknowledge what the shoreline actually is, not what they thought it would be thirty years ago when the Dallas North Tollway actually stopped in North Dallas (near Frankford Road). Another person was concerned about recreation like Little Elm Park in LWV. No Chance. Let me explain, everything in Little Elm Park is on Corps property – it isn't Little Elm's land. If everything beyond Town Hall on Lakecrest, Hillside and Peninsula was Corps property or if everything south of Melody lane was Corps property (all of Carrie and Stowe) then maybe we could have a park like Little Elm. But obviously people own the land and we don't have much Corps property in LWV. Because there is almost no federal land left surrounding LWV and we have little land between people's property lines and the water, we will never have a "Little Elm Park". Instead we will have nature trails, green space, deer and wildlife along the lake.



LIGHTING AND DARK SKIES UPDATE. I think the Council's work and discussions about dark skies and lighting have been very beneficial and they demonstrate the new way we think about operating the Town. Let me give you the entire story. When we had to replace the light fixture at the Highridge mailboxes, the question was, what do we replace it with? That's simple, we just follow our city lighting plan. **Except we don't have one.** We have a master zoning and land use plan, we have a parks plan, we have a water and sewer capital improvement plan, we even have a thoroughfare plan, **but no lighting plan.** The easiest thing to do is to do nothing. Continue to have no plan. When a developer comes in and asks for our requirements we'll tell them do whatever they want – **we have no plan.** When CoServ has to replace a burned out light and asks us what fixture to put in, tell them we have no plan, just give us whatever random light is in the truck. Let's do nothing. It's easy to kick the can down the road. Well, that's not the way we operate. We have to look FORWARD. Remember, two-thirds of LWV isn't here yet. This is another example that we have the opportunity to build **LWV the way we want it to be.**

The more I thought about what type of fixtures we would want, it seemed logical to me that we would want ones that were energy efficient and **that lit the mailboxes, not the sky.** That led me to reading about the Dark Skies organization and educating myself a little. There are only two cities in Texas that are certified. **Two.** Why so few? Mostly because of the commercial lighting – so Dallas, Frisco, and Little Elm can't do it, but, because we have no commercial, Lakewood Village can. **So why not us?** I think it would be awesome to be the quiet, family friendly small town on the lake with wildlife trails and **the only town in the metroplex** where we don't add to the light pollution. Now, some naysayers say it won't matter because of the surrounding Towns, and it might not make a big difference, but that doesn't mean we should just give up. I get it. It's easy to do nothing. Some people make a living finding and posting on Facebook new excuses to do nothing. Fortunately for us, Mayor Pro-tem Ed Reed stepped up and took over leading the next stage, meeting with lighting experts, CoServ experts, and International Dark Skies Association members. Everything has been very promising. I have been more optimistic after every meeting.

WE STILL MAY CHOOSE NOT TO BE CERTIFIED. We are collecting the various cost estimates to see whether the goal is feasible financially. The lights in the original part of town are a horrible random assortment of lights hanging on telephone poles. Many are near the end of their useful lives, so do we want to replace those 8-10 lights on the poles with Dark Skies approved fixtures? CoServ has, for the first time ever, decided to purchase two new types of Dark Skies approved fixtures that can be mounted on their power poles. **They are being tested now. In LAKEWOOD VILLAGE along Shoreline Drive. Here in Lakewood Village.** They are allowing us to be the first city to try out their new lights. We are leading the way.

Looking ahead, another option would be to take the lights off of the power poles and put them on street poles like in the Shores. **Obviously, our future new developments** buried utilities (no power poles) are required, so the street lights will be on the ground in the intersections like the Shores. So, ultimately do we want the original part of Town to look like the rest of the Town, or keep the lights up on the telephone poles? How much would that cost? Taking it a step further, instead of running electrical line, would we make the street poles solar powered? Maybe we do like we did with the fire hydrants and just replace three or four a year. What about along Highridge and Meadowlake? Again, we don't have the answers and obviously costs will be the biggest factor in the decision. But I want you to know **we are looking forward** – lots of questions, no answers yet. Nothing has been decided, it is still early and we have to get a lot more data. Lots of ideas to investigate. **It would be a lot easier to just do nothing.**

REGARDLESS, WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A LIGHTING ORDINANCE. Once the new Council is on board, we will be undertaking a new lighting ordinance. **We must have a plan.** The lighting ordinance will not effect existing homes. **I repeat, it doesn't effect existing homes.** To qualify under the Dark Skies certification program there are only a few items that need to be in the ordinance. A city can make their ordinance as strong as they wish. So, one town regulated when Christmas lights could be hung. We aren't going there. **No way.** Our ordinance will be simple. Some of the things we already do. For example, **public buildings** have to have a lighting curfew – we can't leave the lights on 24/7. We already have the mailbox light at Town Hall on a timer, and the street lights cut off at dawn. **The objective of the ordinance is to settle on a plan for street lights and new construction going forward.** So, you can leave your porch light on all night and everything will be just fine.

DEVELOPMENT NEWS Last week I met with the Belgian representative of the two families that own the two twenty-acre parcels at the front of Town. The adjacent twin ten-acre parcels to the west, nearest the toll bridge have also recently been sold. I also met with a developer interested in the 16 acre parcel to the east of the Belgians' property. Economically, due to the high cost of running water and sewer and buried utilities (electrical, cable, phone), the properties should be developed together as one big project. We'll see if someone can pull it off in the next year.

TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS. Serena Lepley (Seat 4) and Darrell West (Seat 2) are running unopposed and will be sworn in at our June Council meeting. In the race for Mayor (Seat 6) I am running for re-election and will be opposed by Russell "Brent" Ashton. Prior to the election there will be a voter – candidate forum where citizens may ask questions of the candidates. The event dates and times have not been finalized as of today. Election day in Lakewood Village is Saturday, May 5th.

The last day to register to vote is April 5th. If you recently moved here but were already registered in Denton County, you do not need to re-register. Both Linda and myself are certified as volunteer deputy registrars and can officially register you to vote personally. If you are not sure of your eligibility, Linda has the most recent list of registered voters.

COUNCIL ACTIONS. The Town Council approved a variance for an accessory building and continued discussions on Dark Skies certification.

KEY FIGURES: As a comparison to last year,

On March 15, 2017 the Town had \$277,421 in deposits at Point Bank.

Today, March 15, 2018, we have **\$382,829** in the bank.

The Easter bunny is busy hopping our way, I hope everyone can come out and enjoy a beautiful Spring day with the kids. There's never been a better time to be in Lakewood Village.

Dr. Mark E. Vargus
Mayor



(cell) 214-558-6947
Mark@lakewoodvillagetx.us