



Oak Leaves

April
2000

Volume 13
Issue 1

Entryway Update

Calendar

- **Wednesday, April 19**
Board of Directors Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Christiansens', 25 600 River Oaks Dr.
- **Friday, April 28**
Arbor Day
- **May 1 to June 5**
Weekly Curbside Brush Pickup

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The process of the entryway renovation has begun. The first stage will be to have a mason build two brick signs, one on either side of the street, at the corners of Lots 1 and 66. The second stage will be to get a professional landscape design for these areas, and then to implement this design. The third stage will be an assessment of whether or not lighting of the signs is desirable, affordable, and permissible.

To begin the first stage, the Board agreed at their March meeting to pay an attorney \$500 to draw up two legal agreements with the Homeowners of Lots 1 and 66 that would allow the signs to be placed permanently on their property. These are legal agreements that will be registered with the county to run with the land, so that any future homeowners will be bound by these agreements. As has been discussed previously in the Newsletter and at the Annual Meeting, the only possible locations of these signs on either side of the street is on the homeowners properties, so their agreement and approval is essential

The Board has also agreed to accept the contract of Heinz Masonry for building the signs, contingent on the completion of the necessary legal paperwork. The original bid from Heinz was for two brick signs, each 8 feet long by 3 feet high by 16 inches deep. Each sign would be topped with a 2 1/4 inch limestone cap that will be 20 inches wide and 8 feet long. The lettering on the signs will be etched into limestone. Each inset will be 12 inches high by 6 feet long, and the etched letters will be 8 inches tall. The bid came in at \$6,870 total.

After discussions at the Annual Meeting, the Board thinks that raising the concrete base of the signs by 1 1/2 feet is a good idea, so that landscaping can be bermed around the sign and so that the sign will be more visible. The final proposed cost will be published in the next Newsletter. Once the legal papers are signed, and the final proposed cost is obtained and accepted, the Board will be submitting to the appropriate City agencies the required drawing of the sign for City approval before work can begin.

Once the signs are under construction, the Board intends to contact a professional landscaper to create the entryway design around these signs. Look for a copy of their plan in an upcoming Newsletter.

The issue of whether or not lights should be installed at the entryway was discussed at the Annual Meeting. Mr. Heinz, the mason who attended the Annual Meeting, explained that these are items installed after the signs are built. Tom Sinnott, a homeowner who is also a member of the City Plan Commission, explained current Commission rulings involving lighting of signs. The Commission has refused to grant permission for lighting unless a need for such lighting is demonstrated. Since this cannot be done until after the signs are installed, lighting issues must be postponed until a later phase.

This is obviously a long process, but it has begun. As always, homeowner input is encouraged.



Approximate appearance of the proposed River Oaks signs

New Board Members

Each year at the Annual Meeting of the River Oaks Improvement Association, either three or four new members are elected to the Board of Directors for a period of two years. This year, there were four seats to fill. Elected were Linda Hawks, Bob Bates, Marnee Sinnott, and Becky Christiansen. Linda and Bob are new to the Board, while Marnee and Becky were reelected for another term.

The Board of Directors of the ROIA is responsible for maintaining the Common Areas of the subdivision and for sponsoring other events and projects as desired by the majority of homeowners. They publish an annual direc-

tory of homeowners, as well as a newsletter several times a year. They head the Neighborhood Watch program in River Oaks. They also plan and implement neighborhood improvement projects such as the current entryway renovation. In past years, they have also sponsored entertainment events such as an annual picnic, a Halloween bonfire, and an Easter Egg Hunt. The annual River Oaks garage sale is another event they sponsor.

The continuation of these programs is dependent on the interest of the homeowners. There will be news in future Newsletters about Committee meetings for those that might be interested in helping with these events. Please consider lending your time and effort to help with a project of interest.

Trees Available



Each spring, several trees from the River Oaks Tree Nursery need to be removed and replanted due to their size. Two dead Parkway Trees in the subdivision will be replaced from this group of trees, but that leaves several other trees that need homes. The species of these available trees include Hybrid Elm, Burr Oak, and

Green Ash. If you have an interest in giving a home to one or more of these trees, please call Tom Sinnott 393-

2808 or John Christiansen 393-4946.

For those residents who have never visited it, the River Oaks tree nursery is in a fenced-in area in the Lower Common Area, by the river. The trees growing in it have come mostly from homeowner donations, and their main purpose is to provide replacement trees for the Parkway Trees in the subdivision. After that need is filled, they are also used for plantings in the Common Area. And if there are any left from that group, they are made available to interested homeowners.

Committee News

Neighborhood Watch

The Neighborhood Watch program in River Oaks needs your help. If you are interested in helping with the Watch program, please contact Linda Saxton at 393-2206. Linda will be arranging a meeting for those interested in helping with the program.

Entertainment Committee

Each year, the Entertainment Committee of the homeowner's association sponsors several activities. In past years, these have included a summer block party, a Halloween bonfire and a subdivision garage sale. If you would be willing to serve on the Committee and help with these projects, please contact Linda

Classifieds

FOR SALE:

Race Car Bed—White Corvette, with or without twin mattress \$50. Call the Highlands, 2 S 500 River Oaks, 393-1156

Board of Directors			
Marnee Sinnott	President	393-2808	tsinnott@megsinet.net
Bob Bates	Vice-President	393-0886	
Mark Moore	Treasurer	393-6473	mt@megsinet.net
Marilyn Hayes	Secretary	863-1424	hayesmarjm@aol.com
Linda Saxton		393-2206	saxton@mcs.com
Becky Christiansen		393-4946	becky@cyberoak.com
Linda Hawks		836-9706	

Proposed City Tax

The Board of Directors of ROIA was contacted by the City of Warrenton's administration regarding the proposed tax on utilities and telecommunications. We are printing the pamphlet of information that was provided to the Board so that all residents of River Oaks have a chance to read it. If you have any comments or questions regarding this information, please contact the City Administrator at City Hall, Warrenton, 393-9427.

Municipal Electric and Telecommunication Tax Information

Defining the Need for a New Sustainable Revenue Source:

- The City's current yearly expenditures exceed revenues
- New revenue sources are needed to maintain capital and operating funds
- Revenue is needed to continue the annual road program
- Revenue is needed to maintain existing services as well as add new programs and related personnel

Why a Utility Tax (Revenue Concerns)

- Examples of Revenue Changes:
 - o As Cantera builds out, building and construction permit fee revenue will decrease
 - o Potentially large increase in Police Pension Fund
 - o Little annual increase in Sales Tax revenue
 - o Potential loss of Amusement Tax revenue
- Reduces reliance on property tax
- Existing caps on property tax levies
- Material and commodities costs increase faster than property tax cap levies
- Increased demand for services
- No new large revenue source until FY 2011 (end of TIF #1)

Ongoing Concerns (Financial Factors)

- Ongoing road program requires substantial investment to realize a long term benefit
- Street lighting costs have increased \$40,000 over the past three years
- Potential loss of Municipal Infrastructure Maintenance Fee (\$115,000 per year)
- Personal costs account for 65% of General Fund
- Capital equipment and vehicle costs for Public Works and Police continue to rise
- End of Funding for COPS Fast
- Maintenance of Street lights is an ongoing cost
- Road maintenance to extend life of streets continues to increase

Defining a New Sustainable Revenue Source

- 5% tax on electric and telecommunications bills
- A 5% tax would generate \$351,588 from electric and \$575,000 from telecommunications billing per year based on current usage
- Recommend immediate implementation

New Revenue Allocation

- 80% of Revenue would go to a new Capital Improvement Fund for Roads, Sidewalks, Curbs, Storm Drainage, Vehicles and Equipment
- 20% would be used for General Fund Operating Costs

Other Revenue Considerations

Other revenue sources have been considered by staff but have been identified as either flawed in purpose, insufficient to address revenue concerns or already in use. Examples of these sources are:

- Change the current business license ordinance from a one-time license with a \$25 fee to an annual license with a \$25 fee
- Evaluate all current fee structures to determine if they cover the cost to provide the service.
- Consider a small monthly fee of perhaps \$1 to be billed to customers for special services such as brush pickup, Christmas tree pickup, etc.
- Research all possible sources of grants available to fund new or current services.
- Raise vehicle stickers from \$50 to \$100
- Referendum to raise Property Tax Levy
- Referendum debt - bonds in anticipation of FY 2011 Property Tax revenue
- Increase Sales Taxes
- Implement a Natural Gas Tax
- Increase Amusement Tax
- Decrease the Budget
- Reduce Programming
- Cut Services
- Pursue Private Grants from Local Corporations for specific Capital Equipment or projects
- Investigate intergovernmental revenue sources for services or special equipment.

Impacts Spread Among Residents and Businesses

- Usage factors give customers some control over amount of tax paid:
 - o Cost to average household only \$6.54 per month
 - o Cantera will account for 40% of base after build-out
 - o Direct Benefit in New Roads and related infrastructure

Proposal Summary

To maintain City roads and services, new revenues must be identified to compensate for on-going expenditure

A 5% Utility Tax on electric and telecommunications usage will provide a substantial amount of City revenue with minimized impact on household budgets

While other revenue sources have been considered, this utility tax will allow the city to set up and maintain a Capital Expense Fund used directly for City Infrastructure Projects as well as equipment procurement.