

Oakridge News

Sept. 2014

Vol. 22, No. 8



City of Garland District 7 Report—Scott LeMay

As I am sure many of you have heard by now we have adjusted our lawn watering schedule again this year. On August 28th the North Texas Municipal Water District Board voted to allow the member cities to reinstate once a week lawn watering. This schedule will now be in effect through the end of October and will be allowed on your designated trash collection day. While this decision might seem late in the summer watering season it is based on maintaining our water quality. Basically we were so responsible at reducing our water consumption that we were not getting the proper circulation with our water in storage. The water quality in our elevated tanks was degrading due to lack of circulation and heat. Allowing once a week watering in September and October will improve circulation and help Garland Water Utilities ensure our water quality. You may have seen news reports on some of the surrounding cities opening up fire hydrants to increase circulation. While this is certainly a quick way to solve the issue it obviously frustrates many homeowners with parched lawns. We hope to avoid this and it will only be performed if necessary. Once again I applaud our city and residents for their efforts to reduce water consumption. We were asked to reduce by 10% and to date we are well over 20%. For that you have my thanks.

Our annual Healthy Living Expo is scheduled for Saturday, September 27 from 9:00-1:00 at the Curtis Culwell Center. There will be activities, exhibits and information on how to live a healthy lifestyle in a sustainable environment. This event is free and certainly worth your time. Another notable event in September is National Preparedness Month. Our Office of Emergency Management is working with a variety of national, state and local organizations to help educate the public about preparing for emergencies. This is a great time to create or update emergency supply kits and plans. Visit www.garland-oem.com or www.knowwhat2do.com for more information.

Council Updates-

We have completed the process of reviewing and approving the proposed 2014-2015 budget. At our September 2nd meeting after much discussion and several failed motions to amend, we approved the budget minus the proposed \$1.92 tax increase. This will hold our tax rate at \$70.46 per \$100k of valuation. That does remove the voter approved and Street Committee recommended increase. The general consensus on the council is that we need to continue to look for ways to increase street funding. We need to remain fiscally responsible and also mindful of the tax burden

on our residents. As I have said before our economic indicators are positive but I feel we should remain cautious about future financial commitments. Garland already carries a higher than average tax rate compared to our surrounding cities. There are many contributing factors to that but we should be aware of that as we work to compete with those cities for new and redevelopment opportunities. We do have a little over \$3 million in surplus from the previous year. The budget also included proposals for those funds for various positions, programs and equipment. Our decision was also to hold that money and take a closer look at the proposals and to also prioritize them for the highest impact. I supported that decision and also the recommendation of a Budget Committee to also advise us. Make no mistake, we will spend it. The key is to spend it wisely. At the same time we did approve the proposed monthly rate increase of \$7.43 for water, wastewater and solid waste collection. Those increases are associated with increased costs for water from the North Texas Municipal Water District, capital improvements to the wastewater system and solid waste collection that will continue funding for the single stream recycling program. Electric and stormwater rates will remain unchanged. This was not an easy decision since I believe we need to be as sensitive to fee increases as we are tax increases. The bottom line for me here was infrastructure improvements and the continuation of our excellent service levels. Speaking of excellent service we also approved the 3% base pay increase for all city personnel. We have held their compensation flat for several years now while giving them some small one time lump sum payments. We were given some stats that showed 61% of our employees were below market rate in pay. I feel strongly that we should take better care of them for the work they do and also be better able to retain and recruit.

District Updates-

We have approved a concept plan for a townhome development at the corner of North Garland and Beltline. It will be very similar to the Shoal Creek development at Campbell and 190. The developer is required to submit a detail plan for final approval. I would imagine this coming back to us later in the fall.

As always I encourage you to use the city's website for information about the city. If that doesn't work you can contact me. My cell phone number is (214) 794-8904 and my direct email is scottlemayd7@gmail.com.

Scott LeMay- Garland City Council, District 7

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Scatter Shooting with Mike Rose

Apparently there has been some confusion regarding the issuing of the second round of the ONA invoice recently received by all in our Oakridge community. The following statement was printed on the front page of the August newsletter. "Your ONA Board has a target of 500 members and with that number much can be accomplished to improve the appearance of the community landscaping. Will you do your part and become a member. A second round of the ONA Invoice will appear in every home late this August. The Board apologizes to those who have joined but it has proven to be much more cost-effective to invoice this way than to individually mail to each home an invoice." Your monthly newsletter contains informative neighborly articles. Do you read your ONA monthly newsletter? Your Board will now analyze the current membership role and proceed to individually contact those who have previously been a member but to-date have not rejoined.

The fall General Meeting is **Thursday SETEMBER 18TH at 6:30.** Speakers will be from the GISD Board, Garland Solid Waste and the Achievement Center. Come and learn how your TAX dollars are being spent. See you there.

A Word of Thanks—Dale Rouze

It is time to say "THANK YOU" to those who have renewed, paid and volunteered to join the (ONA) Oak Ridge Neighborhood Association **to date.** Your understanding of what it takes to run a voluntary association and care for the surrounding properties without mandatory dues is sincerely appreciated. You have shown social responsibility for your neighbors in supporting attempts to continue maintaining and increasing the value of all the homes and properties involved. It is possible that many homeowners do not understand the difference between a voluntary home owners association and mandatory associations that assess required dues as a condition of living in your home. If this is the case please ask for an association officer/volunteer to come by and explain the difference. Paid members now have an "ORANGE" flag identifying their willingness to help and we hope you will keep it placed somewhere in the front of your home to **signify you "stepped up"** to help. You may have to unfurl or reset your flag due to wind and weather. Old flags do not indicate your membership for 2014/2015. **The neighborhood is proud of your volunteer membership.** The ONA officer/volunteers do not have the responsibility to regulate how you care for your property. However, any citizen of Garland has the right to report violations of the Garland City Code regarding your home and property front, side, and back. The Code Compliance information is on the City of Garland website or you may contact our City Council Representative Scott LeMay at scottlemayd7@gmail.com. for information. I hope you enjoy the community you live in and take advantage of any "extra" privileges membership may offer you. If your ONA flag disappears please contact an officer/volunteer and we will check against the paid list and bring you a replacement. Some of you may have just been waiting for the second sign up form you recently received and **now you have the opportunity to "step up"**.

"In Balance" with Dave Morgan, CPA, Real Estate Broker, ONA Board Treasurer and Sales Manager

No numbers are presented again this month. We are still early into this fiscal year, and any analysis remains not very meaningful. We remain focused on getting members for this fiscal year (June 01, 2014 - May 31, 2015), and we need you to be a part of the ONA! You should have already received our special invoice edition mailing a few weeks ago as this September edition is in your hands as is your ONA discount membership card. If you paid but did not use that "invoice format" to make your membership payment over these past few months, please verify that your check cleared your bank in this fiscal year to make sure your membership is in good order. If you do not have the bright orange ONA member flag in your yard, we do NOT show you having paid for this membership year. Thanks to those of you joining us already!

As you will read elsewhere, the major entrance infrastructure improvements have started BUT will be hard to see until plantings are done when the weather cools. The ONA discount membership card to **MEMBERS ONLY** has been issued and will be accepted at participating businesses in the surrounding area. These folks will provide ONA members with discounts/specials on merchandise and services. Go to "OakridgeNA.org" often to view the growing number of retailer monthly specials as we are getting the program operational over these first few months and beyond.

We are officially re-registered as a City of Garland Neighborhood Based Group.

The City of Garland is holding hearings on updating and consolidating its development codes (including the zoning, subdivision, and site development ordinances) into a comprehensive development code. These hearings will be the next few Thursdays and perhaps beyond. Those days are September 11th, 18th, and 25th at 7:00 pm at 521 West State Street. More information at the special City website "www.garlanddevcode.org; email at GDC@garlandtx.gov; or call 972-205-2990. Please attend!

Current City Code requires that permits be taken out for construction projects BUT not all construction projects. Construction that involves structural changes to your home or new unattached additions (a fence or storage building for example) will almost always require a permit. Further, replacement of an existing hot water heater requires a permit – usually the repair or replacement of an existing fence on the same fence line generally does not require a permit. Doing new plumbing inside or outside (new irrigation systems) requires a permit – putting in replacement countertops do not require a permit. Replacing the air conditioning condensing unit and/or the heating system requires a permit – repairing the air conditioner does not require a permit. If you are doing electrical work, contact the City to see if a permit is needed for the type of work being done. Demolition of swimming pools, interior walls, and entire structures including the slab requires a permit – putting in replacement/new carpet, tile/wood/laminate flooring does not require a permit. A pool type structure with water to be over 24 inches deep requires a permit. Replacing a roof does not require a permit unless over 25% or more of the decking is replaced. There are other permitting requirements AND they can change from time to time. Deal with reputable construction professionals, and verify their statement that "no permitting is needed" by doing your own "trust but verify" research. Neighbors may state they did get a permit, but they may have accidentally broken code. As a Real Estate Broker, I must advise you that when you sell your home, there is a specific question on the Home Disclosure Form where you declare that you got all required building permits while owning your home. If the City finds a permit was done after you sold your home, and they have the new home owner redo that work, then you are legally on the hook to reimburse the new home owner for his costs – including the permit. Your home survey will also have to be updated. Remember, the common thread in requiring permits is that the City wants your home to be ultimately as safe as reasonably possible for you, all those in your home, and surrounding neighbors for the many, many years to come.

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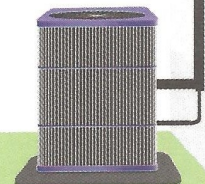
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Upcoming ONA General Meeting Date and Location

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September 18 Meeting Information

Meeting Topics and Guest Speakers- Scott LeMay, City Council; Garland Independent School District Bond Election; City of Garland Environmental Services; Achievement Center of Texas; ONA Membership Benefits; Oakridge Entrances Improvement Update. Come Join us and learn more about your neighborhood!

Enjoy the benefits of your *Oakridge Neighborhood Association* by joining today at: <http://oakridgena.org/join.htm> or use the form in the *Oakridge News Membership Invoice Edition – September 2014*.

Duck Creek Golf Update—Mike Ussery

Summer is almost over and great fall golf weather is upon us. With the summer growing season, some rain and a lot of hard work the golf course is really looking good. As anyone who has played the course is aware, the greens are outstanding. Many Oakridge residents have played the course and an increasing number are becoming regulars.

your free month. Through daily fee rates, annual membership or Player Development membership we hope to see everyone with an Oakridge address making Duck Creek their preferred place to play.

If you have not had a chance to play the course or are ready to play more frequently, we want to extend a special invitation for Oakridge residents to receive a free month of Player Development Membership. Just visit with the golf shop staff prior to October 1, 2014 and enroll for

If you are looking to get started with playing golf, our PGA Professionals are ready to provide private or group instruction to help you improve your game. Also, the Duck Creek Grill is open daily with lunch menu items, cold beer and other beverages. We hope to see you soon and we appreciate your support. You can always visit www.duckcreekgc.com for more golf course info.

ONA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes—September 4, 2014

At the September 3, 2014 Board of Directors meeting, we continued to discuss our efforts to increase membership. We have been out in the neighborhood encouraging folks to join and placing bright orange flags in the yards of ONA members. We are about to kick off our, members only, discount card for use at local merchants. If you are a member, we will be distributing these cards to your home soon.

The drip irrigation system at the Ridge Oak and Jupiter entrance has been installed and is operational. We will move next to the Beltline and Laurel Oaks median with drip irrigation and then start to consider new plantings for these areas. Thanks to your membership dues we are able to enhance our neighborhood entrances. Please support your ONA.



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