

Willow Creek Estates News and Views

Spring 2013

<http://willowcreekestatetx.com>

Newsletter editors: WCHOA Board

President: Dave Bethancourt
bdave@grandecom.net

First VP: Melissa Jewett
melissa@reagan.com

VP: Kathy Dial
kathleen_dial@msn.com

VP: Kim Davis
kimdavis.afc@gmail.com

VP: Marianne Moore
marimooore2001@yahoo.com

Secretary: Paula Brown
paulabrownhome@gmail.com

Director: Dave Bethancourt
bdave@grandecom.net

Director: Jeff Sones
jeffreysones@grandecom.net

Director: Tom Conley
twconley@gmail.com

Treasurer: Carol Short
cshort101@gmail.com

Message from the President

I hope everyone in the neighborhood is doing well and looking forward to an enjoyable summer.

The Board has been busy again the past few months preparing for upcoming events:

- From all reports that we have received, our annual neighborhood spring garage sale event was a resounding success.
- Our previously referred to "annual spring cleanup" will not take place this spring. The City of San Marcos holds 3 of these events in the spring and 3 in the fall. They spread them out among the neighborhoods that are interested. They have 3 neighborhoods that were interested that haven't had one more recently than ours so we have put our name in the hat for the fall.
- The annual meeting and election of officers is coming up Sunday June 2nd and we will be asking for volunteers to serve on the Board. This year's annual meeting will be held at Cody's Bistro and Lounge, and they have graciously offered to host this meeting. The HOA will supply all non-alcoholic beverages and Cody's will have some small munchies for us to enjoy.
- As we have not been able to secure a suitable location for a sign on Great Oaks, we have decided to proceed with the construction of a replacement sign on Reimer. This should begin shortly. If you would like to contribute to this cause it is not too late to send your sign donation to: WCHOA Treasurer, 2442 Great Oaks, San Marcos, TX 78666.

We seem to have had a rash of unrestrained dogs harassing walkers in the neighborhood. I would like to remind everyone to keep your pets up and anyone who experience problems to contact Animal Control at the City or County as the case may be.

Having such good neighbors and being part of a great neighborhood has made my year as President of our HOA a pleasure and I want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve. Any recommendations or suggestions for improvements can be made by contacting one of our Board members, as well a reporting any violations of our deed restrictions to one of the three Directors. I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting in June.

I also want to thank the dedicated group of individuals who volunteer their time and efforts to serve as board members and officers of the HOA. Your service is greatly appreciated.

--Dave Bethancourt, President



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San Marcos CISD Calls \$77 Million Bond Vote

New stadium and prekindergarten campus, new security upgrades among ballot propositions

San Marcos CISD voters will go to the polls May 11 to decide whether to issue \$77 million in bonds to fund construction of a new stadium and numerous other projects throughout the district.

Nearly 24.8 million of the bond money would go toward renovations and additions to five elementary and middle school campuses, providing for energy efficiency and handicap accessibility, according to information provided by San Marcos CISD. Other projects would target academic and athletic performance for students.

"It is a significant investment, but I think it is needed," said Paul Mayhew, a trustee for San Marcos CISD. "I think it is something to put out there and let the voters decide. The voters need to be able to tell us if they want that debt or not. If we can explain why those programs are needed, I think they will respond."

If the election fails, Superintendent Mark Eads said the district will have no choice but to dip into its funds for maintenance and operations to make urgent repairs to its facilities, replacing roofs at two campuses and making improvements that bring the facilities into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. "And when we do that, I'll be coming to you and saying 'Ok, here's the program we're going to cut that had a positive impact on academics. Here's the teaching positions we're going to have to cut because we don't have the resources to take care of those,'" Eads told trustees Feb. 18.

The election would also raise \$12.7 million for a new prekindergarten campus that would serve 600 students. It would be constructed on the site of the old Bowie Elementary School campus on Hwy. 123. Consolidation of the district's prekindergarten program into a single facility would free up space for growth at the elementary schools, said Eads, who added that an expanded prekindergarten facility would more than pay for itself through cost savings as students learn more skills to advance through subsequent grade levels. "If you have success at the early ages, you don't have to invest the funds later to try to catch them up," Eads said. "We're playing catch-up for many, many years, and our feeling is that we need to start at earlier grade levels to get them on target."

Pair of propositions

Following Eads' recommendations, trustees voted unanimously Feb. 25 to call the bond election. They decided to divide the ballot into two propositions.

The first proposition, at about \$58.6 million, would pay for the campus improvements, the new prekindergarten facility, and a new campus for the district's Phoenix and Disciplinary Alternative Education programs, as well as safety and security improvements and additions to the district's support services facility.

The first measure includes \$13.6 million to build a new student activity complex and renovate the track and field, softball and baseball facilities. The complex would include an indoor field, gym area, weight rooms, locker rooms and other facilities.

The second proposition, at \$18.4 million, would fund the construction of a new stadium. The San Marcos High School Rattlers play football games at Texas State University's Bobcat Stadium. Scheduling conflicts with the Bobcats require the Rattlers to play many of their home games on Thursday evenings, Eads said, forcing players to stay up late on school nights. The new stadium would seat about 8,000 people and give the Rattlers their "own home to defend," he said.

Some board members said they wished the first proposition had been broken into multiple options, allowing voters to identify which specific projects they support. "I just feel like this whole thing would be better received if it wasn't so rushed," said trustee John Crowley, who added that he had "major reservations" about the election. "Some of [the projects] I can support and some of them I can't, but ultimately it will be up to the voters."

Combining multiple projects in one bond proposition gives the school district financial flexibility, Eads said. If one project is completed for less than the estimated cost, the leftover funds can be allocated to another project included in the proposition.

If voters approve both proposition, San Marcos CISD property taxes would increase by about \$70 per year – or less than \$6 per month – per \$100,000 of property value, the district estimated. The propositions are based in part on a facilities assessment by the district's architects and were recommended by a citizens advisory committee.

"It's not a Cadillac version," said Mark Newton, a committee co-chairman. "It is needed for our students, it is needed for our community, but there is that reality of what will pass and what we can afford."

****This story is reprinted with approval from Community Impact and was originally written by Wes Ferguson, and you can find them both at <http://impactnews.com/austin-metro/san-marcos-buda-kyle>**

How to Find a Lost Pet

The following information is provided by PetRescue.com



To locate a lost cat or dog, first search your property – cats and small dogs can get into tight places. Then walk around the neighborhood. Talk to everyone about your pet, and give out your phone number. Try making a noise that your animal is familiar with while walking – animals can hear you from a long way off. Stop often and listen for a response. Also, put personal items with a strong scent outside your home to attract your pet – dirty clothes work well.

Call local veterinarians and emergency clinics, and ask if an unidentified animal has been brought in. And, visit local animal shelters and animal-control agencies. Be sure to post flyers within a one-mile radius of where you last saw your pet. Give a phone number, but no name or address and offer a reward. If possible, put a color photo of your pet on each flyer.

In addition to the above information, be sure to check the WCHOA website where information is posted about lost and found pets (and other items) in our subdivision. This is a service provided for Willow Creek residents via your HOA. Check out the WCHOA "Lost and Found Service" on our website. <http://WillowCreekEstatesTX.com/category/lost-found>.

A LETTER FROM JIM NUSE, SAN MARCOS CITY MANAGER

Dear Neighbors:

Vision San Marcos: A River Runs Through Us www.sanmarcostx.gov/vision

I am pleased to report to you that the most significant project of our time—envisioning and creating our new Comprehensive Plan to guide community growth, preservation and development --is nearing completion after thousands of hours of dreams, discussions and decisions contributed by the citizens of San Marcos and our City staff.

The Comp Plan Steering and Citizens Advisory Committees are wrapping up their work and the Planning and Zoning Commission has held one hearing and will continue its review of the plan during March. We anticipate the Comp Plan going to the City Council in April for consideration and approval—with a great celebration of the success that our community has achieved to follow.

The Comprehensive Plan is written to be a very readable, usable document accessible to citizens, neighborhoods, decision-makers, developers, the business community—everyone with a stake in our future.

“The plan is a deliberate and intentional investment in creating an enhanced, stable built environment interwoven with nature,” the introduction states. “Diligence, commitment and our pledge to follow and implement the plan as described in the document are the duties of elected officials, staff and the community. Citizens, business leaders and city officials are charged with oversight of the Plan; we owe this to the past and future generations of San Marcos.”

The plan offers Vision Statements, Goals and Objectives in six major areas: Economic Development, Environment and Resource Protection, Land Use, Parks, Public Spaces and Facilities, Neighborhoods and Housing, and Transportation. You can find the draft copy of the plan on the City’s web site at www.sanmarcostx.gov/vision as well as a summary of each of the six areas.

I want to express my personal thanks to the hundreds of citizens from all walks of life who participated over the past year and a half in the Dream San Marcos process, development of the Comp Plan, and brought their passion and insights to this complex process.

I also want to bring to your attention the development of our first Youth Master Plan this spring. City Council Member Kim Porterfield is serving as the guiding light on this project. We have a Youth Master Plan Steering Committee at work led by Bea Flores, Director of Student Services at San Marcos CISD, Pastor Mark Newton of the First Baptist Church and Gage Sears, a San Marcos High School senior.

In March the committee is holding four “Community Conversations” to ask youth, parents, teachers, grandparents, employers, institutions—all those with a stake in our future—about how we can help our youth succeed in life. Visit our website at www.sanmarcostx.gov/youth for dates and times for these special meetings. Our goal is to complete the Youth Master Plan in June.

The involvement of citizens like you is essential to creating the kind of community and the kind of future that we want for San Marcos. Please know our doors are always open for your participation!

Sincerely,

Jim Nuse

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

Want to share some of your photos? We would like to have some new photos to display on our website. Send your favorite neighborhood photos (pool, family, pets, flowers, deer, etc.) to us at wchoa99@gmail.com.

Hays County Commissioners Court Approves Road Construction Partnership Plan with TxDOT

Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, TX – The Hays County Commissioners Court Tuesday unanimously approved a resolution to develop and construct projects in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) that will be funded in part by \$35 million in savings accrued from the County's successful Pass-Through and Priority Road Bond programs. The resolution came following a presentation by the County's transportation consultant, Mike Weaver of Prime Strategies, Inc.

The proposal calls for a total of \$88 million from TxDOT, \$48 million of which will be reimbursed to the state agency through a Transportation Reinvestment Zone (TRZ). TxDOT would also contribute \$40 million in new construction costs for projects developed by Hays County.

"By taking advantage of innovative partnership arrangements, low interest rates and lower-than-expected material and labor costs we've managed to bring our road projects in well under budget," County Judge Bert Cobb, M.D., said. "That's good news for anyone who travels through or within Hays County because we can fund more road improvements for our stressed transportation system."

"We've had discussions with TxDOT and local governments that resulted in a proposal that focuses on critical transportation needs countywide," Precinct 3 Commissioner Will Conley said. "TxDOT has been a great partner in past and current funding programs, and we are looking forward to this next step in improving mobility and safety in Hays County while creating economic development in some areas."

The resolution recommends a proposal funding nine projects throughout the county, some funded by proposed TRZs. A TRZ could allow TxDOT to pay for upfront construction costs that are then paid back by tax revenue from increased property values in the TRZ. And in some cases swapping roadways between the state highway system and a city or county is expected to bring improvements faster and less expensively.

"Funding this plan will allow us to complete some new projects and position others to take advantage of additional funding when that funding becomes available as well as finish some projects that have been hoped for and discussed for years," said Precinct 1 Commissioner Debbie Gonzales Ingalsbe. "If approved by TxDOT, the state agency would supply \$48 million in upfront costs to finish the eastern portion of the FM 110 loop from the IH-35 Bridge at Yarrington Road to State Highway 123. Improvements and economic potential in that area could finally be realized – it's been on the table for several decades. The money would be reimbursed to TxDOT through a proposed TRZ along FM 110."

"An east-west route between the northwestern part of the county and the IH-35 corridor is desperately needed," Precinct 4 Commissioner Ray Whisenant said. "The plan includes using part of FM 150 and creating a new roadway to make that happen, which will be an economic plus as well as addressing mobility and safety issues drivers face as they struggle to make their way to or from IH-35. We need to start planning now to ensure we preserve that corridor's right of way for when funding becomes available."

According to Precinct 2 Commissioner Mark Jones, another piece of the proposal is to remove a stretch of FM 967 between FM 1626 and Buda from the state highway system and place the Buda Truck Bypass on the state system. "That's a swap that makes sense," Jones said. "Improving FM 967 to relieve traffic congestion west of Buda and building the truck by-pass would take care of Buda's two biggest safety and mobility priorities. The truck by-pass is the only way to route trucks around downtown Buda, which Buda has been trying to do since the 1970s."

The proposal is on its way to TxDOT for review and the Commissioners Court expects to hear from TxDOT sometime in April.

For information about all nine projects visit www.co.hays.tx.us and choose Plans, Policies & Reports from the Government drop-down tab at the top of the page.

REMINDERS – LET’S KEEP OUR NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFUL AND SAFE

- Now that we’ve had some spring rains, it is time to cut those easements. Easements on all lots should be kept cut and debris removed. Vacant lots should be kept cleared back at least 10 feet.
- Obey the posted speed limits – we have lots of walkers and joggers and no sidewalks.
- Pets should not be allowed to run loose in the neighborhood.
- Trash and recycling bins should not be left out at the street after the trash pickup.
- Signs posted around neighborhood for garage sales and lost pets should be removed after the events.
- Fireworks are illegal within the city and also the ETJ which means they are illegal any place in our subdivision.

DID YOU KNOW?

The easiest way to keep informed about what is going on in your neighborhood is to send us your email address so you will receive email notices and neighborhood alerts. Send your email address to us at wchoa99@gmail.com. We can even send our emails to more than one household member. Your email address is considered confidential and will not be shared.

Our dues are only \$20 per calendar year. Don’t recall whether or not you have paid your dues? Go to our website and send an inquiry and we will check your dues status. Just follow this link: <http://willowcreekestatetx.com/membership/dues-inquiry>.



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fax (512)396-9616

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