

# **LETTER TO LEON VALLEY CITIZENS**

**From Mayor Chris Riley**

**November 24, 2023**

**WISHING EVERYONE A SAFE & HAPPY THANKSGIVING WEEKEND!**

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING –November 21, 2023**

The following are highlights of council actions from the November 21<sup>st</sup> council meeting which began at 6:00 p.m., due to an executive session.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

**Huebner Creek Erosion and Flood Control Project Update - Tree Removal**– Several years ago, the Council approved spending \$633,167 for a study to engineer and design channel improvements to widen Huebner Creek from Cherryleaf/Poss to the Bandera Road bridge. The engineer is now at the stage of finalizing the drainage design. A tree survey was performed in the Natural Area Park, indicating that out of 486 total trees in the affected area, 403 must be removed, with only 83 remaining. This includes removing 13 Heritage trees (at least 24 inches in diameter). Staff wanted input from Council first on how to proceed with the project, with these two options: continue with design and engineering, or abandon the project and perform bank stabilization only.

This was the first explanation of the impact of the project on the Natural Area Park– it would seriously damage the 36 acre Natural Area Park which I walk in twice a week. Staff said we could plant more trees after the project was completed. When asked what impact this project would have on reducing flooding in homes, staff said 18 properties were impacted, but did not know the number of homes involved.

To date, the engineering costs expended are \$162,000. At my request, Council and staff agreed to have a field trip to the property in the near future, with actual staking on the extent of the proposed creek widening. One goal of this study is to determine how to get this project “shovel ready”. This means all the engineering and environmental work would be completed so a monetary bid can determine the overall cost for construction. When asked if the trees will need to be removed before we actually obtain a large grant for the construction (millions), the Public Works Director said no. Just a reminder, our City has been honored as a Tree

USA City for the last many years. The City of Leon Valley's tree canopy is 93%, compared with the City of San Antonio's which is 79%. Updates will be forthcoming.

### **Community Pool Repairs and Direction on Possibly Closing One -**

Dr. Caldera gave the following data to Council: 2023 season 803 memberships were sold, 34% were from Leon Valley and 66% were non-residents. A total of 15 free days with one free day per week at both pools, plus holidays. No water fitness classes were held, but the Leon Valley Lionfish Swim Team held practices and swim meets at the Community Pool. Forest Oaks pool had (3) clubhouse rentals and (6) pool/hill parties. Attendance at Forest Oaks Pool was 71% (68% in 2022) and the Community Pool's attendance was 29% (32% in 2022). The fiscal impact for both pools in 2023: Total Costs: \$161,221. with revenue of \$53,319.63 with a net operating cost of \$107,902.

Going forward to 2024: both pools need replastering and are losing water every 2-3 days (Community Pool) and losing 2-3 inches of water every week (Forest Oaks). The projected net operating costs for 2024 in running 2 pools is \$464,791, while bringing in the same revenue as 2023 (\$53,319).

After a lengthy discussion, Council directed the City Manager to bring back a proposal for closing the Community Pool and repairing Forest Oaks Pool for next swim season.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

**Trilogy Subdivision at Seneca & Evers – Council Approved a Final Plat with Variances** – The plat consists of approximately 9.1810 acres of land with 67 residential lots. The entrance into the subdivision is approximately 300 feet north from the blinking red light at Evers and Seneca. The developer requested variances to connect to the water and sewer system and to construct sidewalks at the time of, rather than before, building construction, which Council approved.

**In-Kind Grant Assistance to AARP for tax preparation services and training** – The council waived Conference Center fees (\$15,420) for two weeks of training AARP volunteers in January (Tuesday – Fridays). The council also waived fees of \$18,700 for 2 ½ months of using the Community Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays for help with citizens tax

preparation. Last year 568 total number of taxpayers were helped, with 326 from Leon Valley.

**Town Hall Meeting (January 27, 2024) Agenda topics** – More discussion was held on the tentative agenda. Council decided to remove (2) items on the Town Hall agenda and conduct a separate workshop on the City of Leon Valley Water rates and the City’s Mission, Vision Statement and Strategic Plan. See additional agenda item added from the Executive Session below.

**Poppy’s Café in the Kinman House Lease Agreement** – A three year lease agreement for \$2,200 a month in rental fees beginning January 1, 2024 was approved by Council. The operation will be open a minimum of 25 hours per week between 6 am and 9 pm. A general liability insurance requirement was included in the lease. Will let you know when Grand Opening will be held!

**City Council Meetings for 2024** – Council moved to cancel the following meetings: January 2, 2024 (News Years Day holiday), June 18, 2024 (summer break), July 2, 2024 (4<sup>th</sup> of July) and October 1, 2024 (National Night Out).

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council met in executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss two proposals received to develop the vacant city-owner land in Seneca West along Aids and Samaritan. The council reviewed the proposals and directed the city manager to ask each developer to present their plan at the annual town hall meeting on January 27, 2024. This 27 acre area was bought by the City in 2018. Please come and provide your input to council on how or whether this land should be developed.

Our next regular city council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.** at city hall.

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

**December 2, 2023 – Breakfast with Santa, 8:00 am to 10:30 am at the Leon Valley Community Center** sponsored by the Leon Valley Library. Come see Santa and get your picture taken, as well as participate

in the Silent Auction. Food tickets can be purchased at the library prior to the event or the day of the event. Hope to see you there!

**December 4, 2023 – Lighting of the Christmas Tree and Celebration at 6:00 pm in the grassy area outside of the Leon Valley Conference Center.** The massive lights will be turned on, Santa Claus will stop by, and performances from our area school children will help start the holiday festivities in Leon Valley. Please join us!

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. I am *thankful for our citizens* who choose to live in Leon Valley and help make our community a wonderful place to live. I am *thankful for our City Council who volunteer their time* to improve our quality of life and safety in the community. I am *thankful for all our dedicated staff, including police, fire and EMS, working 24/7* on our behalf to keep us safe.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any councilmember if we can be of service.

Sincerely, Chris  
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