

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

July 2022  
Issue 20

Mary Jo Heye-Townsell

Mayor for Sherwood, Candidate  
City Council Ward 2, Position 1  
501-960-0622  
maryjoheye@gmail.com  
1800 Kristen Ct. 72120



[www.maryjo4sherwood.com](http://www.maryjo4sherwood.com)

## Sherwood Mayor & City Council Contact Information

Kevin Lilly  
Ward 2, Position 2  
501-835-5945  
klilly@cityofsherwood.net

April Broderick  
Ward 1, Position 1  
501-920-0072  
abroderick@cityofsherwood.net

Charlie Harmon  
Ward 1, Position 2  
501-920-1914  
charmon@cityofsherwood.net

Beverly Williams  
Ward 3, Position 1  
501-554-4275  
bwilliams@cityofsherwood.net

Marina Brooks  
Ward 3, Position 2  
501-835-8572  
mbrooks1616@gmail.com

Tim McMinn  
Ward 4, Position 1  
501-772-4766  
timmcmimm@cityofsherwood.net

Mike Sanders  
Ward 4, Position 2  
501-590-2537  
msanders@cityofsherwood.net

Mayor Virginia Young  
501-835-6620  
vyoung@cityofsherwood.net

## Coolhurst Easement Prices Raise Eyebrows No Explanation Given for Price Differences Between Coolhurst, Country Club, and Hemphill Easements

While going over the paid bill list, I stumbled across lots of checks paid to people who live on Coolhurst. I asked for an explanation. I learned that these were paid temporary construction easements for the sidewalks. I had never heard of paying for a construction easement for a sidewalk when using the city's right-of-way. I was told it was a requirement for the grant money for the Coolhurst Sidewalk Project. (I will be addressing how this grant did not actually save the city any money in an upcoming edition of the newsletter.) This was a federal grant that was obtained through Metroplan. We had received sidewalk grant money from Metroplan for the Kelso/Green Valley Subdivision sidewalks in the Gravel Ridge area. I looked back through the 2017-2019 records and could find no payments made to residents for any of these federally funded construction easements.

These temporary construction easements checks totaled \$10,675 to 14 property owners. The average payment was \$762.50 with the lowest amount paid being \$450 and the highest amount \$1925. I was informed that the company that determined these construction easement payments was the same one that had the Country Club job. Once this project on Coolhurst starts, construction will take a matter of a few weeks. For the record, the two City Council Members that live on this street did not receive any payment for temporary construction easements. They live on the side of the street that will not receive sidewalks. Around 37 houses will be affected by the sidewalk project however, only 14 payments were issues. By federal rules, assuming an easement is required of all 37 properties, if money for the easement is offered to one of the properties, it must be offered to all the properties. With less than half of the properties getting money, there must be more to the story. ( See COOLHURST Page 2 )

**A Major Street rebuild will involve the temporary use of land beyond the Right-of-Way more intensively and for a longer duration than a sidewalk project**



Coolhurst looking east from Pembroke



Country Club Road Major Street Rebuild

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

( COOLHURST Continues from Page 1 ) This made me wonder about the people on Country Club. We all know what the people on Country Club are going through. The noise day after day, the rats, the dust, the damage to the yards and cars... This project, if finished on time, will not be done until October of 2023. Logic would say that these people living with a complete street replacement project would deserve more compensation than people subjected to a couple weeks of a sidewalk project. There is far more inconvenience in a multi-year project than a week or two project. Right???

Well, not in the land of Sherwood. The homes on Country Club received a total of \$18,625 for 53 homes. The average payment was \$354.42 with a low of \$250 and a high of \$825. Same company, same area, same kind of easement. Country Club was paid out in October 2021. Coolhurst was paid out in March/April 2022. There were two homes, one right by Country Club and the other one just off Country Club, that received considerably more. However, it looks like this was a Right of Way purchase, not just construction easement.

I checked to see how all this compared with the Hemphill Project. \$10,335 was paid out to 36 homes for an average of \$287.08 with a low (30 homes) of \$250 with a high of \$850 (one home). This will be an extensive and invasive street project. \$287.08 compared to a simple sidewalk project \$762.50. I would surmise that the difference between Country Club \$354.42 and Hemphill \$287.08 is due to Country Club having much larger lots with more street frontage area.

I still cannot understand the big difference between Country Club and Coolhurst though. The lots on Coolhurst are not bigger than those on Country Club. And quite frankly, building a sidewalk is not that invasive of a process especially compared to a road rebuild. And both Country Club and Hemphill are street projects that includes sidewalks. I asked for an explanation from the City Engineer, but he could not give me a reason. He said that the company that the city hired to handle these construction easements made these decisions. *Wait a minute! The city cannot explain the basis of why their money was spent? That is NOT good stewardship! That is NOT Transparency!* However, the City agreed to it and did not call foul. Hmmm MJHT

## Why Do I Want To Be Mayor of Sherwood?

*The Leader* newspaper recently asked me this question. I felt like I could have written a dissertation on the subject. However, he said that I had to keep it brief. So, the following was the response that I sent him. This ran in the *Leader* on June 29th.

**Q: Why do you want to be mayor?**

**A:** I am running for Mayor because I see Sherwood as a city with so much untapped potential. I believe a clear strategic vision for our city - clearly communicated - will put Sherwood on the path of an incredible future. However, for many years, I have been frustrated with the lack of a clear vision and strategic direction that must come from the Mayor. We are just adrift. The City of Sherwood should be reflective of its citizens both in management and in appearance. It should be customer focused, efficient, inclusive, transparent, and strategic. In appearance, let's face it we need a facelift. We need clean streets that are well lit with sidewalks. We need parks that are interesting, assessable, and creative. We need to beautify our city's entrances and make it look inviting. If we want to attract more quality businesses, then we must set the stage and look like a quality community. And we can do these things while preserving our strong public safety. We must always be open to new ideas because great ideas can come from anyone or any place. MJHT

Elect  
**Mary Jo**  
Heye-Townsell  
for  
**Mayor**  
S h e r w o o d

Filed for by  
Mary Jo & Sherwood Committee

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## Sherwood Needs To Improve Its Communications With Its Citizens

Not long after I was first elected to City Council, I brought up broadcasting City Council meetings through Comcast that was offering it at the time for free. I was told the following . . . the less that the citizens know, the happier they are. This did not sit well with me. I believe just the opposite. I believe that the more citizens know, the most invested they will be in our city. With the accessibility of YouTube and Facebook making it so easy to livestream and to see videos, I brought this up again. I had some push back about the cost of the equipment. However, I had done some research and was able to show that the expense was minimal. City Council agreed.

Videoring the Council Meetings has been great. However, community members have asked repeatedly for **close captioning to be turned on** so that for those having a difficult time hearing, then at least they could follow by reading it. This is something that can be done simply and should be done. I would go a step further and **expand videoring** to include have committee and informational workshop meetings also available for viewing. There are some meetings scheduled at times when most people in Sherwood can not go to them. For example, Wastewater Treatment Meetings are at noon and Advertising and Promotion (A&P) Commission meetings at 3pm.

Since this issue, communication, is so important to me I pledged during my last campaign to put out a newsletter. I sent out cards to my Ward with information on how to receive this newsletter by email. Readership has grown every issue and now people are from not just my Ward but also throughout the community receive it. I ask in my newsletter for people to ( See COMMUNICATION Page 4 )

## Mary Jo Successfully Pushed to Broadcast City Council Meetings



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

(COMMUNICATION Continued from Page 3)

let me know how they feel about any given issue and they have. I truly believe that having this kind of communication has made me able to do a better job as a Council Member. This has been a lot of work though but, I truly feel that the citizens deserve this opportunity for information and that it is important.

This past summer while visiting a friend that is a former resident of Sherwood, she inquired about how my campaign for seeking the office of Mayor was going. I talked about the success of the newsletter and that if elected, I would want to keep this going. She then said that she needed to show me something. She brought out a copy of her city's newsletter. It was exactly what I had envisioned. She said that every household receives it once a month and they love it. It was filled with so much helpful information. If elected, I would have a **paper newsletter sent to all homes while having encouraging people to opt for an electronic version to save on paper/trees. Both options would be available.** We have some in our community that are not comfortable with electronics, and they should not be left behind.

I truly enjoy meeting and talking with our citizens. This includes those of all ages including our youth. I think it is important to **go to schools and talk to as well as listen to the students about our community** just as I did recently when invited to Calvary Academy. Why not ask kids about what they would want to see in terms of parks and recreational facilities in the city in which they live? The Mayor in Bryant has a once a monthly program called **Coffee with the Mayor**. It takes place once a month on a Saturday morning at a different location around the city. Sometimes they are at a restaurant or community facility and sometimes they are outdoors at a park. This gives the citizens a chance to ask questions, give ideas, or even just get to know their mayor. I love this idea and would implement it.

I have spent time meeting with several of our **local developers and major landowners**. I have found that they would love a **quarterly regularly schedule luncheon** where they can all talk about projects with each other and the mayor in an informal setting. This is also something I would implement.

I think that it would also be good to invite all the **builders** to come together in a similar fashion to keep lines of communication open and find out if there are any systemic problems that need to be improved or rectified.

I would also like to **invite the leader of all the different faith communities that are in or near Sherwood to come together quarterly to also talk about Sherwood and possible needs out in the community that if we worked together, that perhaps we can solve.** I have talked to several local pastors of churches in our community that loved this idea.

Being involved and present with the Chamber of Commerce not only at ribbon cuttings and luncheon but also board meetings and small group get togethers, I feel is important. **I want the Sherwood's small businesses to know that I am there to be supportive whenever possible.**

And finally, I would **open the door to the Mayor's Office provide a more welcoming environment.** Whether you are a citizen, business owner, or a representative of a company looking to locate in Sherwood, you should be welcomed. I believe that Sherwood is a safe community, and **I am not afraid of its citizens.** I do not believe that this is how I want to live my life. I hear all too often that there calls to the Mayor's Office are not answered. I believe this must change. **I think it is important to never forget that the mayor works for the citizens.**

*Let me make this very clear, I will be working for you. MJHT*



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## ROCK REGION METRO AGREEMENT Tabled, AGAIN

The resolution for Sherwood to enter into an agreement with Rock Region METRO, for a new type of citywide transit service for Sherwood residents, was tabled for another month at the July Council Meeting. For months now the Council and METRO have been trying to hammer out an agreement that both parties can find acceptable. The proposed service is a daily 12-hour van service with pick-ups and drop-offs anywhere within the borders of Sherwood. Called "micro-transit," there are no fixed routes. The cost to ride one way would be \$2 for the rider.

I recently met with a Sherwood resident who is visually impaired and had been a frequent rider of the single express bus that served Sherwood and Jacksonville along a fixed route. He explained to me the service must connect to North Little Rock so regional riders can utilize the transit system to get to work, doctor's appointments, etc. I asked about wait times. He explained that those that utilize the METRO system understand that waits are part of the system and they know how to make the necessary connections and times. They understand how to be patient. He said that it cost him \$60 to get to his last doctor's appointment since Sherwood currently is not part of Rock Region METRO. He said that it must connect to the wider system to be worth it. I spoke to another resident that said that after he had a seizure several years ago, he could not drive for a year. He said he learned how to use the METRO system and got to know the other riders and enjoyed it. He is now cleared to drive but stated that it was a life saver for him during that period of his life.



### Rock Region Metro Micro-transit Van

I asked the METRO CEO if this part of the contract could be amended to include one stop out of Sherwood to connect to the rest of the system. They said yes but it will cause longer wait times. I told them that it was too important and without it then this would not work. We discussed McCain or Springhill. Both Council Member April Broderick and I asked for Springhill so that people could also get to CARTI, Springhill Baptist, as well as connect into the wider regional METRO system.

Council Member Beverly Williams found a few problems with the contract. There had been discussion of a Pilot Program that was not included. There were also some technical problems with the contract that needed to be tweaked. METRO indicated that these could be fixed.

Hopefully, next month these final issues can finally be resolved. I personally feel that this is an important service for people. Not everyone can drive for various reasons and not everyone can afford a car. This would be a three-year program and the cost of the service for the first year is what we paid to be a part of the METRO system three years ago. Rather than a single fixed route, this new service would be available to all citizens of Sherwood at their front door. If the program is not utilized, then we can cancel out of the program without penalty at the end of the three-year period. This program is being subsidized by the federal CARES Act. MJHT

You can find past issues of  
*Mary Jo's Heye-lights* at  
[www.maryjo4sherwood.com](http://www.maryjo4sherwood.com)

*Just click the link for Newsletters*

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## FBI Issues Warning to Parents About Sextortion Scheme Targeting Minors



FBI issued an alert in May of a noted increase in sextortion schemes targeting children in southern Arkansas. The main areas were El Dorado, Magnolia, and Monticello. All parents need to be aware of this trend, how it works, and tips to protect your children. The following was taken directly off the FBI News Release.

Here's how this disturbing scheme works: 1. A predator (posing as a child on social media) uses deception and manipulation to convince a minor victim, usually 13 to 17 years old, to engage in explicit sexual activity over video chat. 2. The videos or images are secretly recorded and saved by the predator. 3. The predator then reveals they have saved the recordings and attempts to extort money from the juvenile victim by threatening to post the videos on various social media pages. 4. To receive money, the predator may ask for bank account login information or request gift cards.

Sextortion is a crime. The coercion of a child by an adult to produce child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries heavy penalties, including life sentences for offenders. To make the victimization stop, children typically notify someone—normally a parent, teacher, caregiver, or law enforcement. The embarrassment children feel from the activity they were coerced to engage in is what usually prevents them from coming forward. Sextortion offenders frequently have dozens of victims around the world, so coming forward to help law enforcement identify a predator may prevent countless future incidents of sexual exploitation.

Here are some tips to protect children online:

- **Everyone should be wary of anyone they encounter online. Block or ignore messages from strangers.**
- **People can pretend to be anyone online. Videos and photos are not proof that a person is who they claim to be.**
- **Be highly suspicious if someone you meet on a game or app asks you to start communicating with them on a different platform.**
- **Encourage children to report suspicious behavior to a trusted adult.**

If you know someone who may be a victim of sextortion in Arkansas or Louisiana contact *FBI Little Rock at 501-221-9100 or FBI New Orleans at 504-816-3000.*

Do not delete anything before law enforcement is able to review it.

Tell police investigators everything about the online encounters. It may be embarrassing, but it is necessary to find and stop the predator. **MJHT**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## June Street Committee Update

**MARYLAND AVENUE:** Remember the Date – October 20, 2022. At the May City Council Meeting, I asked our City Engineer when Maryland Avenue would be completely open. He stated that it will be open October 20, 2022. I asked if this meant folks could drive from Brockington to Hwy. 107 on Maryland that day. he said “yes.” It is shocking just how long this project is taking. Maryland Avenue is actually three separate construction contracts – a city street widening project on the western end, a developer financed extension project in the middle, and a city extension project on the east end. I often go out there to check on the widening portion only to find no contractors on the job verses on the extension part of Maryland or even on Country Club Road. There clearly has need no sense of urgency on this never-ending project.

**COUNTRY CLUB ROAD IMPROVEMENTS:** The information provided now includes a sentence stating the following: “Garver is designing additional improvements on North Hills Blvd from Country Club to HWY 107 to replace failed and failing drainage structures underneath North Hills.” I have personally never experienced problems during rainfall with North Hills being impassable. However, I do not live in that part of town. Therefore, I am asking for input from readers that frequent that area, is this a problem? Is this really where we need to be spending more bond monies? Will area residents call “Calf Rope?”

**HEMPHIL ROAD:** Improvements are focused currently on the northern part of the project at the creek crossing. Curb & gutter are working south from the creek. All utilities have completed their relocations.

**JACKSONVILLE-CATO ROAD:** Construction of Phase 1 beginning at the bridge nearest Cato Elementary and going west will begin in August 2022 *just in time for the start of school.* “Oh, how wonderful!” Phase 2, the eastern section closest to Hwy. 107 and the reason for this project, is still only 50% designed. Phase 2 is the area that is frequently impassible in heavy rain events and has the dangerous hairpin curve. Why this eastern section is being built last is an absolute mystery to me. The rest of the project was not a necessity and yet it ended up the priority. Welcome to Sherwood.

With \$22 million plus dollars in signed contracts and eyeing a Phase 2 of Jacksonville-Cato and now a complete North Hills drainage rebuild, are we going to have any money left to address the daily traffic snarl on Brockington Road? *Seriously, how can we possibly spend \$35 million dollars in bond money on streets and not spend a dime on Brockington Road?* And once that \$35 million is gone, its gone. MJHT

## Got Yard Art?

### ATT Is Installing Fiber Optics Lines Throughout Sherwood Neighborhoods








Is your yard suddenly filled with spray painted dots, dashes, and arrows? Are multi-colored dashed lines crisscrossing your yard? Its not delinquents making mischief. Its ArkUps (Arkansas One Call) locating existing underground utilities in advance of ATT placing fiber optic lines throughout Sherwood.

Placement is already occurring in some neighborhoods. ATT's utility contractor is boring the new lines into location rather than trenching in an effort to reduce the impact on neighborhood yards. Rockier yards may require more frequent entry and exit points for the boring machine. White markings on the yard usually indicate where the new lines will be located and the white circles are where the utility pedestals will be located.



### Arkansas 811

#### APWA Color Code Chart

-  **RED** Electric Power Lines, Conduit, and Lighting Cables
-  **ORANGE** Communication, Alarm or Signal Lines Cables
-  **YELLOW** Gas, Oil, Petroleum, or Gaseous Materials
-  **GREEN** Sewer and Drain Lines
-  **BLUE** Potable (drinkable) Water
-  **PURPLE** Reclaimed Water, Irrigation, and Slurry Lines
-  **PINK** Temporary Survey Markings
-  **WHITE** Proposed Excavation

# Do you want to be on Mary Jo's mailing list?



Send your name & email address to [maryjoheye@gmail.com](mailto:maryjoheye@gmail.com)



MaryJo4Sherwood Website



MaryJo4Sherwood Facebook