

Oak Hill NEWS

Fall 2022

From the Mayor's Desk

Dale Grimes, Mayor



Greetings Oak Hill neighbors and friends!

As we enter the Autumn season and look forward to some relief from the heat and drought of this Summer and a return to the familiar rhythms of this time of year, the Oak Hill Board of Commissioners ("BOC") has continued its work to preserve and foster what we all love about living in Oak Hill. Here are some highlights.

BOC Organizes for New Term. As a result of the August 4th election, Commissioners Joy O'Dell, Scott Price, and I were elected to four-year terms on the BOC. At the August 23rd BOC meeting, we were sworn into office, with City Judge Tom Lawless administering the oath of office. After each municipal election, the BOC has to organize itself by electing certain officers. The BOC re-elected Winston Evans to serve as Vice Mayor and as a member of the City Planning Commission, both for two-year terms. The BOC re-elected me to serve another two-year term as Mayor. By ordinance the Mayor also serves on the Planning Commission.



Left to Right
Scott Price
Winston Evans
Dale Grimes
David DeMarco
Joy O'Dell

Planning Commission Appointments. Current Planning Commission Chair Wade Hill and current member Mitch Barnett have been re-appointed for three-year terms.

Budget for FY 22-23. As required by State law, the BOC adopted the current fiscal year's budget on second reading at its June meeting. As noted in the previous newsletter, the total budget of over \$4 million is much larger than normal due to the inclusion of over \$1 million of "one-time money" from the federal American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") and several hundred thousand in funds from Metro for streets and related infrastructure expenditures left unspent from the prior fiscal year. On the other hand, our projected recurring expenses and revenues are around \$2.5 million – closer to a normal annual budget. The BOC deliberated extensively on the budget, making sure that "one-time money" is spent only for "one-time expenses", and ultimately reducing projections for two of our most significant recurring revenue line items – sales taxes and building permits – because of concerns about the potential effects on them of inflation and higher interest rates. The BOC will continue to carefully watch financial trends affecting our budget in these unsettling economic times.

Continued on next page.

What's New; City Upgrades & Improvements

J. Steven Collie, City Manager

Express Yourself... Or Report a Concern

The City of Oak Hill has upgraded its website and as always, it's accessible 24 hour per day. We are providing a quick and easy platform that will allow citizens to report city service requests or complaints. If you need to report an issue or have a concern, you can go to the City of Oak Hill Website. On the City's revamped website: oakhilltn.us/contact. Go to the home page; at the bottom there is a box with a number of choices, one of which is "Contact Us"; click on that, and midway down the page that opens you will see "Submit a Request"; fill in that form and click "Submit"; you can even upload a photo if you have one. This will send your request/complaint to the City Staff where it can be reviewed and acted upon. These requests are reviewed by City staff during business hours. We hope to be hearing from you soon!!



Contact Us

Service requests, comments, questions, suggestions, or complaints are always welcome. Please complete the form below and your submission will be reviewed by City staff during office hours.

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

In the event of an emergency, contact 911 immediately.

MuniCode

Also, the city is now in partnership with CivicPlus or Municode and has launched a new way to search and review the city codes. Once again, go to the Oak Hill Website and click on Municipal Code at the bottom of the home page. This will take you to the index and you can search for any topic in the published code. You have features that will allow you to print and email any paragraph or code you wish. If you have any questions, please contact the City for assistance.



New Billing Software

The City of Oak Hill will be upgrading to a new billing software for garbage & recycling services. With the new billing software, you will have access to view your account, see when your bill is due and even receive email and text notifications. As the new software gets implemented, we'll be sending more informational materials out to the residents.

Coming Soon

Introducing our new

Customer Web Portal



Annual Billing Options



Email & Text Reminders



View Account History

From the Mayor's Desk

Continued

Improved City Website. The City Staff is to be greatly commended for continuing improvements to the City's website. There is now an easy way for residents to submit suggestions, complaints, or concerns to the City by using the "Contact Us" tab. The Municipal Code of Ordinances has been vastly improved, making it much easier to locate specific code sections quickly. Overall, the entire website is much more user-friendly. I hope you will try it out.

New Service Providers. Over the summer, the BOC approved retaining a number of service providers. We engaged Blankenship CPA Group to serve as our auditor for the next three years, replacing Crosslin LLC, which was our auditor for the last three years. We believe it is a best practice to change auditors periodically, but there is not total agreement as to how often such change should be made. Ultimately, we accepted the previous Acting City Manager's recommendation to make the change now. We also engaged Barge Design Services as the engineering firm to provide the comprehensive Stormwater Runoff Study long discussed by the BOC and City Staff. We authorized the hiring of a geotechnical engineering firm, Geotechnical Engineers of Nashville, to provide as-needed evaluations of building projects that require that expertise. Finally, we approved the low bid from Sessions Paving Company to provide the City's paving services.

Other Business. The City Manager is actively looking for a possible alternate site for the garbage transfer location currently situated on Cherrywood Drive. We find ourselves again in need of permanent staffing of our financial function. The City Manager is working on filling that need as well as reviewing applications for a new part-time codes employee. Also, the BOC approved the purchase of a new truck to replace our aged 2005 model (to be purchased at a great savings through the State vehicle contract), and the purchase of new software for City garbage billing to replace the woefully outdated program currently in use.

Garbage Billing. The rates billed to residents for our garbage and recycling services will not cover the City's contract cost starting in February 2023. Although no one has quantified all the associated indirect costs, it is likely that collections from residents have never covered the full cost. In order to be fiscally responsible, we are considering making some changes—including using only annual billing except in cases of hardship, eliminating discounts, or slightly raising the rate. A proposal will be presented to the BOC for first reading at its September 27 meeting.

In Closing. As you can see, the BOC is hard at work to preserve and maintain the quality of life we are so fortunate to enjoy in Oak Hill. The new City Manager has already established a great working relationship with the Board, and staff members who were brand new a year ago are functioning well as integral parts of our staff. All of this is to better serve our residents. If you have questions or concerns about matters discussed in this report or otherwise, please feel free to contact any BOC member, or try out the "Contact Us" link of the City website. Best wishes for a pleasant and enjoyable autumn season!

Rain Gardens - Happy Gardening!

Marian Tidwell,

The Good Earth Gardener & Oak Hill Resident

"RAIN!!!!" That's my favorite line from the movie, *A Bug's Life*. With so much focus on climate change and how it is affecting local weather patterns I thought it would be a good time to investigate how rain gardens can keep Oak Hill residents from quaking in fear over RAIN!!!!

Why rain gardens? Well, rainstorms that produce a large volume of rain in a short period of time and that fall onto parched soil like we have experienced this year can create problems like erosion and flooding; and that creates problems for the creatures that live in our local ditches and creeks all the way to the Cumberland River and beyond. The rain that washes across our yards can pick up contaminants like fertilizers and pesticides that can harm or kill fish and amphibians living in our neighborhood waterways. The eroded soil itself makes it harder, and sometimes impossible, for fish to get enough oxygen from the water.

What is a rain garden? A rain garden is a prepared garden that collects and slows down rainwater so that any contaminants in that water can sink right into the soil. They are usually sited on a patch of ground near a hard, impervious surface like a driveway, along the natural slope of the ground or can be directed to the rain garden through a downspout and/or pipe either above or below the soil surface.

How is a rain garden created? Think of a rain garden as a soft and fluffy soil sponge in the shape of a shallow bowl that can be planted with attractive native plants which will pull the rainwater up out of the garden while it is also slowly soaking into the ground. A rain garden will perform this amazing function within 48 hours after a rain if properly prepared. That way the mosquitoes don't have a chance to lay eggs on the water surface. The size of your rain garden will depend on how much rain you plan on catching and keeping on your property. The shape of your rain garden is up to you, as is your plant selection. If you use native plants from one of the many available lists for rain gardens you will also be inviting beautiful and important pollinators like native bees and butterflies into your garden.



BEFORE



AFTER

I hope I've peaked your interest about this special type of garden! There are many rain gardens scattered around the Ellington Agricultural Center's campus to check on after a rain. For technical information on calculating the size of your rain garden, preparing soil, choosing plants, and maintaining a rain garden go online to CumberlandRiverCompact.org for their Rain Gardens Manual in the Resources section.

I have been a practicing Master Gardener since 1992 and have had my own garden design company for over 20 years. My designs focus on using native plants and organic techniques to create oases for clients and their wildlife. My newest interest is carving out meadows from lawns for native bees & butterflies.

A Word from Commissioner David DeMarco Tree Mortality

One of the biggest assets of living in Oak Hill is that we all enjoy is the tree canopy. It's a great environment for wildlife, enjoyable to look at, and it provides a cooler, or maybe only less hot, environment for us. When we bought our current house about 30 years ago, we had almost 100 trees on our one-acre lot. Over the last 30 years, we've lost about 30 trees due to storms, ice, drought, insects, disease, etc. I've planted some replacements, but not enough to fully replace them because some were too crowded or too close to the house. But it got me wondering, is my annual average of a one percent loss normal? Trees are supposed to last forever, right? But you see a lot of trees on the ground in any forest that never reached their full maturity. From what I have read, a loss rate of 1% to 3% is not unusual. It's higher in urban areas, presumably due to auto exhaust. While we are lower density than many areas, we are closer to urban than rural. But regardless, the point is, unfortunately, a bit like us, trees regularly and unexpectedly die verses all of them living for 100+ years. What's the solution? We can't stop the wind and ice and any many cases we don't know about insects and disease until it's too late. But we can regularly plant more trees. You've probably heard the Chinese proverb "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is today." October and November are the best months to plant trees. The roots grow during the winter and the trees can get established and require minimal effort on our part. Here are some easy ways to get trees from a couple of Nashville nonprofits:

Nashville Tree Foundation: Free trees, a bit smaller, limit of one per person, first come first serve, pick up and plant yourself:
www.nashvilletreefoundation.org/nashville-tree-fest

-Friday, October 21
Hip Donelson Farmers Market
-Sunday, October 23
Musicians Comer Fall Market at Centennial Park
-Tuesday, October 25
East Nashville Farmers Market



Nashville Tree Conservation Corps: Reasonably priced larger trees; order online for they are delivered and can be planted for an additional fee. Orders taken October through February:
www.nashvilletreeconservationcorps.org

Butterfly Migration

There are at least two types of butterflies that migrate southward though our area this time of year. The most well-known is the Monarch. They can be seen flying south/southwest on their way to Mexico. They migrate a bit higher and so you probably need to be on a hill to see them. I used to see them when my office was on a hill in Brentwood. The generation that migrates south is several generations removed from the ones the migrated north. So, they are all going somewhere they, their parents, or grandparents, have never been. And the generations that migrate south live much longer than the longer than the intervening generations. I used to think they migrated in a flock and was surprised that they all go solo.



You have likely seen, but may not have noticed, the Cloudless Sulfur butterfly. They are a small to medium sized solid yellow butterfly. This time of year they are headed south/southeast, to Florida. You can often notice them if you are driving east or west and they will be flying across the road. In September, it would be rare to see them flying in any other direction. If you are outside watching a football or soccer game, keep an eye out. You'll probably see a few.



Visit us at: oakhilltn.us

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GOING DIGITAL

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Boards & Commissions

Board of Commissioners (BOC)

Regular Meetings at 6pm the 4th Tuesday of every month
 At the Oak Hill Board Room, Suite 102

Members	Term
Dale Grimes, Mayor	2022-2025
Winston Evans, Vice Mayor	2020-2024
David DeMarco, Commissioner	2020-2024
Joy O'Dell, Commissioner	2022-2025
Scott Price, Commissioner	2022-2025

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)

Regular Meetings at 6pm the 3rd Tuesday of every month
 At the Oak Hill Board Room, Suite 102

Members	Term Expires
Chris Taylor, Chair	June 30, 2025
Zach Baldwin	June 30, 2023
Mary Catherine Bradshaw	June 30, 2024
Chris Goetz	June 30, 2024

Planning Commission (PC)

Regular Meetings at 6pm the 1st Tuesday of every month
 At the Oak Hill Board Room, Suite 102

Members	Term Expires
Wade Hill, Chair	August 31, 2025
Robert Diehl, Vice Chair	August 31, 2024
Dale Grimes	August 31, 2025
Flynn Doyle	August 31, 2023
Greer Tidwell	August 31, 2023
Michael Barry	August 31, 2024
Mitch Barnett	August 31, 2025
Shali Scott	August 31, 2024
Winston Evans	August 31, 2025

