



Mayor's Letter

May 15, 2017

Hello Everyone,

I WANT TO THANK ALL OF THE CANDIDATES for a spirited election campaign. We had a record turnout with nearly 60 percent of our eligible citizens voting. To put that in perspective we had 245 votes cast here in LWV, while over in Little Elm, for their city-wide council seat, there were just over 1000 votes cast, even though Little Elm has almost **eighty times our population**. We will swear in our new councilmember Elizabeth Shields and returning members Clint Bushong and Mayor Pro-tem Ed Reed at our June 8th Council meeting. I want to thank Councilman Ray Duff for his service to the town. It has been a privilege and an honor to serve with Ray.

A DECADE. The June 8th meeting will be my **128th council meeting** (43rd as Mayor) and mark my ten year anniversary on the Town Council. As I reflect back, the biggest change I see is that, like it or not, with Eldorado and the Toll Bridge thrown at us, we've had to grow up in a hurry. We're a town, we're the government, you can't operate like a small community HOA. At some point you have to take the training wheels off and act like a real town. Real towns have finance directors; real towns borrow money; real towns have annual audits by independent auditors; real towns have public works projects; real towns pave streets; real towns drill wells, expand and improve wastewater plants, and yes, **just like everybody else**, we have to deal with developers.

Faced with this reality, our choice is simple. **It's easy to do nothing.** It's easy and effortless to sell-out to a developer. Sure, build whatever you want, as long as it isn't next to me. Apartments ? Commercial ? It's too complicated to understand, I don't care as long as it isn't behind my house. Just mail it in, minimize the effort. I don't get paid for this, you get what you pay for, right ? That's easy. Look around us. Do you see any towns that have maintained their quiet country residential feel ?

I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT MY VISION OF THE FUTURE OF LWV. Why ? **Because we don't have to blow it.** Every meeting, every single meeting I have with developers we are the underdog. Every developer has more money, more experts and more firepower than we do. I fight hard each and every time, that's my responsibility to you. Once we let in apartments and commercial there is no going back. I just don't understand what is wrong with "settling" for being a quiet small town, with just residential houses. **Why not us ? Why not Lakewood Village ? Don't we deserve it ? Why can't we just say no. Why can't Lakewood Village be the town that didn't chase the commercial dollars. Why can't Lakewood Village be the town that says driving four minutes to get gas or a hamburger is close enough.** With Clint Bushong leading the way, we've expended an enormous effort in updating our subdivision, zoning, and building ordinances to give us a fighting chance when we go toe-to-toe with developers. **Being great takes effort.** We're so close. I'm not going to apologize for being passionate when I see individuals willing to throw it all away for the sake of trash-talking and self-promotion on Facebook or to advance their own mayoral aspirations.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TWO TOWN HALL MEETINGS IN LATE JUNE, one during the week and one on a Saturday. Everyone is invited. **You can ask me any question on any Topic. I will record the meeting for all to see.** Bring your flyers and print those ridiculous Facebook postings. What do you want to see ? Want to see our bank accounts ? No problem. Any topic. I'll even have some special guests.

MORE THAN VISION, ITS SIMPLE ECONOMICS. Commercial isn't going to work. Lets look at some numbers. Everyone should be familiar with the old Keys Market strip center on Eldorado, on the left just after Little Elm park (it was recently remodeled). Today you can rent space there for \$18 per square foot/year. There are five spaces currently available that are 1450 - 1900 square feet. So lets say the average is 1600 square feet. So the average rent would be $1600 \times \$18 = \$28,800$ per year or \$2400 per month. Lets assume for simplicity that the same rents would apply here in LWV.

Lakewood Village Ice Cream Shop is now open for business at our front entrance of Lakecrest and Eldorado. That's nice, its old fashioned, just what a small town needs. Lets assume that our cost of ice cream is **zero**, the cost of the cones, napkins, and supplies are **zero**. Lets assume the workers will also work for **zero pay** (just like councilmembers). Let's sell an ice-cream cone for \$4. Okay. That means we have to sell 600 per month or **20 per day, every day, winter and summer, 365 days of the year just to pay the rent**. Do we even have twenty young children in town ? What about drive-up ? Sure, people driving 60 MPH heading to I-35 driving to work in the morning will make a left turn into LWV and then a U-Turn back onto Eldorado in traffic to get their 7am ice-cream cone. Coming home ? Well, how many times last week did you stop for an ice cream cone on your way home from work ? Now, suppose you operate in the real world, where you have to pay for the ice cream and you comply with the Texas minimum wage of \$7.25/hour. It won't work. It's not what you want to hear, but that's the hard economics of being in a small town. We don't have the rooftops !

Its Funny, but I haven't had a single meeting with a potential McDonalds, Starbucks, Kroger or Whataburger about commercial in LWV. It's always an amateur. You can look up the site location criteria for the traditional businesses. For a McDonalds you need a minimum of one acre of land, it has to be at an intersection of two main roads or highways, there has to be signage in multiple directions on multiple roads, and it has to have a traffic signal. There's also traffic counts and population requirements within three and five miles. We don't meet any of the criteria, except, we do have one acre of land.

BUT, MAYBE I'M WRONG. Lets say that LWV has a world-record appetite for ice cream and the shop sells ten times what it needs to cover the rent. Sales are \$250,000. That would generate a total of \$3,750 in sales tax. But if we had a generic 1600 square foot, \$200,000 house instead, the town would collect \$600 in property taxes plus \$400 in annual franchise fees and sales taxes, and \$1400 a year in water and sewer revenues. So, in the best case scenario, the rosiest economic outcome, the town gains a little more than \$1000 or about one-quarter of one percent of our current revenues. **That's the best case.** That's the upside. What about the downside ?

The zoning is "commercial". Not "commercial that we think is pretty and we like". Not "tell us what you want and we'll think about it commercial". There is no "that's not what we want, we're sorry you built it, we're ordering you to tear it down" zoning category. **Its land use. This is Texas.** Property rights are taken serious. When the ice cream shop fails, you can't tell the owner they can't lease it to a thrift-shop, nail salon, bar, vape shop, package store, bait shop, tarot-card reader, or probably even a strip club. We don't have any churches, synagogues, temples, or schools in LWV and there isn't any residential homes within 500 feet of the corner. If we tried to stop the owner from re-leasing we would be sued. What's our justification ? The only thing worse than a crappy strip center **is a failed crappy strip center. The only thing worse than a crappy failed strip center is a crappy failed strip center at the front of our beautiful town that everyone will see.** What about the lights, parking, noise ? There will have to be a buffer zone around it, as nobody will want to live next to it. So it takes up a lot of land that could be used for quiet, residential homes with families and great neighbors. The upside is economically trivial, the downside is a long-term disaster. If you put a dollar in a slot machine at WinStar and you expect to lose 95% of the time, suppose when you win it pays you \$1.10. Would you take the gamble ? I wouldn't. I won't gamble with the town's future. Let me be absolutely clear. I will not support any commercial development in LWV.

SOME NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Election Judge **Jane Schoknecht** and Election Clerk **Robin West** for their fine work on a very long election day. Of course **Linda** deserves many thanks for her outstanding work presiding over the early voting and pulling those 14-hour days in our record-setting election.

I hope everyone has taken notice of the new bulletin board at the Highridge mailboxes courtesy of **Gary Newsome, Ed Reed, and Darrell West**. They even built it with a new shingled roof, something that a lot of us are looking forward to ourselves. This is a great example of a project that needed to be done, where the cost was trivial, but we just didn't have the manpower. Linda wasn't going to do it. The guys recognized the issue and got it done. We need more of that attitude. I appreciate it.

The Town Council approved the proposal by **Gary Newsome** that the fence permit fees be waived until July. Hopefully this will encourage those of us with falling-down fences to get something done. Further, the town will dispose of the old fences for free. Contact Gary or Linda for details. The fee waiver does not apply to pool enclosures as they must be inspected for life-health-safety requirements.

The Town picnic celebrating the Town's 40 year anniversary is in the planning stages with **Linda Louden** leading the effort on behalf of the Lakewood Village MDD. If you have some ideas or would like to help out, we can use a hand. Contact Linda at Town hall.

Now the bad news;

Last month we had another sewage blockage on Peninsula due to a house flushing wipes down the toilet. The blockage went into a house. Our insurance company paid \$16,000 to the owner. **The wipes are NOT DISPOSABLE. STOP FLUSHING THEM.**

A week later, more wipes clogged and destroyed the lift-station motor at the sewer plant. **The new motor cost you and me \$7,000.** We have to pay for it. **That's \$7,000 of our money that was wasted.** So, prior to our annual preventative cleaning of the sewer lines we are going to camera the lines and trace back where the wipes are coming from. When we find the service line to the house with the wipes they will get a bill for the \$23,000. I don't know what else to do. **It isn't fair that we have to waste town money because someone deliberately, willfully, intentionally destroys town equipment.**

DOGS. My favorite topic. Dogs. Dogs. Linda has informed me that we have had an exponential increase in the amount of dog attacks and threatening dogs running loose. Owning a dog is a personal choice. I think dogs are great. I choose not to have one because of my travel schedule. Owning a dog means you have responsibility. No excuses. We are going to step up the enforcement. It is absolutely unacceptable that anyone should fear walking our streets. Take care of your dogs. Take responsibility.

It's hard to end on a high note, but, hey how many towns have their biggest problem being dog related. I'm sure someone will post on Facebook that we have an epidemic of lawlessness in LWV - dogs not on a leash.

It's never been a better time to be in Lakewood Village.

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Mayor



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