

# *Willow Creek Estates News and Views*

## *Summer 2011*

<http://willowcreekestatetx.com>

Newsletter editors: WCHOA Board

**President: Jeff Sones**  
*jeffreysones@grandecom.net*

**First VP: Melissa Jewett**  
*melissa@reagan.com*

**VP: Robert Mooney**  
*rmooney8@austin.rr.com*

**VP: Kathy Dial**  
*kathleen\_dial@msn.com*

**VP: Jay Stiles**  
*jay.stiles@live.com*

**VP: Kim Davis**  
*kimredraider@austin.rr.com*

**Director: Dave Bethancourt**  
*bdave@grandecom.net*

**Director: Bob Galinger**  
*galinger@grandecom.net*

**Director: Ray Kotowski**  
*buck@grandecom.net*

**Secretary: Don Griffin**  
*grif67@hotmail.com*

**Treasurer: Carol Short**  
*ashort@centurytel.net*

### ***Greetings:***

We had a great annual meeting. I want to especially thank County Commissioner Will Conley for coming by and addressing some of our questions and concerns. We added three new board members to the board; Bob Galinger as director, Ray Kotowski as director, and Kim Davis as Vice President. Tom Conley and June Holland decided to step down, but we appreciate their input and hard work. Your officers for the next year are listed above. WCHOA is managed by volunteer Willow Creek residents who serve a minimum of one year terms. We are always looking for new Board members and welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer a little time to keep our community a peaceful, family oriented place to live.

There were many important different issues discussed in the general meeting, one was the fact of raising our yearly dues. It was voted on and passed by the general membership present that we should raise our dues \$5.00 a year, for a total of \$20.00 a year. As a board, we have yet to decide on when to implement the raise, but we did decide that if you had already paid your dues for this year and beyond, we would not raise them until the following year. We would love some feedback from all of our residents on this issue. Please feel free to e-mail any of the board members listed above to give us your opinion on this and any other subjects you would like to discuss. We do work for you.

Another item that was discussed was putting together a voluntary donation fund to help offset the costs of our new entrance signs. There is a big cost savings doing the next two at the same time, and we would love to be able to have additional funding to help with the total cost. If anyone would like to donate financial support toward these neighborhood updates, please send your donations to our Treasurer, Carol Short at 2442 Great Oaks Drive. You can also contact Carol at her e-mail address listed above.

In addition to the new entrance sign, some other accomplishments for the past year include getting the city to put center stripes on Stagecoach, selling ads on the website and newsletter to help cover the associated expenses, and working to resolve deed restriction violations. Please be mindful of your deed restrictions.

If you received one of the door prizes at the annual meeting, please remember to "Thank" our donors to let them know we appreciate their generosity. Door prizes were contributed by Texas Roadhouse, Conley Car Wash, Tres Hermanes, Lowe's, Center Point Station, Root Cellar, Twist & Shout Frozen Yogurt, and Kathy Dial.

We are looking forward to this next year and don't forget about our upcoming events:

National (Texas) Night Out – Tuesday, October 4, 2011

Christmas Lighting Contest – Christmas Holidays

-- Jeff Sones, President

### ***Get Involved!***

The Willow Creek Home Owners Association (WCHOA) really needs every homeowner's support...and this means YOU. Our collective efforts with the potential for over 400 households working together can continue to make our neighborhood the prettiest and safest in San Marcos. We need to stand together to enhance property values, limit criminal activities, and make the neighborhood pleasing for all our inhabitants. By joining the association you will have a direct say in decisions that affect our roads, how and where we erect new signs, and such annual activities as the Christmas decorating contest and the Neighborhood Night Out program. Please use the payment coupon on the back page and complete your application. Remember, the more members, the more political clout we will have.

## ***New Neighborhood Entrance Sign:***

We hope all of you have seen the new entrance sign for our community at the intersection of Stagecoach Trail and Snyder Hill Drive. This rock sign was originally necessitated by the construction ongoing across the street. Because of some truly imaginative creativity by the Board members, it not only replaces our old sign, but is a much more classy representation of the attractiveness of our neighborhood. Rock signs of this nature are expensive to design and build, but due to the talents and volunteer efforts of some of our neighbors, we were able to erect this sign and remove the old one at about half the cost had we used only commercial professionals.



The board and all our residents owe a big “thank you” and “job well done” to the following neighbors: Melissa & Jeff Jewett, Bob Mooney, Dave Bethancourt, Ray Kotowski, and Jeff & Karen Sones. Also, we need to recognize and thank our neighbors, Mike and Patricia Blanton on Snyder Hill Drive, who so generously agreed to sign an easement on the portion of their land that the sign sits on.

In the near future, the board plans to continue our upgrade of signs by replacing our current sign at the intersection of Reimer and Philo Streets and to erect a new sign on Great Oaks Drive. Even with the cost-reducing efforts of our volunteers, these signs require a considerable investment from our general fund. We are soliciting volunteer donors for the new community sign and have already received contributions from Kathleen Dial, John & Virginia Durrett, Donald & Polly Griffin, and Gary & Christine Winek. Whatever monies we raise by voluntary donations to the sign fund will only be used to help pay for the signs. You can make a donation to our sign fund of any amount you wish. Designate that you want it to go into the sign fund and forward it to our WCHOA Treasurer, Carol Short, 2442 Great Oaks Drive. Please pitch in and help us make our community an even more attractive place to live.

**Tom Taber GMB**

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# Hays County, Texas

Submitted by Will Conley  
Hays County Commissioner Precinct 3  
[will.conley@co.hays.tx.us](mailto:will.conley@co.hays.tx.us)

## Hays County Commissioners Court: Move Forward on County-wide Transportation Plan

**Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, TX** – The Hays County Commissioners Court has authorized transportation planning company Parsons Brinkerhoff to move forward with developing a county-wide transportation plan to update the County's existing 10-year-old plan. At its July 19 meeting, the Court agreed that considerable input is needed from municipal government planners and the general public to ensure that the new plan takes recent population growth (some 60,000 people have moved to Hays County since the last plan was adopted) and future growth corridors into consideration.

By mid August the Court expects to begin the process of selecting appointees to a Citizens Committee that will work with County staff and Parsons Brinkerhoff to address planning needs. A series of public meetings and workshops will also be held to give the public an opportunity to voice transportation concerns and recommendations.

The Court also noted that while regional transportation plans exist that have had County input, it is critical for the County and the municipalities in it to coordinate on transportation planning within Hays County to maximize available dollars and minimize the potential for bottlenecks that can occur when different road systems intersect. The Court set a cap of \$325,000 for the study, with instructions to Parsons Brinkerhoff to build on previous plans as much as possible to keep the cost under the maximum. All but \$50,000 of that amount is available in the current 2011 budget.

Specific scope-of-work items to be addressed by the planning process include:

- Development of a transportation plan that is based on sound technical analysis
- Accommodate growth while maintaining and improving access to destinations for the traveling public (e.g., work, school, shopping, residential)
- Maintenance and improvement of the transportation system and the mobility of its users
- Provide Hays County with the information and tools needed to preserve the right-of-way needed for future transportation improvements
- Development of a transportation plan through an open and transparent process that provides numerous and various ways for the public to stay involved and provide input into the process
- Creation and adoption of a transportation plan that not only addresses specific project needs but ones that also sets an overall direction for the transportation future of Hays County.

## ***Willow Creek Neighborhood Night Out:***

It's getting close to that time of the year again! Many of you have participated in our Texas Night Out gatherings in past years and we plan to have a similar function the first Tuesday in October - the 4th. This is a time we set aside each year to take a few minutes in an evening to come out and interact with our neighbors. It's organized as part of our Neighborhood Watch program and has been a rousing success in the last couple of years. We hope you will be involved this year as it really is a "the more the merrier" kind of night.

Your Neighborhood Watch are neighbors helping neighbors by looking after their homes when they are away, helping keep everyone aware of any issues in our community and interacting with local law enforcement. Willow Creek is a good place to live and there are very few incidents of any kind, and we believe the Neighborhood Watch program helps contribute to that.

This year's Neighborhood Night Out will have food and drinks, activities for the kids, representatives from local law enforcement and the fire department, local office holders, and lots of door prizes. We are going to try to and have some live music again this year. Mark the date on your calendar and we will be sending out details as we get closer to the event. New volunteers are very welcome!

## ***Loose Dog Alert! Loose Dog Alert!***

Loose dog alert! The email says. In Hays County, TX, this notice should never happen. A dog running loose in any part of Hays County is breaking the law – and so is its owner. Plainly said, if you own a dog in Willow Creek it must be restricted to a fenced area on your property or tethered appropriately to confine it on your property. These same rules apply to the dogs of visitors in your home. Period. No exceptions.

Willow Creek is a great neighborhood with a maze of straight, wide streets which invite walkers, joggers, and bikers. My dog and I are fitness walkers. We can weave in and out of streets and walk up to 4 miles and never leave the neighborhood. Exercising while "neighboring" is great and, over the five years we have lived here we have enjoyed our healthy, friendly neighborhood.

BUT – an enjoyable walk with my dog, my friend's daily jog, bikers logging miles around the neighborhood, and children playing in their own front yards become a nightmare very quickly when residents allow their dogs to run loose. Dogs running loose are not welcome on the streets and in neighbor's yards. These dogs too often "pack up" with other dogs on the loose and create potentially dangerous situations. Lately, I have been concerned about many dogs running loose and not collared or identified in any way. A neighbor told me last week she encountered three dogs congregated in the middle of Mountain Drive, that would not let her pass on her daily run. Willow Creek Circle has had this problem for some time. These are not strays. They are all dogs with collars whose owners allow them to run loose off their property. They are breaking the law.

Three years ago, my dog and I were walking on Stagecoach and three Jack Russell's running loose jumped both my dog and me. Fortunately, the owners drove by and rescued us before there was any serious injury. That was when I started to carry a yellow plastic baseball bat. I'm sure you've seen me. It's my way of defending my dog and me. A week rarely goes by that I don't have to raise it in defense against two or three dogs creating a threatening climate on the street. We no longer walk on one specific street in Willow Creek because of a large dog, which runs aggressively from his yard and taunts my dog. The Animal Control officer stopped me one day and asked me if I was carrying my yellow baseball bat because dogs running loose had become such a problem. When I told him yes, he gave me the phone number to call to report them. I have it programmed into my cell phone and have shared it with other walkers and bikers.

Do my baseball bat and my phone number for Animal Control solve our neighborhood's problem? No. Not at all. The problem is not the dogs. It's the human beings, the residents that break the law and allow their dogs to run loose. Whether you own a dog or not, make very certain you are clear on the laws regarding dog ownership in Hays County. These are common courtesy guidelines for Willow Creek residents. But they are animal control LAWS of Hays County. (Please refer to Fourth Amended Hays County Animal Control Ordinance No. 20893, specifically page 3)

Graciously Submitted By Willow Creek Resident...Terri Clamons



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## ***Sound Finances: Our Foundation for the Future:***

The San Marcos City Council adopted five “Strategic Initiatives” earlier this year to fulfill our mission of service to the people of San Marcos. They *include Sound Finances, Customer Friendly Processes, Big Picture Infrastructure, Maintain and Protect the San Marcos River, and Community Wellness/ Strengthen the Middle Class.* These goals are driving our activities at all levels of the City.

In this report to you, I want to elaborate on the first initiative: Sound Finances.

Having a solid financial foundation is critical for every operation of City government. I have been working closely with our leadership team and their capable staffs to accomplish some key objectives:

- Each department has completed a “Functional Analysis” to describe what we do and how we might do things better. We are now presenting those reports at City Council meetings and posting online for the public.
- We are preparing the 2012 budget. The Council has adopted its budget policy and departments are hard at work putting budgets together, with benchmarks that show how we compare with other cities. The City Council will hold workshops, public hearings and discussions in August before the 2012 budget is adopted in September. The fiscal year runs from October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012.
- Our Finance staff has started research on a long-term financial plan.
- We have a consultant reviewing our financial policies.
- Our staff has undertaken a detailed review of the Capital Improvements Program, which sets forth major projects for investment by the City. This review is evaluating our needs, capacity and priorities for facilities, roads, parks, utilities and more.
- We are developing five year financial models with the help of staff and consultants.
- We have a fee analysis underway and we are identifying ways to develop new revenue sources.

Our goal to build a sound financial structure requires painstaking and detailed work. I want to thank the many people who are contributing to this great task, as it becomes the foundation of all that we do.

***Submitted by Jim Nuse, San Marcos City Manager and Willow Creek Resident***

## ***Neighborhood Commission:***

The Neighborhood Commission is now an active body within the City of San Marcos Citizen Boards and Commissions. The purpose of the Neighborhood Commission as set forth in the Horizons Master Plan is to serve as an advisory body to the City Council, other Commissions, and staff to seek solutions to common problems and issues.

The Commission consists of 13 voting members appointed by the City Council. Willow Creek Estates is in Sector 9. Robert Mooney has been appointed to serve as the Commissioner for Sector 9. Robert has also been elected Vice Chair of the Commission. If you are a resident of San Marcos and reside in Sector 9, feel free to contact Robert at 396-3049 to express any concern(s) you might want to have addressed by the Commission.

## Treasurer's Report, June 1, 2010 – May 31, 2011:

Our treasurer (Carol Short) provided the following financial and membership information:

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditures</u>	
Dues Collected	\$3585.00	Annual Meeting	\$ 389.88
Gifts	25.00	Entrance Signs	4444.69
Interest	29.28	Garage Sale	21.00
Newsletter Ads	136.00	Newsletter & Postcards	413.05
Website Ads	900.00	Night Out/Watch Committee	545.26
	<u>\$4675.28</u>	Office Supplies	100.39
		Postage	149.60
		Website Maintenance	<u>280.00</u>
			\$6343.87

For the year just ended (June 1, 2010 – May 31, 2011), we had a total of 208 paid members – a 3% increase over the prior year.

### **Membership: We still need your support!**

**We still need the support of many more of our residents** so we will be able to have new signs constructed at the Reimer and Great Oaks entrances. This is just one example of what your WCHOA Board is doing to improve our neighborhood.

We know you may have heard this before, but a strong financial position is based on strong membership numbers. And in the 2010-2011 year, WCHOA had 208 paid members. **We want to do better in the 2011-2012 year.** Many of us have paid our dues for the current year, but to provide even more and better services and events such as the website, National Neighborhood Night Out, and getting the other two entrance signs built, we need the support of more of our residents. ***Please help us by making sure that your neighbors know about the WCHOA and why you consider your membership an important investment.***

***Thanks again for supporting your HOA! WCHOA records show that your membership is paid through May 31, 2012.***

### **The Old versus the New:**

A side by side comparison.....what a difference a sign can make!

