

# District Four Quarterl-E-News Nov/Dec 2006

Seventh Edition

Nancy Tower 337-625-7379

tower520@bellsouth.net



## Definition of Revenue?

Those of you who watch the council meetings on the government channel may have wondered about the discussion regarding the "definition of revenue." The contention is related to the word's use in the City Home Rule Charter, which outlines how our city government is to operate (like a constitution).

In the charter, Section 2-11 A. it states, "An act of the council having the force of law shall be by ordinance. An act requiring an ordinance shall included but not be limited to those which..." This section of the charter goes on to list 18 actions that require an ordinance including; levying taxes, appropriating funds, providing for fines or penalties, etc. Item number six says, "Provide for raising revenue."

The question arose when, in September of this year, Mayor LeLeux decided to take control of some fundraising activities that had previously been conducted by the Brimstone Historical Society. These activities include the food booths and the carnival at the Christmas Under the Oaks festival. While the funds typically raised with these activities are very small in comparison to the city's budget, they provided a significant income for the Brimstone. Members of the Historical Society brought this to my attention and I asked the mayor not to take these funds from the Brimstone. He believed that because the carnival and food booths were on city property that he could take this action. The Society offered to move the activities back onto their property so that they may continue to have the fundraiser, the mayor refused. There was no visible compromise.

Tom Boggan, who was present in the audience for the public discussion (at an agenda meeting), brought the particular city charter reference mentioned above to the attention of the council. It seemed clear that "raising revenue" included "fundraising." The mayor disagreed and cited a state accounting practice that would allow the administration to change the budget five percent without an ordinance. It is my understanding that the charter, which is voted on by the people, is the law that we must follow unless there is a more restrictive state law or our charter is found to be unconstitutional in anyway. Neither of those is the case here.

Because there is disagreement, I thought it would be best to get a legal opinion from the Attorney General. We, as a city, have had no problem requesting Attorney General opinions in the past and I would like to see us do so again. The mayor requested that the council not support the request for the Attorney General opinion and it was voted down. However, members of the council have asked the city auditor to provide his interpretation of this requirement as it relates to the budget. I appreciate the auditor's efforts and look forward to his comments, but this is clearly a legal question, which should be answered by a third party attorney who is skilled in this area.

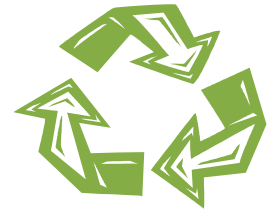
## Christmas Social – My House



On **Tuesday, December 19, from 5 – 9** in the evening you're invited to my house for hot Taco Soup and warm Hospitality. It's Open House – Style. Just come by before or after Christmas Shopping and enjoy a meal with friends. Community Advisory Panel Members will be providing the dessert and we'll have plenty of tea, water, cold drinks and coffee to help wash it all done. The whole family's invited. Location: **520 North Lebanon**

## CAP Studies Recycling

The District Four Community Advisory initiated a series of meetings on recycling in October. The CAP heard from a member of Team Green regarding some recycling options and information regarding how other areas have implemented recycling successfully. In November the CAP members heard from a recycling company representative who presented some very simple yet effective options for initiating recycling quickly. Although the December meeting is primarily a Christmas social, additional information about recycling will be available for that meeting as well.



The recycling company offered some voluntary options for recycling of paper at no cost to the city or the residents. These options have been communicated to the council members and the mayor. I am hopeful that this discussion will generate some response from the administration, however, if that is not the case I plan to communicate some of the ideas publicly and initiate some pilot programs in District Four.

Additionally, we were surprised to learn that curbside recycling is a possibility for us to consider again as a city. This time we could conduct the recycling in such a way as to limit the cost to the resident, while tracking the pounds removed from the landfill. The reduction in pounds to be disposed of should allow us to negotiate lower garbage rates with a contract company when our garbage contract is re-bid in 2009. This limited paper-only recycling would remove approximately 70 percent of the weight of recyclable materials from the waste stream for approximately \$1 per household per month. This needs much more discussion, but is an option that I believe we should study further.

## Adopt-A-Spot Needs You

The District Four Adopt-A-Spot program will celebrate six months on December 2, which is the next scheduled pick-up date. Remember, if you're interested in joining us – just show up at Suzanne McCrory's office on Maplewood Drive on the first Saturday of the month at 8:00 a.m. We have t-shirts, trash bags, mosquito repellent and we deliver water on pick-up routes. You'll join a team of volunteers who care about the cleanliness of our community and are willing to do something about it.

### **Adopt-A-Spot Volunteer**



Many thanks to the Sulphur Kiwanis Club, the Sulphur High Key Club and all the 30+ volunteers who participate in the program. We're getting ready to expand the program to include some educational efforts and to encourage neighborhood pride. Please give me a call if you have any ideas, or just want to help.

## Christmas Under the Oaks

Don't miss this year's Christmas Under the Oaks festivities. The Holiday House, Balloon Parade, Carnival and even ice-skating should be wonderful. We look forward to seeing you there!

***Re-Building On Our Community Strengths – Post Rita!***