

District Four Quarterly-E-News July/August 2006

Fifth Edition

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City of Sulphur Looking for Good Employees

The City of Sulphur's Public Works Department is looking for nine good, drug-free employees. Starting pay is \$8.50/hr with good benefits. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please let me know or send them to the city to fill out an application. For the city to meet the needs of our residents we must have qualified employees.

Adopt-A-Spot Program Begins

The District Four Adopt-A-Spot program was initiated with a big success on Saturday, July 1, with 16 volunteers collectively donating about 40 hours of labor to help cleanup district four. For the volunteers it was a labor of love. "Sulphur is my home and I like for my home to be clean," said Susan Settoon Richards, Adpot-A-Spot Coordinator, "I'm glad to be part of an effort to make district four an even more beautiful part of our city."

The volunteers collected more than 50 bags of garbage and other debris, which filled a dumpster provided by Allied Waste at no charge. The volunteers who helped with the July 1 clean up were: Michael, Robin and Houston Baudoin, Ginger Eddy, James Hodges, Chris and Tracy Mixon, Loy Murphy, Susan Settoon Richards, Durl and Glenda Schultz, Jace Sweeney, Tyler Tullos, Natalie, Natascha and Nancy Tower.



Until the identified streets for cleanup are adopted by area organizations and businesses, the volunteer clean-up days will continue on a monthly basis. The next clean-up will be scheduled for **Saturday, August 5**. If would like to help, please let me know.

There are seven high traffic areas that have been targeted for monthly clean-up:

- 1) Beglis from Maplewood south to just past the apartment complex
- 2) Maplewood Drive from Hazel west to Shasta
- 3) Maplewood Drive from Shasta west to Beglis (*Adopted by the Sulphur Kiwanis Club*)
- 4) Post Oak from Maplewood Drive south to I-10
- 5) Post Oak from Maplewood Drive north to Hwy 90
- 6) North Hazel Street (*Adopted by Durl and Glenda Schultz*)
- 7) South Hazel Street



Congressman Boustany's Newsletter

If you like keeping up with national issues, you may be interested in subscribing to Congressman Boustany's newsletter. If you're interested, just click on the link below and ask to be added to the distribution:

<http://boustany.houseenews.net/mail/util.cfm?returnmsg=subscribe>

Flooding – June 19

June 19 brought a heavy rain in a short period of time. The likes thereof we haven't seen in nearly a year, at least not since Hurricane Rita blew through in September. The heavy rain caused severe flooding throughout the city and took its toll on District Four with more than 50 homes flooded. In many cases those who flooded had lived in their homes for decades and had never seen it this bad. Additionally, the majority of damage was not covered by any insurance because these are not flood prone areas and flood insurance was not required.

It's been an emotional issue. In a few cases, the residents had just completed repairs from tree damage due to Rita only to have their work ruined.

Many thanks to the residents who attended the July 10 council meeting to express concerns. I hope that the council and the administration heard your comments and that we can all work together to fix the problems. I have already learned from the mayor that the public works director has dispatched some crews to check the city drainage. They have already checked a number of drains in district four and five, but have not found any obstructions. I still believe that there are some areas of constricted flows due to debris, but if there are they will hopefully find them and get the debris removed.

Meanwhile, we know that Bayou D'Inde continues to be a problem. It needs to be dredged and we can't because of historical contamination that the EPA doesn't want to disturb. Additionally, because the bayou is tidally influenced it is not a good outlet during a south wind or at high tide. This is an issue we can and should continue to address with the Estuary Task Force, EPA, the Corps of Engineers, etc. But – we need to do our part to correct any problems that we have control over in the meantime.

As for each of us individually – please do not blow leaves down the storm drains, do not allow other debris to clog up drains if you can help it, and please do help to keep the ditches mowed and free of debris that create a pinch point.

If you have questions or concerns about the drainage, please contact me or visit my website at www.nancytower.com to read some of the past minutes of the District Four Community Advisory Panel and learn about some of the efforts that have been underway for nearly a year now to reduce the drainage problems.

Animal Ordinances

A few months ago I introduced an ordinance amendment to begin changes to our animal ordinances in an attempt to make our city safer. The amendment failed because we were informed by our city attorney that the proposed redefinition of vicious was in conflict with a criminal code that the city adopted in 2004.

As a result, the ordinance which adopted the criminal code in 2004 must be amended to allow for more stringent city ordinances related to various issues in the city. That amendment is being drafted and will hopefully be on the agenda at the August city council meeting.

After that is done, I plan to move forward with suggesting the following changes to our animal ordinances. If you have questions or concerns about any of these, please let me know.

- 1) Redefining vicious – currently the law says “may be considered vicious if the animal has bitten a person on more than one occasion.” I think that even one unprovoked bite should suffice.
- 2) Need to define “unprovoked” and a few other words that were brought to our attention by Marsha Montgomery (local humane society president).
- 3) Leash law – there is no current requirement that the person holding the leash be of the necessary physical stature to control the animal. Define “competent person.”
- 4) Fences – I think that staking and chaining of animals should be illegal in the city.
- 5) Victim’s rights – I think that if you are the victim of a vicious dog bite, which results in medical treatment (stitches, etc) you should have some say in the decision as to whether or not the dog is put down or released to the owner under certain condition.
- 6) Insurance – should we have a requirement in the city that dog owners have home owners insurance, which would cover any damages to another person or property from the animal? I don’t have enough information on this – but it sounds like a reasonable option.
- 7) Animal owners to be notified of ordinances – when an animal is taken to the vet for the first time or is picked up by animal control, etc. there should be a process in place to ensure that the owners are informed of the laws governing their animal.

Community Advisory Panel Meetings

The District Four Community Advisory Panel will celebrate our first full year in existence in August. The panel began meeting in August of 2005 and has only missed one meeting – the October after Rita.

We have studied drainage, road maintenance and overlay programs, animal ordinances, litter laws and other ordinance enforcement issues like condemned property, abandoned cars, grass cutting, lawn watering, etc. It has been very educational and in a number of instances the CAP members have been able to provide the type of advice and insights that will make us a better city.

In July we kicked off our Adopt-A-Spot program with a group of 16 volunteers who worked to clean up six of our seven identified high traffic areas. Since the kick-off, two roads have been adopted and another clean-up day is scheduled for August 5.

Future meetings will continue the discussion of drainage (we’re not done with that one yet), begin to address traffic signals, economic development and even recycling.

It doesn’t all happen overnight, but we are meeting and discussing these issues and the city will be a better place as a result of the involvement of our citizens. If you’d like to attend a CAP meeting, we meet on the third Tuesday of every month in the evening. Occasionally our meeting location changes, so just give me a call if you’re interested in more details.

Garbage Rate Increase Anticipated

Allied (formerly BFI) has sent the city a letter requesting a rate increase as allowed in the contract due to the high cost of gasoline and certain labor adjustments. They have also requested an additional adjustment due to changes in their cost of operations. These increases are expected to amount to a 10 – 15 percent increase. Although no one can argue that the cost of fuel has definitely increased and that good labor is hard to come by – the mayor and a couple of council members will be meeting with Allied to get additional information and hopefully to address the service issues.