



MAINSTREAM

www.cityofmesquite.com

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

November 2015

- 2, 16** City Council Meetings at City Hall, 7 p.m., 757 N. Galloway Avenue. 972-216-6244
 - 13** Rollin' Country will perform live at the Mesquite 50+ Dance, 7 - 9:30 p.m., Evans Senior Center, 1116 Hillcrest. \$6 per person at the door. Free dance lessons begin at 6 p.m
 - 29** Halloween Happenings, Ages 10 and under, 6 - 8 p.m., Mesquite Main Library, 300 West Grubb, 972-216-6220
- For information on City services impacted during holidays, please visit www.cityofmesquite.com/holidays.

City Council calls for a street bond election

The Mesquite City Council has called for a special election to ask citizens to consider a \$125 million bond proposition to repair more than 100 miles of residential streets throughout the community. Early voting is October 19 - 30 and Election Day is November 3. For more information, visit www.cityofmesquite.com/StreetBond. Here are brief answers to the most commonly asked questions about the bond referendum.



Why is the City having this bond election?

A Citizens' Street Bond Committee made a recommendation to the City Council to seek voter consideration of a \$125 million improvement plan to repair deteriorated residential streets in Mesquite.

What streets will be repaired?

The funds raised through the sale of bonds will be used to improve Grade 4 residential streets. The Grade 4 residential streets in the worst condition will be addressed first.

What is a Grade 4 street?

The City's Public Works Department annually reviews the quality of streets based on various factors. Each street is given a grade of 1 (Good), 2 (Satisfactory), 3 (Fair) and 4 (Poor). To view any street's grade, visit www.cityofmesquite.com/StreetGrades.

How will the streets be repaired?

The repairs will include additional concrete and steel reinforcement and new sidewalks and handicap ramps where needed.

(continued on page 2.)

Frequently Called City Phone Numbers

- Main Number..... 972-288-7711
- Animal Services 972-216-6283
- Building Inspection 972-216-6212
- Environmental Code..... 972-216-6276
- Parks and Recreation 972-216-6260
- Planning and Zoning 972-216-6216
- Trash Collection/Recycling 972-216-6284
- Street/Alley Repair..... 972-216-6282
- Water Billing..... 972-216-6208
- Water Leaks/Sewer Back-ups 972-216-6278

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Nextdoor

www.youtube.com/cityofmesquitetexas



Stan Pickett
Mayor



Greg Noschese
Mayor Pro Tem,
Place 5



Bruce Archer
Deputy Mayor Pro
Tem, Place 3



Bill Porter
Councilmember
Place 1



Jeff Casper
Councilmember
Place 2



Shirley Roberts
Councilmember
Place 4



Dennis Tarpley
Councilmember
Place 6

Street Bond Election



MAYOR'S CORNER

Recently, the Mesquite City Council decided to call for a special election to ask citizens to consider a \$125 million bond proposition to repair more than 100 miles of residential streets throughout our community. In the simplest terms, these are deteriorating streets, located in our neighborhoods and this bond election is one way to fund those repairs. Early voting is October 19 – 30 and Election Day is November 3. I encourage residents to get the most accurate and updated information before voting by visiting our special webpage: www.cityofmesquite.com/StreetBond.

Stan Pickett
Mayor

(continued from cover)

When would the repairs begin?

Improvements would begin in late 2016.

Is there a schedule of when specific streets will be repaired?

No. Streets repairs will be grouped by area for efficient construction. Any underground utilities due for repair or replacement will be completed before any street improvements occur.

How will the streets not being repaired with bond funds be addressed?

Repairs to non-residential streets and thoroughfares, such as Galloway Avenue, are paid for with other funding sources and through financial participation with other entities such as Dallas County. Highway repair and improvements are the responsibility of the state or the federal government.

How much will this cost me in increased taxes?

A portion of the City tax rate is specifically used to pay bond debt. If the street bond election is approved by the voters, the tax rate is estimated to increase 9.4 cents during the next five years. For a homeowner with the average value home in Mesquite (\$82,285), the tax increase is estimated to be \$7.62 per month by 2020. Homeowners 65 years and older with an over-65 exemption will not see a City property tax increase as long as they remain in the same residence and do not make improvements that increase the taxable value of their home.

How do Mesquite property taxes relate to other cities in the region?

Mesquite uses seven peer cities when comparing tax rates and services. Those cities are Plano, Irving, Carrollton, Richardson, Arlington, Grand Prairie and Garland. As of the 2014 tax year, Mesquite's property tax rate of 64 cents per \$100 of home value is the 4th lowest rate among those cities.

Can the City repair residential streets without this bond election?

The City budgets more than \$1 million each year for regular maintenance of streets and alleys. The City attempts to repair approximately nine miles of street each year. However, the streets deteriorate three times faster than they can be repaired using existing City resources. The City Council did not raise taxes or call for a bond election during the past eight years due to the adverse impacts of the 2007 recession on Mesquite residents.

If the City does borrow money, what is the City's ability to pay back the loan?

Mesquite has a bond rating of AA+ which is the 2nd highest rating in the lending industry. Among the seven peer cities, Mesquite is tied for the 2nd best bond rating.

Recent Change in State Law

A law passed by the Texas Legislature this year now prohibits a City from using certain long-term financing options for a period of three years for a project that is part of a bond proposition that does not get voter approval.

If you have any questions about the street bond election, please complete an online question form at www.cityofmesquite.com/streetbond. On this website you may also view answers to other questions that have been submitted.

Talkin' Turf with Travis

Here are landscaping tips from Travis E. Sales, the City's Manager of Park Services and Municipal Arborist.

As we progress towards the end of summer and transition into fall, this is an important time to start preparing your landscape for the winter months. Make sure you apply a final application of fertilizer. Also, raise your mowing height one-half inch during the last month of mowing. This will help protect your turfgrass root system during the winter weather. Deep soak your tree root systems, especially young immature trees, at least once per week until the leaves start to brown out. This will help with sugar and energy storage for the spring. Finally, try to eradicate any weed and insect problems you may have prior to winter so that your landscape can start fresh in the spring without competition. If you have questions or concerns about your landscape, please feel free to contact me at tsales@cityofmesquite.com or check out my webpage for more tips and videos at www.cityofmesquite.com/travis.



Mesquite City Council selects Cliff Keheley as new City Manager

In September, the Mesquite City Council selected Assistant City Manager Cliff Keheley to serve as City Manager beginning October 1. He replaces former City Manager Ted Barron who retired September 30. Mesquite Mayor Stan Pickett stated that Keheley was selected because



of his vast experiences on a variety of City projects, his involvement in the community and his enormous knowledge of the organization. Keheley has been with the City since 1994, serving in various leadership roles. He has led the efforts on numerous City projects including the recent renovations to the Mesquite Golf Course and the new Mesquite Heritage Trail.

Safe Halloween Tips from the Mesquite Police Department

Halloween trick-or-treating can be a fun time for kids. The Mesquite Police Department has some suggestions to make the holiday safe and enjoyable for kids treat-or-treating.

- Try make-up instead of a mask. Masks can obstruct a child's vision while crossing streets and using steps.
- Wear light colors or put reflective tape on costumes.
- Always be in groups and parents should accompany young children.
- Trick-or-treat while it's still light out. If it's dark, make sure someone has a flashlight and pick well-lighted streets.
- Instruct kids not to go inside anyone's home. Remain on the porch at all times.
- Warn kids against accepting rides from strangers.
- Remind kids to keep a safe distance from moving cars, cross only at street corners, never between parked cars, and never diagonally across an intersection.
- Remind kids not to eat any treats until parents have inspected them.
- Parents, discard any homemade or unwrapped treats.



Parks and Recreation Corner

For more information on any of these programs, please call 972-216-6260 or visit www.cityofmesquite.com/pard.

Turkey Camp:

During Thanksgiving break, send your kids to Turkey Camp for a day or week of fun. Payment is due November 19 or a \$10 late fee is applied. Participants must bring a water bottle and sack lunch. Camp is November 23 – 25 and 27, 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. The cost is \$16 per day or \$60 per week.

Christmas in the Park:

Mark your calendar now for this three-day event (Thursday, December 3, and Friday, December 4, 6 - 9 p.m.; Saturday, December 5, 3 - 9 p.m.) which fills Westlake Park with a festive spirit and twinkling lights.



Basketball League:

Registration is October 5 - November 1 for children ages 5 - 14. Games begin Saturday, December 12. The fee is \$65 per player.



Special Needs Athletes:

Join us in Therapeutic Recreation Basketball every Monday, November 10 - February 22 from 6:45 - 8:45 p.m. at Poteet High School.

Archery:

The Westlake Sports Center will host a free Introduction Class for kids age 6 – 15 on Saturday, November 7. A Women's Beginner's Archery Class on Saturdays, November 7 - 21 and an Adult Co-Ed Class on Saturdays, November 14 and 21 are available for a small fee.

Tennis:

Enjoy free play day for children ages 10 and under on Saturday, November 14, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. This is an instructional program teaching kids the basics of tennis.



Community Snapshots

Mesquite Arts Center Activities

The Mesquite Arts Center is located at 1527 N. Galloway.

For details on events, programs and facility reservations, call 972-216-6444 or visit www.mesquiteartscenter.org

20th Anniversary Concert: The Mesquite Arts Center is celebrating its 20th year and the public is invited to a special celebration concert on November 14 at 7:30 p.m. featuring members of the Mesquite Community Band, Mesquite Community Theatre and the Mesquite Symphony Orchestra. This collaborative performance showcases the music of Rogers and Hammerstein. The anniversary event is free and will be held in the Concert Hall at the Mesquite Arts Center. For more information please visit www.mesquiteartscenter.org.

Mesquite Community Theatre presents "Inspecting Carol" with performances November 20, 21, 22 and December 4, 5, 6 11, 12. For times and tickets, visit www.mesquitecommunitytheatre.com.

Changes in credit card fees

Beginning November 1, the City will no longer pay the service fees associated with customer payments made by credit cards or other payment methods in which a fee is assessed. After November 1 these fees will be passed on to the customer. This will apply to credit card payments online and payments made in person at City Hall. There is no charge for customers who sign-up for automatic bank draft for payment of their monthly water bill.

The City has been absorbing approximately \$500,000 per year in fees assessed by credit card companies. This expense raises the cost of service to all citizens. The new credit card policy will redirect the expense of credit card fees to only those customers who use them to pay utility bills, speeding tickets, court fines, permit fees, etc. Exact fees will vary depending on the type of credit card used. The projected fees to be assessed are: credit cards (2.35% of bill or a \$1.95 minimum), E-check (flat fee of \$1.75).

Water and sewer rate increase

Effective with October billings, City water and sewer customers will see a 10 percent increase in rates to cover the increased cost of water and sewer charges from the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD). NTMWD is the supplier of water and sewer services to the City. In an effort to lower the increase needed for all customers from 12 percent to 10 percent, the City Council approved passing on credit card and service fees to those customers who choose to pay their utility bills with credit cards or other payment methods in which a fee is assessed to the City (see related story above).



In August, the Mesquite City Council recognized resident and Special Olympics World Games Silver Medalist Matthew Hernandez.



On September 8, Mayor Stan Pickett presented a special proclamation to honor the Daughters of the American Revolution.



At the 9/11 Ceremony at Fire Station #1, Baker Brothers Plumbing and Air Conditioning presented a \$10,000 donation to Mayor Pickett for the Mesquite Freedom Park project. For details, please visit www.mesquitefreedompark.com.