

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

March 2022  
Issue 17

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



## 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  
timmcminn@cityofsherwood.net

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

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

## SHERWOOD BUYS SWAMP LAND

Sherwood bought swamp. Yes, it is true, it is even called Cypress Swamp! For two years, the administration has been trying to get the Sherwood City Council to buy this swamp and, unfortunately, it finally happened. At its February city council meeting, by a vote of 5 to 3, Sherwood owns swamp land. The voting in favor were council members Marina Brooks, Beverly Williams, Tim McMinn, Mike Sanders, and Charlie Harmon. The votes against were Kevin Lilly, April Broderick, and myself.

This land can be seen west of Warden Road, the frontage road alongside Hwy. 67/167, between Cornerstone Bible Church and Gander RV. (Between the Wildwood and Brockington exits.) From the frontage road the swamp stretches back to the city's southern sewage treatment plant. The entire area is the outflow channel of the Woodruff Creek drainage basin

Nothing says park like a swamp adjacent to a sewage treatment plant.

Unfortunately, council members were influenced by a wetland park they visited in Bentonville with a long extensive boardwalk (See SWAMP Page 2)



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

( SWAMP continued from Page 1 ) over a marshy area. I explained that this was not a Bentonville City Park like we had been led to believe. It was a privately owned park built by the Walton Foundation and owned by the Peel Compton Foundation. Osage Park as it's called in Bentonville was very expensive to develop and will continue to be expensive to maintain. Engineering in wetland areas is complicated and whenever you touch a federally established floodway there are additional environmental hoops as well. I verified this both with Bentonville Parks & Rec. Department and the Peel Compton Foundation.

At the city council meeting statements, were made about this being a good price and investment for the city. I also informed the city council that the cost is not just \$25,000. If the city wanted to do anything with this swamp it would have to conduct a floodway study. It's a federally identified floodway, right? I was told by a city engineer from another city, an actual civil engineer, that a floodway study would cost a minimum of \$50,000 with no guarantee of a favorable outcome allowing you to touch it. Why is a floodway study necessary? This area is a THE outflow of Woodruff Creek that drains all of Henson Park, the golf course, most of old Sherwood, and areas extending west of Hwy. 107 behind the Walmart Super Center and well north of Kiehl Avenue. Neither the city nor anyone else can jeopardize this outflow. The floor of the swamp cannot be raised to impede that flow thereby reducing its capacity to carry flood water away. Inhibiting the outflow of the creek will cause upstream flooding. Again, this is the outflow of Woodruff Creek. In fact, the above-mentioned city engineer could not believe that we would even consider buying this land.

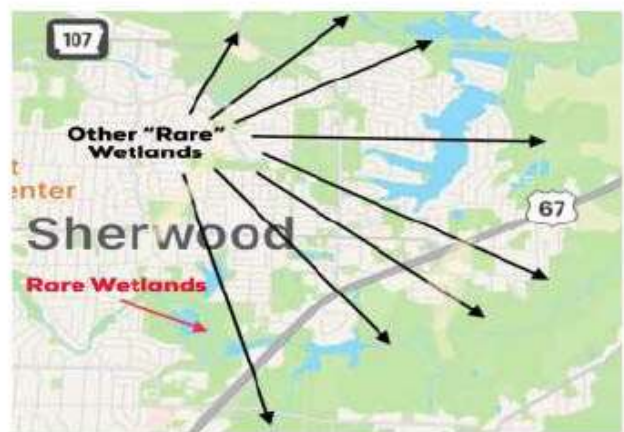
A comment was made about this being rare and we need to save it. There is no shortage of swamp/wet land area in Sherwood, let alone central Arkansas. Just cross Hwy. 67/167 there are acres and acres of swamp back there. Glenn Hills Subdivision, Gap Creek, and even

Indianhead subdivision is surrounded by wetland swamps. Rare? I pointed to Fourche Creek in Little Rock as an example. I truly do not see any possibility of this being a tourist attraction or an investment as mentioned.

It was also mentioned that if not used for walking trails, it could be used as a blue trail for kayaking. I explained that I took the time to walk around and explore this area. When you get back past the open area that you see by the frontage road, it is dense and filled with the trash that washes down the creek. My family owns four kayaks, and it would not be a safe or good area to kayak through because of the density. In the summer it will be filled with mosquitoes, snakes like water moccasins and cotton mouths, and, of course, one popular alligator.

I stated that, "I cannot imagine, given the condition our parks are in and the need for additional parks, we could ever prudently spend \$1 on swamp land that would be extremely expensive to develop. We have existing parks that need so much as well as areas of the city that don't even have parks. This is a careless use of money." I finally asked, "How much are you willing for the city to sacrifice to develop swamp land when we have limited resources and such great existing needs?"

Mayor Young weighed into the discussion favoring the purchase. We clearly have different priorities for the city. Sherwood now owns swampland. MJHT



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## TRAFFIC CALMING CONSIDERED AS RESIDENTIAL SPEEDING BECOMES A BIGGER ISSUE

The city council workshop this past week discussed traffic calming devices. This represents a major about-face for the city. The reason for this is because of the number of complaints coming from all areas of the city about dangerous speeding in residential areas. People are concerned about someone getting hurt or killed, especially children. We have even had residents video reckless behavior taking place on their streets, but police cannot do much with these videos. These videos are the basis of a private action, – you suing another person privately – but not legally prosecutable. For a public action, for a citation from a police officer, the police must see the transgression for themselves

Speed “bumps” were outlawed before I got on city council because of the damage that they can do to emergency vehicles, namely fire trucks. By speed bumps, I am speaking of a sharp, narrow bumps that you find in parking lots. See graphic in next column.

However, as the graphic shows, there are other variations available that do not negatively impact fire trucks. This exhibit, by the way, was not presented at the city council workshop.

Unfortunately, instead of being provided with options and being available to discuss the pros and cons of each, we listened to a nice elderly planner for over 25 minutes, but admittedly not an expert in traffic calming or even transportation. In essence, he gave us no relevant information, but just blurted out his opinions. All the while my husband, Tab Townsell, was sitting in the audience. He developed and wrote Conway’s policy for calming traffic devices like speed “humps” nearly two decades ago. With modification, these policies are still being employed to this day. Tab is asked to present to cities around our state about transportation, street development, and traffic calming devices. He is considered an expert on traffic calming as well as best

practices for street design. However, our mayor has less than favorable feelings towards Tab. Instead of utilizing his knowledge to shine light on how improve our city, we must wander in the darkness. Being my spouse, I get the benefit of this knowledge, though.

As the discussion progressed even against certain negative comments, it was wondered where to start. It has to be established what constitutes a problem and ask where those problems might be occurring. I suggested residential collectors and gave examples of Silver Creek and Indian Bay, as examples. I also mentioned that problems in Indianhead with the cut-through traffic from Jacksonville. (See TRAFFIC CALMING on Page 4)

### Traffic-control methods

Traffic-control devices are installed on public roads and in private developments. They are not used on main roads.

#### 1 Speed bump

Used mostly in private residential developments and shopping centers.

4 to 6 inches

1 to 3 feet



#### 2 Speed hump

Used mostly on residential streets with speed limits up to 25 mph.

3 to 4 inches

10 to 12 feet



#### 3 Speed table

Used on more traveled residential streets with speed limits up to 30 mph.

3 to 4 inches

22 feet



Note: Drawings not to scale

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

(TRAFFIC CALMING from Page 4) I also spoke about the difference between Gap Creek Drive and Indian Bay Drive. Gap Creek Dr. off of Brockington Road is immediately narrowed by a mid-street island/median. Not only does this immediately slow down traffic, it sets the tone that this is now a neighborhood. Drivers are put on notice right off of Brockington. Further, Gap Creek Dr. has traffic circles throughout the neighborhood. Rather than stop signs, these traffic calming devices keep the traffic moving while also curbing speeding.

I rarely have complaints about speeding in the Gap Creek area. However, Indian Bay Drive has none of these traffic calming benefits and I have gotten frequent complaints about speeding. Same area of town and same residents use both. When there are long collector streets without any stops or traffic circles, speeds increase. And as was mentioned at the meeting, when there are stop signs, they have found that people race between them.

Overall, this workshop did at least provide some opportunity to talk about some possibilities. However, there was no leadership or organization to make this workshop really productive. There was more time spent on why we can't do anything rather than figuring out how we can make things work and looking at successful programs around the state. Unfortunately, some folks stubbornly do not want any changes in Sherwood. Growth is proving that to be impossible. However, if we can strike a balance between calming traffic and moving traffic, we can find a way forward with our city.

While traffic calming should not be cost prohibitive nor should it inhibit the ability of our public safety departments to maneuver, we are doing a disservice to our city not to try tools that have worked all around the country. We owe it to our community and the safety of our citizens to make our city safer. MJHT

## Maryland Improvement Update

*(Remember, there are two projects: an East Maryland EXTENSION project & the East Maryland WIDENING project.)* I have had several questions about the progress of this project. The information that I am giving you is as of March 10<sup>th</sup> from the Street Committee. The information on the East Maryland widening project (that is east of hwy. 107) was almost word for word the same that was given on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The Gene Summers Construction Co. reported it has progressed to Barber with new curb and gutter and driveway replacement. Last month it was to Wesley, this was the only change in wording. Some final soil stabilization (sod) is complete. Placement of storm drainpipes continues eastward. As of 3/13/22, by my visual inspection, curb & gutter has progressed only halfway between Barber and Wesley. The widening from Barber to the already widened section of Maryland near Overcup Drive has not yet started.

The East Maryland extension project is also proceeding but at a more rapid pace. The roadway base is constructed except on the very western end. The eastern end is ready for curb and gutter. (This was the same as last month.) However, it goes on and says the Burkhalter company is going to undercut a section and replace it with compactible shale prior to pouring curbs. It sounds like the base was not compacted enough so they are redoing those areas. This is not a bad thing because it is better to get it correct on the front end. Water and wastewater collection mains are installed: stormwater drainage is now being installed. This extension project, as distinguished from the widening project, is primarily, but not completely, funded by the City of Sherwood as per agreement with the developer of Stone Hill.

There is no update on the ultimate timeline as to when it will all be completed. MJHT

For more Information about Mary Jo Heye-Townsell go to

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

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## THE 900 UNIT U-STORAGE PROJECT CONTINUES ON THE GRAVEL RIDGE STORAGE UNIT STILL WILL NOT GO AWAY

The Sherwood City Council again discussed the proposed 900 unit mini-storage unit proposed in the Gravel Ridge area on its second reading. As you all may recall, I wrote about this proposal last month. This facility would be just off Hwy. 107, but very visible from the highway and adjacent to the Wandering Ridge neighborhood. At the January meeting when this was first introduced, I as well as some other council members expressed our concerns. It was then decided to take no action until we had time to look more closely into it.

At the February City Council meeting, Council Member Charlie Harmon led off the discussion with published information that we had received from a local business owner and resident that mentioned the national average of storage warehouse space per person in a given three-mile radius is 6 square feet. The Gravel Ridge area already has 14 square feet per person within three miles without this facility. Council Member April Broderick added that based on this data, we no longer just feel we have too many mini-storage units. Now, we know by the math that we have too many mini-storage units. Council Member Mike Sanders stated that this would be the 6<sup>th</sup> such facility in Gravel Ridge alone.

Council Member Kevin Lilly talked about how the city gets no sales tax revenue from the mini-storage facilities. This was taken away by the state legislature probably over a decade ago. In that sense, mini-storage facilities waste city commercial space that could be utilized by businesses that capture sales tax revenue to pay for city services. Sherwood's city government is almost entirely funded by sales tax revenue.

Arguing the contrary, Council Member Marina Brooks stated the city cannot tell a landowner what they can do with their property. Disagreeing, Harmon explained that this type of business was not allowed by right in its current zone. Because of conditional zoning, had to be specifically allowed. This is the essence and benefit of zoning. Therefore, the city does have the right to say "no" to this conditional use request.

Brooks then argued that she had only received two emails and they were from existing owners of mini warehouse facilities. Her comments implied that the community was not against this project.

I vouched that I did hear from residents both in Gravel Ridge and in my own Ward. The owner of the property applying for the conditional use then challenged my right to speak of people's opinions in the area, because I wasn't his area's representative. He questioned why people outside my Ward would contact me. (*Obviously, he has not read my newsletter!*) I stated that it is not unusual to hear from citizens outside of one's Ward. Further, as a member of the City Council, all of Sherwood is my responsibility. I spoke about how these types of projects are cheap to build in relation to other types of businesses. I also stated that we do not know what the mini-storage demand would even be with the other 600-unit facility on Maryland not open yet.

Council Member Beverly Williams expressed her concern about the potential for many vacant large buildings since the applicant was talking about up to nine separate buildings. The engineer on the project stated that they would be built in phases, as needed. There was some confusion about the city council's right to act pertaining to conditional use zoning after a statement by the Planning Commission Chairman. The city council did not act that night do this conditional use request will go to a third and final reading at the next City Council meeting.

*Post Script: this past week the city council had a workshop and one of the topics was conditional use zoning. It has now been clarified that the city council has four choices in any conditional use requests. The choices are to approve as is, approve with additional conditions, to send it back to the Planning Commission, or to deny the project based on several different criteria. The city council will take one of these choices at Sherwood City Council meeting on March*

*Once again, if there is ever a project or an issue in the city that you feel strongly about, let your feelings be known with an email to your city council representatives. Find all email addresses on the front page. Mine is [maryjoheye@gmail.com](mailto:maryjoheye@gmail.com) Your voices have a lot of influence. Those voices are taken very seriously by your city council representatives. MJHT*

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



Send your name &  
email address to

[maryjoheyeye@gmail.com](mailto:maryjoheyeye@gmail.com)

*Its Free*