

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

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Issue 9



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## MARYLAND, MY MARYLAND (AVENUE) Who Should Pay to Finish Maryland Across the Gap

The Sherwood administration presented a resolution to the City Council authorizing the Mayor to sign a dedication plat of the final portion of Maryland Avenue. This is the long-awaited segment needed to fully connect Maryland between Hwy. 107 and Brockington Road. This has been greatly needed for traffic flow and public safety for some time. This resolution would basically allow the developer to build part of the remaining Maryland connection and the city would build the rest of it. At face value, this is great, however, there are several problems with this particular deal.

First, the developer was supposed to have built this connection 20 plus years ago. However, he was allowed to develop the phases of Stonehill Subdivision out of sequence. He started with the easiest, most profitable sections first. Once these were done, he stopped. This final section has a major creek crossing which is very expensive. Had the developer spread the cost of this creek crossing over the entire subdivision, he could have built this last phase. Building the phases out of sequence left this huge expense in the last undeveloped phase of the subdivision. And it didn't get built. Building out of sequence also created two other problems. A public safety problem was created for a large neighborhood by leaving only one way in and out for a long time. Internal streets are still so convoluted the safety issue isn't completely fixed. Also, by Maryland not being completed, an arterial street the city was counting on to better disperse traffic and relieve congestion did not get built.

Second, the City Council had already determined how the city should handle this issue. Years ago, an ordinance was passed that, if the city had to build the street, a lien(s) would be placed on all the land (or lots) in this remaining section. I am paraphrasing this. This was passed and put into place for two situations, this one on Maryland and one on Oakbrooke. This is the situation now, however, the administration wants to make a "new deal" with the developer.

This is the situation now, however, the administration (See MARYLAND, Page )

### What's Inside

- Relief for Brockington? P5
- New Sign Ord. Debate P4
- A New Bike/Ped Trail P3
- A Tribute to Veterans P7
- John Mundell Memorial P6
- Trail of Lights Dates P5  
And More

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

( MARYLAND, Continued from Page 1)

wants to make a “new deal” with the developer.

Typically, the developer builds the streets to develop the land. This cost is worked into the price of the lots. In most new subdivisions, the developer will build the local streets inside the subdivision and the city will build the arterial and collector streets outside of a subdivision. These arterials and collectors generally do not have driveways on them. In the case of Maryland, it was a little different. Maryland is a minor arterial, but the developer would get to build houses with driveways on it – like the rest of Maryland. In return, though, the developer would have to build the street. However, the developer has long neglected completing the arterial street. The ordinance mentioned above would allow the city to finally build the street, place liens on the lots, and get reimbursed for what the developer should have done long ago.

Fast forward to today. The city has already paid for the engineering and plans for the street. This is a \$1.8 million project and it was specifically mentioned as part of the 2018 bond issue passed by the voters. The City has all the money needed to build this project and the street has to get built to deliver on that promise.

The Sherwood administration's proposed resolution would ignore this street's history and the ordinance passed by the City Council to address this same situation. Further, language in this “deal” would allow the developer to build his portion of the street in a “timely manner.” What does “timely manner” mean? “Timely manner” puts the promised opening of this street in the hands of this developer and means the city cannot guarantee this street's completion to its citizens. Further this “deal” was still making the City pick up the lion's share of the cost. Building the creek crossing and the sections of street needed over the flood plain and floodway, was going ( **Next Column**)

## Happy Retirement “Bud” McGill

After 34 for years of service with the city, Cecil “Bud” McGill is retiring. Bud worked in the Public Works Department.

Join in honoring him by a drive thru retirement celebration.

Nov. 13 at 1 pm Sherwood Forest  
Line up at Dee Jay Hudson Drive  
to enter from the Trail of Lights.

to cost \$1.3 million of the estimated \$1.8 million dollar project. The city would be picking up over two-thirds of the cost

Because of this project's history and the its unfairness to the taxpayers of Sherwood, a number of City Council members opposed this “deal.” The Administration's argument was that the ordinance to place liens might not stand up in court. Many of us on the Council said No. After a long discussion, the thinking of the Council was that this was not a good deal for our citizens. It seems most City Council members want the city to build the street with our money and on our time line. And they want liens placed on the property **to recover the full price of the street back to the city**. However, that course of action has not yet been determined. This issue will come up again at the November City Council meeting.

Personally, I do not understand why almost 3 years after the Bond issue passed, why are we still messing around with this “deal.” This has been an issue for the entire time I have been on the Council, 10 years. This has taken far too long and the city needs this connection completed. Helping the developer out in this situation is not the main concern; Sherwood taxpayers are. Keep attuned for further news on how the city resolves this issue. **MJHT**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## Great News For Bike Ped Trails

**Hurray!** Sherwood received notice in October of the award of a Metroplan grant for engineering on a multi-use path under the major Entergy power line easement running north and south, just west of Brockington. (See map.) The city will be receiving \$100,000 in 80/20 grant monies to be matched by \$25,000 from the city. This money will allow the city to make a stronger application for construction monies in the next few years by having engineering already done. Metroplan will be awarding grants annually and it has prioritized multi-use paths to receive up to half of its monies over the next ten years.

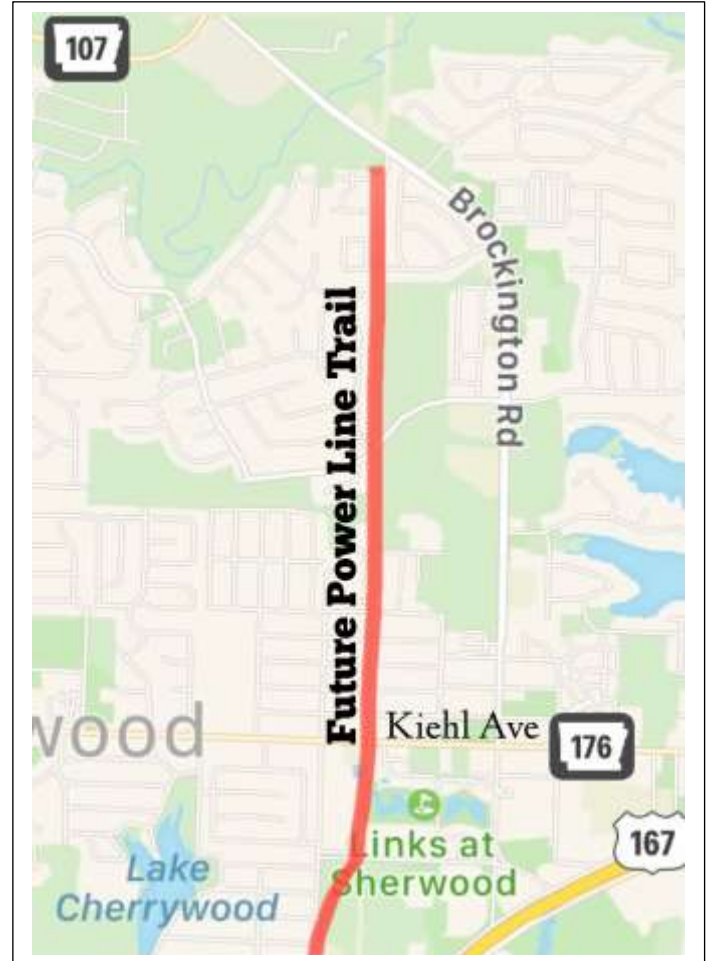
I am so excited at the prospect of this trail. I have long advocated for this particular trail and for multi-use paths in general. In my re-election campaign in 2018, I even made a video about how we could build a trail under these power lines. (See picture.) Finally, we have some movement on this idea to take advantage of the land under the power lines.

Richard Penn, the City Engineer, announced at the September Council Meeting that Sherwood was making grant applications for three projects in



Campaigning in 2018

iMetroplan's annual Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG) awards. All projects are ranked by a published matrix that emphasizes complete streets and multi-use paths. The three projects for which Sherwood applied included a Jump Start project in the Skyscapper District. (Next Column)



**The Power Line Trail was awarded a \$100,000 engineering grant from Metroplan for 2021. Proceeding with engineering could help deliver a construction grant to build the trail in 2022.**

While the power line project made the cut, unfortunately, the roundabout and Skyscapper District did not score well enough to make the list. Had the power line project been further along, Sherwood could have been awarded quite a bit more money to construct it. Still, we are on our way to building a city trail system that will serve the citizens of Sherwood for years to come. *Hurray! MHJT*

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## The City Council Debates a New Sign Ordinance



### Signs: Tall or Short?

The City Council is working on a new sign ordinance. As I mentioned at the October City Council Meeting, as we consider a new sign ordinance, it is important to think about what we want our city to look like in the future. Recent growth has made Sherwood a much larger city; the old ways are not necessarily the best practices going forward. We should look at those cities we admire to learn what we should do.

The trend for progressive communities is more monument signage. Why should tall pole signs dominate the skyline? This helps to make a city look cleaner and less cluttered. Maumelle, Conway, Fayetteville, Bentonville, and parts of Little Rock have each adopted similar measures. For example, in Conway, a commercial business can have a single sign, no more than 8 feet tall, and no more than 64 square feet per side – in essence, two sheets of plywood side by side. ***Of course, This only affects new signs; current signs are grandfather in.*** Also, different rules should apply to 67/167 verses Brockington Road or Country Club Road. Tall signage on the interstate makes more sense than tall signs on streets where everyone knows where a business is. Regarding other types of signs, how do you like electronic signs? Are flashing signs okay or are they ( **Next Column** )

distracting? Can signs be too bright? Do we want to look like a little Las Vegas? How large should signs be in relation to the lot size? It is a complex issue.

I ask you to consider the places you really like. Wherever that is I can promise it is the city rules and what the citizens want That determines what that city looks like? ***What should our sign rules be?***

### Home Businesses: Yes or No?

Another interesting issue as emerged out of the Sign issue...home businesses. Home business is a huge trend that has only grown with Covid.

Not all businesses are appropriate in a residential area, but some wouldn't be noticed. Currently, no home businesses are allowed in Sherwood, even though we all know they are there. I had a seamstress tell me that she had her business in her home in Sherwood. However, after a visit from city personnel, she decided to move her business to North Little Rock. We lost a good business and the tax revenue off of it. She sees one customer at a time. We are not talking for a business that fills up a street with cars or noise. It can be the same with many businesses. Think about people that give lessons; music lessons, painting lessons, and such. Think about a CPA, travel agent, or attorney, for example. We are talking about single individual businesses with very limited clientele.

Home businesses should be legal, in my opinion, but they should very tightly regulated. They should be allowed to have a small, unlit sign affixed to or near their home and no more parking than a normal driveway. But they should not be banned. They should be allowed depending on what they look like and what they act like just like they are in other communities. The City Council is working on finding a balance so that home businesses can be allowed and yet do not negatively affect your neighborhood. **Again, if you have an opinion, please let me know. Email me – [maryjoheye@gmail.com](mailto:maryjoheye@gmail.com) MJHT**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## Brockington Road on ARDOT Schedule to Get Congestion Relief in 2023

In October, ArDOT delivered to Metroplan its Draft Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for the upcoming four-year highway improvement cycle in the central Arkansas region. Included in the draft was a "minor widening" of Brockington Road, slated for 2023, between Kiehl Avenue and Hwy. 67/167. This is great news for all residents in east central Sherwood who use Brockington Road to access the interstate.

For those who did not know, Brockington Road in this section, formerly known as Brookwood, is also State Highway 176Y. While Sherwood has asked ArDOT to partner with the city in a study of that entire area from the intersection of Brockington Rd. and Kiehl Ave. through the interstate on-ramp on Warden Rd., the real relief always had to include a widening of this section of Brockington. Too much traffic comes down Brockington Rd. to only allow one lane of traffic to cross Kiehl and continue towards the interstate. We do not yet know what "minor widening" means but we hold hope that an additional travel lane can be added southbound, perhaps be just widening or by just a partial widening and a partial restriping.

Sherwood needs to also be prepared for the local financial match from the city. According to the draft TIP, the project is estimated to cost \$2 million dollars. Of that total, \$800,000 will be federal dollars, \$200,000 will be from state highway dollars, and \$1 million is expected in local contributions. Fortunately, Sherwood can make this local match with the proceeds of the 2018 half-cent sales tax and bond issue. It is also possible that Sherwood can apply for a STBG grant through Metroplan. However, since Metroplan dollars are also federal dollars, the entire local match ( **BROCKINGTON, Next Column** )



### 2020 Trail of Lights

Trail of Light will be open early this year from November 20<sup>th</sup> to December 30<sup>th</sup> from 6-9:30 pm. The entrance is located in the parking lot of the Sherwood Sports Complex off of Bear Paw Road.

#### ( BROCKINGTON, Continued from Last Column. )

Cannot be from this source. Sherwood must at least match every federal dollar with 25 cents of local monies regardless of the source. And while this a strong project, there is no guarantee of getting a Metroplan grant.

Another complication is the impact of the recent Supreme Court decision prohibiting the use of the state's current half-cent sales monies for 30 Crossing. The funding and/or timing of all projects in the draft TIP is yet to be determined. This will probably not affect the ultimate completion of this project; however, it might affect its timing. All this is yet to be determined. The draft TIP may have to be modified before it is fully released for comment and ultimate approval. The City must join ArDOT and Metroplan in waiting. As we wait, Sherwood does need to get its money in hand for what ever match is required of it. As Metroplan stated in its traffic analysis of Sherwood, this is the most strategic street improvement in the city for Sherwood's future. Let's find the money and be ready to partner when the Highway Department comes calling. **MJHT**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## Never Again!

I was honored to be there in this moment for Kimberly Mundell. (See Photo at Right.) However, as much as this sign and this moment were a good thing, this shouldn't have happened. This sign should not be there. Kimberly and I shouldn't have been there. John Mundell should not have been killed bicycling on the street in our city. We can build our city better.

I am strongly advocating that whenever the city builds streets that we need to have sidewalks and bike lanes or 10-foot side paths to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists. If we are going to build a great trail system, if we are going to be a progressive city, we need to build a city that accommodates all street users. We need to build complete streets. This is the city we need to sell to all who would wish to relocate here. We would not be the first in this area, by any means.

For example, the new Jacksonville Cato Road improvement is being designed right now. This bond issue project needs to have the ten-foot side paths because this road leads to schools. Now is the smartest, cheapest time to build this street right. The larger side paths accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists safely and would allow kids to be able to cycle or walk to school out of danger. Currently, the plan does not have bike lanes or the larger sidewalks. This needs to change! **MJHT**



**A Proper Sidepath for Walkers and Bicyclists**

As Reported in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*



## Christmas Parade is Canceled

The Mayor announced that the Christmas Parade was cancelled because in her opinion it could not be done safely due to COVID-19 and the crowds that come out for it. When asked why the city could have a Veteran Day Parade but not a Christmas Parade, she stated the city does not run the Veterans Day Parade. Huh? The city should approve the Veterans Day Parade. It had to block streets and provide safety. Why not find a way to make it work?

In my opinion, this was an overreaction. I personally feel that if we eliminated the throwing of candy, limited entries to only Sherwood organizations, stretched out the route to allow more social distancing, and strongly encouraged masks, this can be done safely. We need to find ways to say "yes" rather than just saying "no." The Mayor had discouraged trick or treating and that she would not let her grandchildren participate. However, neighborhoods like Glenn Hills, found ways to do it safely and many felt that it was better than ever. The same could have been done with the Christmas Parade. Let's have a "can do" attitude that looks for ways to say "yes" with innovation and ideas. **MJHT**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## Veterans Day 2020

I am so glad that Sherwood honors our veterans with parades and ceremonies. As a community, as citizens of this republic and of this city, we owe them so much. Thank you to all that have served in the military!

From the testimonies of people in my life, I know it is important to remember that war damages not only the physical outer body, but also the inner soul, where those experiences forever change a person. I know it did my father who was a Korean War veteran. He volunteered after high school in 1952. He was sent to Korea assigned to Field Artillery, Battery A2B as a Forward Observer. As a child, I remember from time to time he would let out a blood curdling scream in the middle of the night that would awaken us all. We knew these were his war nightmares. Though, he rarely spoke about the war, he did tell us it was an indescribable cold. He never wanted to feel that cold again; he didn't want to be reminded. Even though he was from Danville, Illinois, he chose to go to the University of Arizona in Tucson and then to Houston Texas after graduation. He was staying south. We knew he had terrible experiences that haunted him, but what exactly, he did not share. I have some old pictures, medals, and ribbons. I wish I knew more. I can only imagine how hard it must have been for that young man from a sleepy Midwest town to be in a foreign land so different from his. He never wanted to go back. I must say that the Korean War Memorial in Washington DC meant so much to him. My dad passed away many years ago, but I still think of him often and miss him still. I still respect his service.

Two years ago, Tab, Nico, and I took a Spring Break trip to Washington DC. If you have never been there, I recommend it. Experiencing the Korean War Memorial with Nico was so special. I told him about his grandfather and how realistic those statues are according to what my father told me. We talked about how scary it must have been and how proud we were of him. It made all of us want to learn more.

On the first day of Nursing School at UAMS, I met Justin. We were both different from most of the class because we were older with different life experiences. As we were walking into that first class, he turned to me and said, I have learned that you need a buddy that always has your back to get through tough things. How about we be that for each other...I agreed. For two years we had each other's backs. We sat together, studied together, compared lecture notes, complained to each other, laughed a lot, and made sure that we both made it through. He is now an amazing RN for the VA. What I learned during our time together was what a hero he was and is. Justin was a veteran of two wars in the Middle East and had two purple hearts from three gunshot wounds. He opened up about what it was like over there and what it was like coming home and trying to adjust not once but twice. He stayed in close contact with his fellow Army Rangers from his unit and showed me pictures of them. You would never know by looking at Justin that he had been shot three times or the trauma that he had experienced. He struggles from time to time with the memories and gets comfort by being around those like him at the VFW. Despite everything he went through, he still wants to help people, especially other veterans. He loves our country and all that it stands for.

However, he will never be in a parade. He told me many guys like him do not want to be in parades. He gets embarrassed when strangers would thank him for his service in a public way and he says most he served with are like him. We have many quiet heroes like Justin in our community, in our neighborhoods. While we say thank you to our veterans with parades and ceremonies, it is important that we also keep these quiet heroes in our prayers every day, but especially this week of Veterans Day. Thank you, Dad and Justin!

*Mary Jo Heye-Townsell*