

# Oak Hill NEWS

Spring 2022

## From the Mayor's Desk

Dale Grimes, Mayor

**G**reetings Oak Hill neighbors and friends! I hope all have had a good start to 2022. The Oak Hill Board of Commissioners (“BOC”) continues to have a “full plate” of items to work on as we seek to preserve the quality of life we all love about our City. This brief report will highlight some of them.

**Search for new City Manager.** We are in the midst of our search process for a new City Manager. Several months ago we retained a professional search firm, Bakertilly, to assist us with this search. After interviewing the BOC members and City staff, they prepared a profile for the position and advertised it much more widely than was done for the City’s recent searches—sending it to over 5,000 email addresses and publicizing it to a number of relevant organizations. This has resulted in 54 persons submitting resumes and a pool that Bakertilly considers strong. The firm has continued the search with 15 candidates, who have provided more in-depth information that the BOC is currently reviewing to further narrow the field. By the time you are reading this, we may have made our final selection; now I can only say that the process seems to be working well, and I hope it will lead to a fine appointment.



**Thanks to City Staff.** The Oak Hill staff has been persevering very well during these months of transition. Not only did we have a transition in December 2020 with a new City Manager, another occurred when he was sidelined by illness in July, just as three new staff members came on board. We were very fortunate to find a highly experienced Acting City Manager in Austin Edmondson to lead the staff beginning in August. He has been commuting weekly from his home in western Kentucky ever since. We owe great thanks to him and the entire staff for their service to our community.

**Standards for new construction.** At our January meeting, the BOC adopted the amendment to our zoning ordinance that revised the “Bulk Building Standards” that now apply to new and renovation construction. These standards govern the size and “bulk” of a structure by limiting maximum floor space under roof, total lot coverage of structures and imperious surfaces, building height, number of stories, lot setbacks, etc. The City already had such standards, adopted in 2017. At that time, the BOC predicted they would need to be re-evaluated, based on experience. The process just completed—after over a year of working with our consultant Greg Gamble—was prompted by concerns expressed by many citizens that the 2017 standards allowed homes to be built that were thought to be too large or out of scale with neighboring homes. Yet it is also recognized that new homes will continue to be built that are larger than many of our existing houses. The goal has been to find the right balance between new and existing homes and to promote responsible residential growth in Oak Hill.

In adopting these standards, the BOC used an open and transparent process that included input from BOC, Planning Commission (“PC”), and Board of Zoning Appeals members, a focus group of 13 diverse citizens representing all parts of Oak Hill, a public meeting attended by over 100 citizens where all who wanted to comment got to speak, public comments at several BOC meetings, public hearings before the BOC

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## Financial Update

Commissioner David DeMarco



### Reserves

Our audit for the year ended June 30, 2021 was completed in December. There are a lot of numbers to digest. Overall, the best measure of solvency is net funds in reserve, after factoring in liabilities. This is liquid assets (cash, investments, and short-term receivables) less payables. Oak Hill ended the year with reserves of \$8,169,015. This represents 3.80 years’ worth of expenditures. Compared with similar cities, Berry Hill is 1.86, Belle Meade is 4.01 and Forest Hills is 7.86. Berry Hill’s number is low because they incurred \$1,565,000 of storm water management expenses in the most recent fiscal year. Using their budgeted expenses of \$3,319,418, their reserves would be 3.22 year’s expenses. So overall, Oak Hill’s reserves are comparable to Berry Hill and Belle Meade. We added approximately \$800,000 to our reserves for each of the past two years.

### Revenue

One of our main sources of income, the Hall tax, is now gone except for a relatively minor residual amount we expect is still due. We only received about \$116,000 for the fiscal year ended June 30, after receiving \$677,000 for the prior year. Our sales tax revenue remains strong, in spite of the pandemic. Building permits continue to be at record highs, just over \$600,000 for the year ended June 2021. This is almost \$160,000 more than the average for the prior five years and so far this current fiscal year appears to be on track to be close to \$600,000. The announcement by the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates over the next two years will affect mortgage rates and may slow down the fees from building permits.

We have had a few unexpected and nonrecurring sources of revenue. The most notable, by a large margin, is a \$1.3 grant from the American Rescue Act. This will be paid over two years, with the first installment received a few months ago. These funds are restricted, in our case primarily, for storm water infrastructure. It is not enough to solve all of Oak Hill’s storm water issues, but undoubtedly will help.

### Expenditures

We had a comprehensive study done of the condition of every street in Oak Hill, and plan to get on a regular program of street maintenance. We have a number of roads that need improvement. At our January meeting, we approved starting some much-needed roadwork on Prescott Road and Norfleet Drive. The total project cost will be approximately \$670,000 and should begin in June. These roads require significant work to stabilize the sub-surface, similar to what had to be done to Lakeview Drive and Blevins Drive in 2019.

### Summary

There have been some very significant shifts in sources of revenue in recent years, but fortunately, the positives have offset the negatives. Let me know if you have any questions about our finances. David.DeMarco@OakHillTN.us. Our audited statements for all years are available here: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/advanced-search.html>

# Let's Talk Trash

Commissioner Joy O'Dell

Since the onset of the COVID virus, our lifestyles have changed. Many people are working from home. While that has enabled us to enjoy the natural beauty of Oak Hill more than ever, we are generating more garbage at home. In fact, our trash volume has increased by 25% since the beginning of the pandemic\*.

*YEAR	2018	2019	2020
TONNAGE	1,738	1,673	2,100

While the residents of Oak Hill pay for garbage and recycling pick-up through the City, there are limitations on the volume of garbage and type of recycling available.

First, under the City's contract with our garbage and recycling vendor, Clean Earth, residences are allowed up to six 32-gallon garbage containers on a weekly basis. (You can contact Clean Earth to pay for a second weekly pickup.) The garbage must be placed in puncture-resistant bags and securely tied.

Second, recyclables must be bagged and securely tied, as well. In particular, all recyclable boxes must be flattened or broken down and placed in a bag within the resident's recyclable bin. However, NO GLASS is recyclable through our vendor. Bottles, broken glasses, etc. ARE PROHIBITED. Even one unacceptable item in the recycling bin can result in the processing center rejecting the entire load, as well as heavy fees for Clean Earth!

Third, Clean Earth is only obligated to pick up routine household waste and recyclables. They will not pick up the following items: paint cans, bookshelves, wood, chairs or other furniture, and appliances. These items can be dropped off at Metro Recycling Convenience Centers. Glass can be taken to any Metro Recycling Drop-Off Site.

There is some good news for residents who are doing some "Spring cleaning" and may exceed their trash limit, you can call and pay Clean Earth at (615) 714-2177 for a one-time pick up of items such as appliances, mattresses, furniture and more for a small fee.

Please do your part to keep our trash and recycling costs reasonable.

## Oak Hill Recycling Guidelines

### PAPER



Office Paper, Mail, Telephone Books, Magazines, Paper Beverage Cartons

\*Shredded paper can only be composted.  
Bag in a paper bag & drop off at compostable material drop-off locations.

### Cardboard



Boxes, Paper Towel & Toilet Paper Rolls, Cereal Boxes

\*Pizza Boxes: Recycle any portion without grease. Grease portions can be composted.  
\*Flatten cardboard

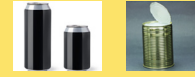
### PLASTIC



Bottles, Jars and Jugs— Beverage, Kitchen, Laundry & Bath

\*Attach caps to bottles  
\*NO: Spray or Pump Nozzles, Tub Containers (yogurt), styrofoam, plastic cups, etc.

### METALS



Aluminum & Steel Food & Beverage Containers

\*No Aluminum Foil or Aluminum Trays

### General Tips

- Empty and rinse all food and beverage containers.
- "When in doubt, throw it out" (or ask us.)



### Additional Recycling Options

- **FOOD WASTE**—Compost at a local convenience center.
- **STYROFOAM**—Recycle clean takeout containers at Publix.
- **PLASTIC BAGS**—Recycle at local grocery or big box stores. (Acceptable items include: grocery bags, dry cleaner bags, bread bags, toilet paper & paper towel plastic wrap.)
- **GLASS**—Recycle at local drop off sites.

### From the Mayor's Desk, continued from page 1

and PC, and from many emails sent by citizens throughout the process. The recommendations of the consultant were based on all that input, along with a great deal of research to make sure the proposals were data-driven; the proposed standards were refined along the way in response to all this information. Full details of the new ordinance are available on the City's website.

**New City website.** Speaking of the website, the City has a brand new one, at long last. It is designed to be more user-friendly so announcements and other content are readily and easily available. A great many people have been asking for improvements in City communications. Please check out the website and see what you think.

**Storm water runoff.** This continues to be a matter of great concern to us all. This BOC is continuing its serious search for solutions. This fall we adopted an amendment to tighten the standards of the new storm water ordinance we adopted a year ago. The original version was adapted from Metro's code, and the amendment makes those requirements more relevant to storm water issues in our area. We received a proposal from the City's engineering firm to study specific runoff issues and make recommendations; the proposed cost was such that we decided it would be prudent to seek other proposals. In the meantime we learned that the City will receive federal money under the American Rescue Plan ("ARP") for eligible projects, and that a storm water study could be funded with some of that. A decision to go forward has been deferred since we have been advised that

the to-be-hired City Manager should probably have a role in the decision-making process. Meanwhile, the BOC voted in January to fund (also with approximately \$225,000 of ARP-qualifying money) repair of a number of culverts throughout the City that have been sitting on the City's "to-do" list for 10 years. Culverts are an important part of the storm water system in Oak Hill, and maintaining their integrity is crucial; the same must be said for bridges, drainage ditches, and creeks—all must be maintained to make sure the water flows unimpeded downstream.

**Financial management.** The City continues to be managed in a fiscally sound manner consistent with serving the needs of the citizens of Oak Hill. As the Hall Income Tax fades away, we will no longer receive the hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been a mainstay of our revenue for years. We have received less from this source than we budgeted for this fiscal year due to timing issues from the federal and state extensions of tax filings in 2021, and the remainder may not come in this year. We are managing nonetheless due to a steady flow so far of our share of the state sales tax and building permit fees. How inflation and potentially higher interest rates will affect these revenue streams is unknown at this point.

**Investment Management Committee.** The City does have funds in reserves, and to make sure they are managed as well as possible under the serious strictures of state law, the BOC reinstated an Investment Advisory Committee at the January meeting. Three members have been appointed—Grace Bennett,

Erik Milam, and John Gawaluck—who graciously and willingly agreed to serve. They have already met and made recommendations as to the investment of our funds to take advantage of rising rates while assuring liquidity as necessary. They will meet a couple of times a year, or more frequently if needed, to provide their expert advice on managing these important funds.

**Audit for Fiscal Year 2020-21.** The City's financial statements received a clean, unqualified opinion from our auditing firm, Crosslin LLC, for the FY ended June 30, 2021. The BOC held a special December meeting to receive the audit, ask questions, and discuss with the partner in charge of our audit. The audit was subsequently filed on time with the state Comptroller's office for the second year in a row.

**On the horizon.** The BOC received the road condition survey from the City Engineer, replacing the last survey conducted in 2012. The next step is to implement the recommendations for a road maintenance program that will address maintenance to extend the life of our roads, repairs to roads that need it, and rebuilding in cases where that is required. The BOC has authorized major repairs to Prescott Road and Norfleet Drive, where subsurface collapsing has caused serious deterioration. We approved using the same cap-grouting process we used two years ago for Lakeview Drive and Blevins Drive. It is more expensive than simply repaving, but our City Engineer strongly believes it will be a more permanent fix. To repave without addressing the underlying cause would likely lead to the new pavement collapsing again and wasting our limited road maintenance dollars. The BOC will be considering a land disturbance ordinance to prevent unnecessary and undesirable clear cutting of larger areas of underbrush, grubbing of roots, and other activities that disturb the surface of the land and allow erosion, runoff onto neighboring property, and clogging of ditches and waterways. The BOC is looking at a proposed ordinance to allow rebuilding non-conforming structures to make sure no existing homeowner whose home has been rendered "non-conforming" by the new bulk building standards (or even those adopted in 2017) will be prevented from rebuilding the same house if damaged by a catastrophic event. And this month, the BOC will begin working with the Acting City Manager to prepare the FY 2022-23 budget.

**In Closing.** If you have questions or concerns about these matters, or anything else affecting Oak Hill, please feel free to contact any member of the Board of Commissioners. Best wishes for a great Spring! 🍀



The City of Oak Hill would like to congratulate Radnor Lake State Park for the young eagles that are nesting there for the first time.

## Construction Permit Regulations in the City of Oak Hill

Stephen Snow, City Code Officer

If you are like many residents in the City of Oak Hill, you probably have dreams and plans of special projects for your home which will make your residence and yard more attractive, more functional, more hospitable, and perhaps more efficient. At first it is only an idea, then you settle on a concept, and before long you move into thoughts of costs, schedules, contracts, and contractors. But upon remembering you live in a City that rigorously protects its residents' community goals and environmental standards, your thoughts turn toward the viability of your project in light of the City's requirements. At this point you will likely be wondering if you will need to obtain a permit for your project.

Just so you are not held in suspense, in most cases the answer will be "YES", a permit is required for "construction-related" projects and activities. But how can such a broad net be cast with such certainty without having specifics of my particular project, you may ask. The path to this understanding begins, and largely ends, with the following passages based in Chapter 14 of the City of Oak Hill Municipal Code.

The first passage in § 14-104 emphasizes the "Applicability" of the entire "Zoning and Land Use Control" chapter: **No building or land shall hereafter be used and no building or part thereof shall be erected, moved or altered unless for a use expressly or by necessary implication permitted or authorized by this ordinance.** This broad statement addresses any use of both buildings and land as being a permissible activity.

The second passage from § 14-113, (yy) is the definition of "Structure": **Anything constructed or erected requiring more or less permanent location on the ground or attachment to something having permanent location on the ground, excluding wheels. Any new structure requires a building permit.** This definition captures most everything involved in a construction or property enhancement project, and then finishes with an all-inclusive permit requirement.

Having settled the permitting scope for buildings and land, in the following passage, trees and vegetation are also addressed via the City's latest Woodland and Tree Protection Ordinance. The scope of this ordinance is too long to be written out here, but it can be summarized loosely as applying to newly platted lots, permitted land-related or building-related construction projects, and any tree-related disturbance activity on a lot held by the same person or entity for less than two years. With this broad scope in mind, the exceptions to this ordinance are summarized\* as:

1. Removal of dead or naturally fallen trees or vegetation.
2. Removal of severely damaged or diseased trees that have been diagnosed by a certified arborist or the City to be beyond treatment or recovery.
3. Limited tree or vegetation removal necessary for sight-lines or for field surveying.
4. Actions of utility companies within their easements.
5. Removal of trees and plants listed in the current edition of "Invasive Plants", published by the Tennessee Invasive Plant Council.

\*see Ordinance 0-20-01-01-01 for complete verbiage.

With the full understanding of these passages above, there is very little left in the field of construction which would not be construed by the City to be a permissible activity. Although there are very few exceptions to Oak Hill's permitting process which are truly "construction-related", it can be confusing when the line between "construction" and "maintenance" becomes blurred. Some may view yardwork, wall-covering, power washing, furnishing, painting, gardening, and similar activities to be "construction-related", and understandably so, but the City in most of those situations would advise you that a permit is not required for these and so many other activities it does not consider to be "construction-related". It has been the effort of City officials and staff through the years to clarify this distinction in its ordinances and codes, particularly in the passages noted above, so it is helpful to begin with these requirements for a proper understanding of why and when a permit is necessary. Beyond that, if you are still unsure if a permit is required for your project, the staff at Oak Hill is available and eager to discuss your project and address your questions.

Change is inevitable, and Oak Hill has certainly seen its share. But thanks to the efforts of your elected officials and dedicated staff to codify the wishes of the residents and oversee the permitting of construction activities, that dream project you are planning will bring you years of satisfaction while enhancing the beauty and appeal of the City you call home. 🍀

Visit us at: [oakhilltn.us](http://oakhilltn.us)

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Our goal is to eventually make the *Oak Hill News* available only in electronic form. If you wish to subscribe to this publication and receive additional important updates on Official City Business, please send your request to: [comments@oakhilltn.us](mailto:comments@oakhilltn.us). Please include your Family Name, Property Address, Phone (Text) Number, and Email Address. —Thank you.

Do we need to update your mailing information? If so, please email any corrections to [comments@oakhilltn.us](mailto:comments@oakhilltn.us).

**Save the Date**

Oak Hill 4th of July Celebration—10:00AM on Stonewall Drive  
*Come. Enjoy. Meet your neighbors.*



City of Oak Hill Staff

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City of Oak Hill Boards and Commissions	
<b>Board of Commissioners</b> Regular Meetings—6:00 pm the 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month at the Oak Hill City Office	
<b>Members</b>	
Dale Grimes, Mayor	2018-2022
Winston Evans, Vice Mayor	2020-2024
John DeLuca, Commissioner	2020-2022
David DeMarco, Commissioner	2020-2024
Joy O'Dell, Commissioner	2020-2022
<b>Board of Zoning Appeals</b> Regular Meetings—6:00 pm the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month at the Oak Hill City Office	
<b>Members</b>	
Chris Taylor, Chair	June 30, 2022
Zach Baldwin	June 30, 2023
Mary Catherine Bradshaw	June 30, 2024
Chris Goetz	June 30, 2024
Emmie Thomas	June 30, 2022
<b>Planning Commission</b> Regular Meetings—6:00 pm the 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month at the Oak Hill City Office	
<b>Members</b>	
Wade Hill, Chair	August 31, 2022
Robert Diehl, Vice Chair/Secretary	August 31, 2024
Mitch Barrett	August 31, 2022
Michael Barry	August 31, 2024
Flynn Doyle	August 31, 2023
Winston Evans	August 31, 2022
Dale Grimes	August 31, 2022
Shali Scott	August 31, 2024
Greer Tidwell	August 31, 2023