

The City of Bunker Hill Village

Website: www.bunkerhill.net

January 2007

ELECTED CITY OFFICIALS

Mayor	William H. Marshall
Alderman	Peter V. Tuters
Alderman	Susan B. Schwartz
Alderman	David T. Ellis
Mayor Pro Tem	Derry D. Essary
Alderman	Michelle H. Belco

The City Council holds its regular meetings on the third Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m.

OFFICE HOURS:

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
We may be reached at 713-467-9762. For after-hours utility emergencies, please call the Memorial Villages Police Department at 713-365-3700.

The Code of Ordinances is available at City Hall or via our website – www.bunkerhill.net.

2006 Tax Rate:

After careful review, your Bunker Hill Village City Council unanimously voted to keep the 2006 property tax rate at \$0.307944 per \$100 valuation, which is the same as the 2005 rate. The Council, Mayor and City Administrator are very sensitive to the tax burden on our residents. During our budgeting process, we vigorously discussed, and often debated, how Bunker Hill's needs impact the overall tax burden on our residents. Over the last eight years, we have been able to reduce the tax rate 17% recognizing that property values have increased 67%.

During this period, we have accomplished significant drainage, water plant, street, sidewalk and other infrastructure improvements that will benefit Bunker Hill residents for many years to come, both in terms of actual enjoyment, as well as enhanced property values.

We realize that higher tax revenues (even with a flat tax rate), are an additional burden on our residents. We would not have voted to keep the tax rate the same had we not found, after careful review of the proposed budgets, that the additional revenues will serve the residents well in terms of life safety, life services, and property value support. We also very much value and appreciate the resident input we receive on this subject.

Perhaps more importantly, we have focused on the true needs of our Police and Fire/Medical

Response departments bringing them to "World Class" performance with the right personnel, training and equipment. For the record, Police and Fire/EMS consume over 100% of our property taxes not dedicated to debt service and roughly 80% of our total administrative (non-utility) budget. Numerous examples of how this is paying off for our residents can be cited.

FINANCIAL POSITION:

Over the past few years, our financial position has continued to be very strong and improving in spite of a relatively large capital expenditure program. Bunker Hill Village is rated Aa3 by Moody's Investor Services, one of the premier debt rating agencies. Moody's has nineteen different debt rating levels. There are only three levels higher than our current rating. None of our neighboring municipalities, with bond indebtedness, have a higher rating.

According to Moody's, our ratings are primarily based on "modest debt ratios and a solid financial position". Currently, we have \$17 million of debt outstanding and against assessed property values of over \$1 Billion.

We expect that our debt level will decline in the future as we have the financing in place for our 2007 capital projects and next year is expected to be the last significant capital investment year in the foreseeable future.

At the end of 2005, we had \$1.7 million in our general fund balance. This is a resource the city carries forward to the next fiscal year. The Government Finance Officers Association, a national group, benchmarks what a good fund balance should be and they recommend you have a minimum of three months expenditures in your fund balance. Last year, we had nine months of expenditures.

2007 CAPITAL PROJECTS:

In an effort to improve the drainage, roadway conditions, and pedestrian access throughout the City, Bunker Hill Village has several projects planned for 2007.

Calco Contracting, Inc. was awarded a \$4.3 million contract, which will begin in January 2007. The project will improve the existing drainage system along the east side of Bunker Hill Road, from Taylorcrest Road to Memorial Drive, with the construction of a new storm sewer system and

enclosing the existing roadside ditch. The system will be designed to optimize depth and capacity to allow connections from side streets.

The drainage improvements will continue on Memorial Drive from Bunker Hill Road to Applewood. The existing roadside ditch on the east and north side of Memorial will be replaced by a storm sewer system. In addition to the drainage improvements, a new eight-foot wide sidewalk will be constructed along Memorial Drive. Drainage improvements, along Memorial Drive, are proposed in the general vicinity of City Hall, extending from near Arbordale Lane to Clarendon Lane on the east side. The proposed improvements will consist of construction of a new storm sewer system, replacement of the existing roadside ditch system, and constructing a new eight-foot wide sidewalk.

The drainage system on the south side of Taylorcrest, from Bunker Hill Road to Blalock Road, will be enclosed and a new eight-foot sidewalk will be constructed.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) has advanced \$1,702,944 to help fund this project. METRO is a Houston area government agency, created by the state legislature and funded by sales tax receipts.

PRIVATE LANE TO PUBLIC STREET:

Construction on Raydon Lane has already begun as part of upgrading this street from a private lane to a public street. The work will include improvements to the water, sanitary and drainage systems, as well as new concrete pavement. This work is being funded by property owners on Raydon and the City of Bunker Hill Village. Other similar projects for private street conversions are under consideration at the request of various property owners in the city. The benefits of private street conversions are numerous and typically include the updating of all utilities and roadways to current city standards, as well as city maintenance of the facilities. To initiate the conversion of a private street, property owners should contact the city to obtain the criteria for conversion.

ISSUED PERMITS AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE:

The City has begun publishing issued permits on the city's web site. Residents can view any new permit at www.bunkerhill.net. This service, as well as new ordinance requirements for subdivision property owner notification of new home construction, is an attempt to keep

residents informed of planned improvements throughout the city.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ZONING:

Zoning in Bunker Hill Village plays a major role in the preservation of new and existing neighborhoods. After a subdivision is complete and the homes are occupied, changes begin to occur. Over a period of time, the character of the neighborhood begins to change, and if left uncontrolled, deterioration will result. Zoning regulations serve to control these changes in response to the individual and collective needs of the community.

Effective zoning depends on the support of the citizens of the community and an understanding of the local zoning regulations. While many will resist zoning on the basis that it restricts what is allowed on private property, few will fail to recognize that zoning is essentially important to the quality of the community.

DEED RESTRICTIONS:

Deed restrictions are a contract entered into by private parties. Even though set-back lines, common areas, and other matters required by deed restrictions may be reflected on a plat filed with the City, those matters remain a contractual relationship between private parties. Chapter 212 of the Local Government Code only permits enforcement of land use restrictions contained in plats by those cities with a population of 1.5 million or more, so long as those cities comply with some other requirements in the statute. Needless to say, the list of Texas cities with a population of 1.5 million or more is rather short.

The filing of the plats with the County makes them a public record, upon which others may rely. While the City may ensure that the plat complies with all of its ordinances, it is not permitted to enforce that contractual relationship between private parties. To ensure that Bunker Hill Village property owners, within subdivisions having recorded deed restrictions, are aware of all new construction and room additions in which the foot print of the building is changed, the city recently enacted an ordinance. This ordinance requires that no building permit be issued until the permit applicant has submitted an affidavit certifying that notice of the permit application has been delivered to each lot owner within the subdivision.

VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT (VFD):

The VFD prides itself on being able to respond to emergencies quickly. In the past four months, it

has taken residents who call 911 an average of 35 minutes from the time the VFD receives the call to the time they arrive at the hospital. This average time includes numerous trips to the medical center in downtown Houston

From the time a 911 call is received, it takes an average of five minutes to get emergency personnel and equipment to your home. This compares favorably with the City of Houston that has an average response time of six minutes from the time the emergency equipment leaves the station.

Recently, our state of the art EMS units responded to two 911 calls for assistance only to find the victims in total cardiac-related failure and essentially gone. Due to the quick response, personnel capabilities and equipment available (on the advanced cardiac care ambulance), both patients were successfully "brought back" and are continuing with their lives.

MEMORIAL VILLAGES POLICE DEPARTMENT (MVPD) In the past year, crime in the Bunker Hill area has been relatively minor and relatively unchanged when compared to the past few years. This is in stark contrast to the significant increase in serious criminal activity in some of our surrounding jurisdictions.

When problems do arise, the MVPD has the tools to efficiently and effectively react. As an example, earlier this fall the MVPD responded to a distress call in one of our neighboring villages. The call turned out to be a home invasion robbery in progress with multiple weapons. Within minutes, MVPD were at and around the scene arresting two of the three suspects and have identified the third. The homeowner (wife) and housekeeper were unharmed. At one point, we had over 10 units (marked and unmarked) in and around the scene.

The residents of Bunker Hill need to take a great deal of credit themselves for making our neighborhood safe, according to police Chief Gary Brye. Residents have been very proactive in communicating with the MVPD when they see suspicious activity. In order to get even more involved in the process, Chief Brye highly recommends that everyone subscribe to the MVPD's weekly email summarizing criminal activity and recommending strategies for reducing crime in the future.

CRIME ANALYSIS REPORT VIA EMAIL:

We have had a tremendous response from residents wishing to receive the Crime Analysis

Report generated by the Memorial Villages Police Department via Email. If you have not already sent us your Email address and wish to receive these reports, please send an Email to Ruthie Sager, Bunker Hill City Administrator, at rsager@bunkerhill.net.

BUNKER HILL VEHICLE ID STICKERS:

To obtain a City of Bunker Hill Vehicle ID sticker, you must come to City Hall and provide proof of insurance for the vehicle(s) you are requesting a sticker for; along with your driver's license verifying that you are a Bunker Hill resident. Both your insurance card and your driver's license must have a Bunker Hill address. This pertains to long-time residents, as well as new residents.

We also ask that you remove the City of Bunker Hill Village sticker prior to selling or trading a vehicle.

LEASH LAW – REMINDER:

It shall be unlawful for an owner to permit any dog to be at large upon the streets, alleys, and public grounds of the city, or upon the premises of any person not the owner or keeper of such dog. Any dog on the streets, alleys, or public grounds of the city or on the premises of any person not the owner or keeper thereof, shall be at large, in violation of this section, unless such dog is under the control of the owner or keeper, or his agent, by means of a leash, chain, rope or cord not more than fifteen (15) feet in length and of sufficient strength to control the conduct of the dog. (Ord. No. 99-126, Section 8, 2-16-99)

Delivery of Garbage Bags:

Paper garbage bags are available for delivery only. If your check is received prior to noon on Thursdays, the bags will be delivered that afternoon. The cost is \$25.00 per bundle (50 bags).

HOUSE WATCH:

If you are going to be away from home for several days, please call the Memorial Villages Police Department at 713-365-3700 to place your home on "house watch".

HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE ALERT:

Effective on June 1, 2003, the six villages that are served by the Village Fire Department were upgraded by the Insurance Services Offices (ISO) from a Public Protection Classification (PPC) of three (3) to two (2). This resulted in significant savings on the fire-protection portion of your homeowner's insurance. The PPC or Protection Class is listed on the Insurance Declarations page of your homeowner's insurance policy. If

you are in doubt as to whether you are being given credit for this improved rating, please contact your insurance agent. Out of 2,192 communities in Texas with an ISO classification, only 30 have a Class 2 rating. The ISO rate reduction is the result of the hard work and cooperation of the Village Fire Department, the Memorial Villages Water Authority, and the Mayors, Council Members and employees of the six villages.