

Willow Creek Estates News and Views

Winter 2012

<http://willowcreekestatetx.com>

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Message from the President

We had another exceptional "Neighborhood Night Out" at Dick's Classic Car Garage on October 2nd. Again this year we had a great crowd and the weather was phenomenal. This event gives us all an opportunity to meet new friends and neighbors. We also had approximately 150 people including the wonderful representatives from the San Marcos Police and Fire Departments, the Hays County Sherriff's Department, the constable, and local political candidates and officials. There was plenty to eat including hot dogs, popcorn, and lots of door prizes.

National Night Out is an annual event that encourages neighborhoods to stage block parties for the purpose of using relationships to help prevent possible crime in the area. If you weren't able to attend this year, we hope you will be able to next year. In Texas, this yearly event is held on the first Tuesday in October, so add it to next year's calendar now.

A special thanks to the many local businesses for their generosity in donating gift certificates and merchandise for the door prizes! Please utilize the businesses that support your community. Donations were received by: Target (all the drinks, ice and many gifts), McCoy's Building Supply, Texas Roadhouse, Luke Wester Automotive, Conley's Carwash and Oil Change Center, Sage Capital Bank, Dick's Classic Car Garage, Waterford Royal Dolton, Tres Hermanas Restaurant, and Sunset Lanes. Other donations were received from some of our neighbors as well. We certainly do not want to forget to thank all the board members and some of our residents for volunteering; we could not have this gathering without all their hard work.

On December 11th City Council gave final approval to a brand new single-family subdivision on the west side of our neighborhood between Hernandez and Miller schools. KB Home will begin working with the City engineers and staff to get their preliminary plat completed. They hope to begin construction of the development by September 2013. Your HOA Board has been working closely with the owner's representatives, developer and builder to receive a comprehensive outcome for all.

Some of you may have noticed we now have flags next to our entrance signs on Stagecoach on patriotic national holidays. Mr. John Durrett is providing the flags at his expense. We would like to thank John, as this is a nice addition to our neighborhood entrance.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays

-- Dave Bethancourt



FULL BAR

DAILY DRINK SPECIALS

FULL MENU: 11 am–9 pm

LATE NIGHT APPETIZERS:

9 pm–10 pm

FREE

PESTO APPETIZER

One coupon per table.

Expires: 1/13/13

OPEN FOR LUNCH & DINNER!

512-393-2867

ACROSS FROM THE OUTLET MALLS, NEXT TO STARBUCKS

WWW.CODYSBISTROANDLOUNGE.COM

A WORD FROM THE BOARD REGARDING COVENANT RESTRICTIONS

~Trailers and Motor Homes in Sections 11 and 12~

We seem to have a recurring problem in Sections 11 and 12 with homeowners parking motor homes and trailers contrary to what is permissible in that Section's deed restrictions. Motor homes and travel trailers can only be permanently housed on a lot in a covered garage so they are not visible from the street or another lot. Section 5 of the Section 11 and 12 restrictions reads in part "No motor home, boat, truck, commercial vehicle, travel trailer, or similar vehicle may be parked on any unpaved portion of a Lot at any time, nor in a driveway or street for more than 72 hours. A motor home, boat or travel trailer may be permanently housed on a Lot, but only if it is in a covered garage of adequate size so that it is not visible from any street or other lot."

We have reminded numerous homeowners of this restriction over the last year or so. We currently have several more complaints. It is the desire of the Board that our neighbors in this section will take heed of this writing and abide by the restrictions.

For those unsure of where Sections 11 and 12 are, it is Handler Hollow and Tate, part of Leslie, Mountain, and Great Oaks.

Our covenants are in place to insure the beauty and safety of our neighborhood. Enforcing them is not an attempt to encroach on homeowners' freedoms, but meant as a tool to provide a common set of rules and guidelines which apply to everyone. With cooperation from all homeowners, our neighborhood will continue to be one of the prettiest and most desirable places to live in San Marcos.



Christmas Outdoor Lighting Display Contest

Many of our neighbors put up beautiful outdoor lighting displays during the Christmas Holiday season which certainly enhance our celebration of this special time. Members of your WCHOA Board will be out judging the displays and recognizing those which are considered the best efforts by our neighbors in the following categories:

- 1) Best Overall displays
- 2) Best Theme
- 3) Best Children's Theme
- 4) Best Religious Display
- 5) Most Elegant

Judging will be done during the week beginning December 16th and final decisions will be completed by December 24th and the lucky recipients will be notified. Prizes in previous years have included gift certificates from some local restaurants and businesses. GOOD LUCK!!



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A LETTER FROM JIM NUSE, SAN MARCOS CITY MANAGER

Dear Neighbors:

As 2012 draws to a close, the City of San Marcos is hard at work putting major infrastructure projects on the ground across San Marcos. Our Engineering/ Capital Improvements Department has many projects in construction and in design this year, with more coming in the future.

Anyone who buys groceries is aware of the street and utility construction on Hopkins Street impacting travel to and from our HEB stores. The project at Thorpe and Hopkins will improve the safety, pedestrian access and traffic flow at a very busy intersection. The improvements include new traffic signals, dedicated turn lanes, water lines, storm drains, new sidewalks, and raised medians. I am happy to report this project is nearly completed!

Downtown San Marcos is undergoing a transformation, with the start in September of Phase I of the Downtown Reconstruction Project. This \$10.2 million project will provide underground electric and telecommunications, street and sidewalk reconstruction, drainage, water and wastewater improvements, and pedestrian amenities including lighting, bicycle racks, benches, trees and landscaping, bicycle racks and benches, and a water quality pond near the river. The project will implement many features of the Downtown Master Plan.

Other big projects on the horizon include the Hunter Road improvements, Loop 82 Railroad Overpass, (a TXDOT Project on Aquarena Springs Drive) and Railroad Quiet Zones. Design is 75% complete on the Hunter Road project to improve the road, build a bridge over Purgatory Creek and add pedestrian/ bike facilities. The project will include a round-about traffic feature at Hunter and San Antonio Streets to improve safety and traffic flow.

You can find a list of projects on the City of San Marcos website at www.sanmarcostx.gov/construction well as many others that are in design.

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks to you for your support and patience during projects with such big impacts on our community. I encourage you to make special efforts to shop at local businesses affected by construction.

Happy Holidays to you and your families!

Sincerely,

Jim Nuse

How Can We See the Forest, Through the Trees?

Over the past several years we have seen our City bombarded with new multifamily developments proposed by large nationally recognized firms seeking approval for the development of 1000's of new units of housing, presumably for students. The Buie Tract, The Vistas, The Retreat, Hillside Ranch, Aspen Heights, Sessom Drive, Capes Camp...just to name a few. In the midst of all this, our City Council has sought to "bolster the middle class" of San Marcos. But with very few single family developments proposed, it is difficult to bolster a class of citizens that aren't looking for large scale multifamily developments to raise their children in. Then along comes an opportunity...

Lazy Oaks Ranch is a proposed 1,400 acre development located on the west side of the City adjacent to the San Marcos Academy. The developers recently presented their proposed project to the City Council for approval of a Development Agreement which would provide for, in summary, the following:

- Construction of a maximum of 1,750 units
- Connection to City water and wastewater utilities
- Annexation of the property as it is developed
- Preservation of 460 acres of open space
- A variety of lot sizes allowing for a variety of housing types
- Water quality standards that exceed TCEQ requirements

There seems to be a lot of information out there about this project and it seems difficult at times to weed through what the issues are and whether this is a development that will be good for the City. Let's begin with location. It's one of the oldest sayings in real estate...location, location, location.

This project is located entirely over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and contains habitat that is known to be potential habitat for golden-cheek warblers and the black-cap vireo. After all, this property was a finalist as a mitigation property in the Hays County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan. However, the County didn't select this property and therefore, did not purchase it. So that means the owner has all the rights of any other property owner over the recharge zone. Nevertheless, the owner is still establishing an area for conservation/open space preservation that will set aside and preserve some of the most prime habitat on the property.

The TCEQ, EPA and other State and Federal regulatory agencies have established the minimum standards required to develop on property with habitat, sensitive features or over the recharge zone. These standards have been developed by professional engineers, environmentalists, and other professionals who have years of experience in their field and are respected by their colleagues and peers. The Lazy Oaks project proposes to exceed the TCEQ standards for water quality and will abide by all other required development standards.

Density also appears to be a concern that comes up. The idea that this property will be developed as one big multifamily student housing project or another Sagewood or Retreat has been presented. Density is a function of the number of dwelling units per acre. Acreage can be established as gross (total) acreage or net (less open space/preserved areas). So, basic mathematics will tell us that 1,750/1,400 is 1.25 units per gross acre and 1,750/940 is 1.86 units per net acre. These numbers in no way reach densities close to multifamily densities. Furthermore, these densities are well below the maximum 3.0 units per gross acre permitted by the Very Low Density Residential land use category in the Comprehensive Master Plan.

But the development agreement for Lazy Oaks allows for clustering of units, or conservation development, some might argue. The idea behind this type of development is to provide clusters of smaller lot sizes in less desirable areas to preserve more sensitive or desirable areas. Think of it in terms of 100 units on 100 acres. Is it better to distribute 100 units evenly across 100 acres, allowing all areas of all lots to be under private ownership by separate individual property owners or is it better to cluster the 100 homes on 20 acres at a density of 5 units per acre and preserve the remaining portion of the property as public or private undevelopable open space? This is a very subjective question that does not have any correct answer. However, studies have shown that cluster or conservation development can increase water quality and have positive effects against the development on a property.

Developments of this kind offer a variety of lot sizes and housing products in a desirable area. Multifamily is not permitted under the development agreement and all dwellings will have to abide by the single family occupancy restrictions of the Land Development Cod(LDC). If a true goal of our Council is to bolster the middle class, then we should provide a variety of single family housing options as proposed by this development. San Marcos has an abundance of housing products that are affordable for first time homebuyers or as investment properties. There are also numerous subdivisions in and around San Marcos that can provide executive level housing for upper management and high-income jobs. However, where do we have move-up, second home-buyer housing for the middle class. These types of individuals expect certain levels of amenities, views, lot sizes and housing types that can only be provided in a location like Lazy Oaks Ranch.

There also seems to be some confusion about where this project is located and the impact it will have on other single family neighborhoods. This property is located behind the San Marcos Academy and will be sharing an entrance with the Academy. The closest single family subdivision is the Settlement and Fox Ridge neighborhoods to the west which are directly adjacent to approximately 1/3 of the property. This neighborhood is a large, multiple acreage lot neighborhood that sits at a higher elevation than the Lazy Oaks property and is heavily vegetated with extensive tree cover. The next closest single family neighborhoods would be the houses that are on Summit Ridge Drive in Willow Creek and those along Arroyo Doble off of McCarty Lane which are over a mile away. Arroyo Doble is between Lazy Oaks and Summit Ridge Drive. The houses at the end of Summit Ridge Drive back up to the City-owned Purgatory Creek Greenspace and lie at an elevation that is significantly lower than the Lazy Oaks property. The highest points on Lazy Oaks sit at an elevation that is up to 200 feet higher than the intersection of Summit Ridge Drive and Willow Arbor. Visibility between Summit Ridge Drive and Lazy Oaks will be significantly impeded by the topography as well as the existing tree cover between Summit Ridge Drive and Lazy Oaks. Consider this: is the San Marcos Academy visible from the houses in Willow Creek, specifically along Summit Ridge Drive? If the Academy is not visible or is minimally visible, the houses that will be constructed will not be as large as the Academy's buildings and will be less visible or not visible at all.

Deciphering fact from fiction or truth from misinformation can often be a difficult and vexing task. It is much easier to accept information provided by a friend or read in an online blog. However, doing so does a great injustice to a freedom and right that we are all blessed to have: freedom of individual thought. We are blessed to live in a country where we have unlimited access to resources that allow us to research and investigate the issues that affect us and to formulate our own, individual opinions. I encourage everyone to take advantage of every opportunity available to learn about this great project, see the forest through the trees and develop your own opinion about this development.

Submitted by: Jeff Jewett
Willow Creek Estates Resident

Staying in the Loop: Your E-mail Address is the Key

You want to know what's going on in the neighborhood and what your Homeowners Association is up to. The best way to do that is to share your email address with us. That'll help us keep you in the loop – in real time – about what's going on in Willow Creek. We use your e-mail address to distribute the Newsletter and to put out alerts you need to know about such as vandalism, scam artists, thefts, lost or found pets, or other timely information. We only use your e-mail address to keep you hooked in to Willow Creek information. We don't sell it. We don't share it. So, please, send us a quick message from the email account you'd like us to use to contact you, and we'll add you to the list. More than one email address? No problem. We'll be happy to make sure both of them are covered. Carol Short, our Treasurer, would love to hear from you. You can reach her at wchoa99@gmail.com. Stay in touch!

WILLOW CREEK HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

c/o WCHOA Treasurer
2442 Great Oaks Dr
San Marcos, TX 78666-5034
<http://WillowCreekEstatesTX.com>

Billing Date: December 15, 2012

INVOICE

For the period
January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

Dues for the 2013 year, which are now due, are only \$20 per household. Membership in WCHOA is a real bargain in terms of value as we work to provide even more services and activities for residents and families.

It is okay to pay ahead. You may pay dues for future year at the current \$20 rate.

Checks should be made payable to "WCHOA" and mailed to the address at the bottom of this page.

Please return bottom portion with your payment

Willow Creek Homeowners Association, Inc.

Name: _____

(Please include spouse/partner)

Address: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Phone number: _____ **email address:*** _____

*Please note that email addresses will NOT be shared. They will only be used to communicate WCHOA items to our residents. We can easily accommodate up to two email addresses and two phone numbers in our database.

Amount Paid: \$ _____

Make check payment to "WCHOA" and mail to:

WCHOA Treasurer
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