

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

February 2022  
Issue 16

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

## Raw Sewage in Woodruff Creek?

### Reports at Planning Commission Meeting Disturbing

At the January 11<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting it was reported by Sherwood citizens that raw sewage has been spilling into Woodruff Creek during heavy rain events. There had recently been a heavy rain event on January 9<sup>th</sup>. As both a City Council member and a Registered Nurse, I was concerned about these reports. This creek runs alongside a walking trail and several parks. At one of the parks, Henson Park, it was not unusual to see a family fishing or kids playing with the rocks in the stream. This situation had never been brought to the attention of the City Council nor had I ever seen any public warnings about possible sewage in this creek. Along with others I have picked up trash in this creek at Keep Sherwood Beautiful events.

I spoke to one of those residents, Rick Shockley, who invited me out to see the problem. He told me that the city was aware of it and that he had personally called the Mayor's office. He was disappointed with the response of the city, to put it mildly.

My husband and I went out to his home. Shockley, a long-term resident of this area of Sherwood, showed us around the property and stated that this was not a problem before extensive land development occurred up the line. He stated that the manhole cover was literally lifted off by the force of the water and that the sewage flowed down the road directly into Woodruff Creek. He showed us bits of toilet paper mixed in the mud all the way down to the creek. Shockley did call the Sherwood Mayor's Office and that someone from the city did come out. They looked that the pools of sewage with remnants of toilet paper and agreed the situation was bad, but that it was a North Little Rock's line, not Sherwood's. (See **WOODRUFF CREEK on Page 2**)

Toilet Paper from Sewage Spill



Problematic Manhole in Regan Road



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

**(WOODRUFF CREEK Continued from Front Page)** They advised him to reach out to North Little Rock and they left. Shockley did call up NLR Mayor Terry Hartwick's office and spoke to him. Two men from North Little Rock came out, sprinkled chemicals (most likely lime) in the large pools and picked up some of the larger pieces of toilet paper. My husband and I came after this visit and there were still lots of bits of toilet paper visible. Mr. Shockley stated that one of the NLR workers stated to him that there were several problems like this in the city of Sherwood and referenced one of them near the golf course. There has been a report on television about a similar situation on Country Club. Shockley stated that he also reached out to AEDQ several times but due to the office working virtually, he did not feel that he got through to the right people to investigate this.

To Mayor Hartwick's and North Little Rock's credit, they did send out a crew of workers as seen in the picture. I suspect they were looking for downstream blockages since they were working on the opposite side of the road. Hopefully, this will help the problem. However, since this is happening only with heavy rain events, there must be more issues with this line.

I also spoke to long-time resident, Rebecca White, who agreed this problem has happened periodically over the past 10 years but feels it has gotten worse in recent years, citing upstream development on the line as contributing to the problem.

She too had witnessed the manhole being blown off several times just as Mr. Shockley had stated. It was obvious when visiting with Mrs. White the dirt in the area upstream from the manhole did not have the pungent smell as it did downstream of the manhole.

With both the physical evidence of the event, including pictures that they showed me, and the consistent firsthand eyewitness accounts, there is no question that this has been happening. Now what does this mean?

This is not an unusual problem in cities. You have an old line that most likely has some cracks and is getting

infiltration of rainwater causing an overload of the system that comes out further downstream with enough force to lift the manhole covers off. This line was probably fine when it was first installed, but due to growth and age, it seems to be struggling.

When faced with sewer infiltration issues other cities frequently install a rubber liner which unrolls inside the existing pipe. This seals the cracks and stops the infiltration. While this is not our line to fix, we can strongly advocate to fix this line which serves our city

Hopefully, this will be resolved quickly because it runs through or along many homes and parks. I have seen people fishing with their kids in the creek as well as children and dogs playing in it. Remember the rock stacking sculptures in Henson Park? Raw sewage contains so many disease-causing organisms, such as Salmonella & E Coli, that present in the fish, on rocks, and in the dirt/mud. This can then be tracked into people's homes. According to the EPA, 7 million people yearly suffer from illnesses caused by exposure to raw sewage. 7% of those become severely or fatally ill. *This is not to be taken lightly.* This situation must be made public to our citizens so that they can take the necessary precautions. Our first duty must always be to protect the health and welfare of our citizens!

In conclusion, when an event like this occurs, it is important that the city notify the citizens of a possible problem until we know that there are no longer safety concerns. Sampling of water and soil need to be taken to make sure that the creek from Lee Bridge and beyond are safe. Communication and transparency are key to keeping our citizens safe. **MJHT**

**North Little Rock Utilities Responds**



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## PUMP TRACKS: ON MY PARKS & REC WISH LIST



Child rides new Big Quarry Pump Track in North Little Rock

**Dateline NOW:** Pump tracks are a new style parks & recreation facility growing rapidly in popularity and appealing to a surprising range of ages from young to however young older folks want to be. Pump tracks are primarily closed bike tracks that send bicyclists, one at a time, over humps, called rollers, and banked turns in its course. The name comes from the design of the track that allows the bicyclist to “pump” the downhill segments by throwing their weight into the bike. This pumping allows these tracks to build built on flat or near flat ground after creating a slightly elevated starting chute. Pump tracks can also be built to different levels of expertise so that riders can take on as much thrill as they choose.

The great thing about pump tracks is that they are an unstructured activity. There are not leagues or scheduled times. You just ride when you want to and until you are satisfied. Ride by yourself or with your friends. While this strongly appeals to twenty and thirty somethings as a community-enhancing lifestyle amenity, the most energetic users are children and teenagers. And they are fearless, I might add. Well-appointed pump track facilities even include covered waiting areas for parents as well as picnic, rest areas, and restrooms.

North Little Rock just opened a new pump track facility along its Arkansas River Trail called the Big Rock Quarry Bike Park. Sherwood’s recent bicycling study tour to Northwest Arkansas took city officials to two pump tracks in Springdale and Rogers. “The Railyard” in Rogers was recently upgraded from a dirt track to a paved track. From ped/bike counters at “The Railyard”, 48,000 separate runs were made through track in the first 48 hours after the facility re-opened. That was not 48,000 separate people, but multiple runs by many people who are using the facility. This speaks to the fun people have in this activity – they simply run the course, again and again and again.

So, if these facilities are so popular, why doesn’t Sherwood have one? Let’s just say, I will strongly push to develop pump tracks as part of Sherwood’s recreational mix.

### The Railyard in Rogers



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## Scott Gann Replaces Amy Fletcher on Parks & Rec

At the January Council Meeting, Scott Gann was voted in as the newest member of the Parks and Recreation Committee. Scott is replacing Amy Fletcher. He will add knowledge about biking as recreation and sport to the committee as well as enthusiasm for outdoor recreational activities.

Scott moved to Sherwood in 2008 from North Little Rock. He graduated from Northeast High School in North Little Rock. He and his wife have two teenagers. They have a 16-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old son. He works with the state of Arkansas/Department of Human Services. His main responsibility is to maintain and troubleshoot IT issues within the IT security area.

He has been an active volunteer and founding member of the Arkansas Dyslexia Support Group, a grassroots parent support group. They currently have over 1,000 members. He is very proud of the part this group had in helping to write four new reading laws during the 2017 legislative session that made exciting changes for the kids.

He sees Sherwood as having so much potential to be a pro-outdoor community. He feels that much of our green spaces are underutilized and that Sherwood needs to be more forward thinking especially North of Kiehl. He stated that all the growth seems to be toward Gravel Ridge and we need more infrastructure changes in that direction.

**Scott Gann Joins Parks & Rec Committee**



## Parks Update

The Parks Director announced that the contract was awarded on the Soccer Complex renovations and work should begin shortly. They have run tests on the new Parks survey, and it should be published soon. This survey will have some new questions and the report will be more user friendly. I will be emailing the QR code to the readers of this newsletter. Please take a moment and participate in this important survey

## New Finance Officer Proposed

At the city's February Human Resource Committee meeting the committee voted to remove the financial responsibilities for our multi-million-dollar city out of the City Clerk's office and to create a Financial Officer's position. This eliminates the risk of the city's finances being subject to the election whims of who's running for City Clerk. Fortunately, Angela Nicholson has served our city wonderfully as City Clerk for years, easily combining electoral success and complete competence in the job. However, Angela has announced her retirement and we cannot be so sure the next City Clerk will be as competent. Competence is needed in this job, not electability.

While all details are to be worked out, the Human Resource Committee has recommended to the city council that a new financial officer position be created as a department head with the possible designation as the City Treasurer as well and the City Clerk's position possibly be part time. It was also discussed that the new position could hopefully come online by July 1 to be fully prepared by the year's end. ( If you remember, I called for this change back in Mary Jo's Heye-lights, Issue 14, November 2021. ) This change will align Sherwood with every peer city or larger in the state and provide a better guarantee of professionalism in the handling of our city finances

**And Angela Nicholson, thank you so much for your service. You were a joy to work with and you will be missed**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

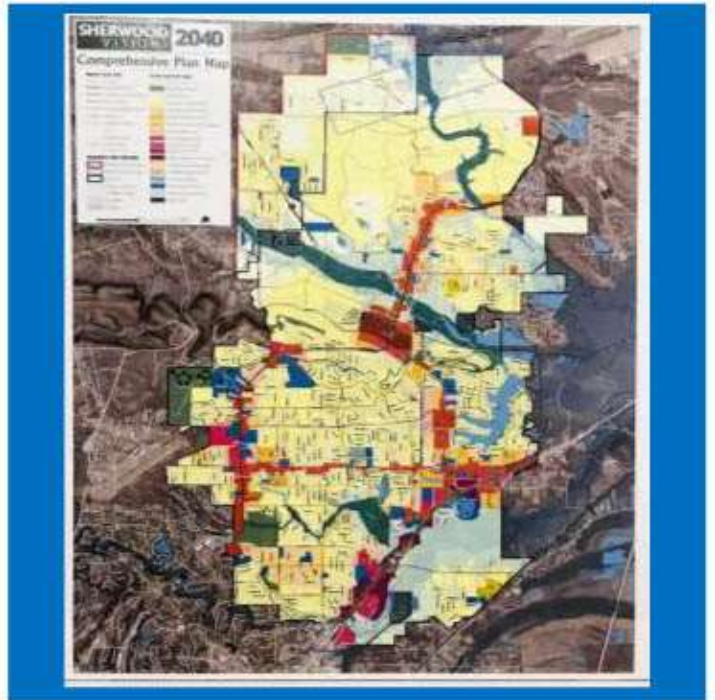
## PLANNING NOTEBOOK

### PROBLEMS EMERGE IN THE REZONING PROCESS

Recently, I had been contacted by several citizens opposed to a zoning change in land next to their homes. Oddly, they complained that they had not been officially notified. This should not be the case. On investigation of this issue, I was told that it was not a "rezoning" but it was about changing the city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. And if you only propose changing this Land Use Plan then you don't have to send letters to the surrounding citizens. The Planning Commission Chairman stated that surrounding properties do not have to be notified and there is nothing in the Zoning Code about notifying anyone about possible changes in the Land Use Plan. He went on to say that this is one of the things that they are thinking about in the new zoning code.

So, let's unpack this. If you change the Land Use Plan, does it change the zoning? No. However, in Sherwood it is a first step in changing the zoning. In these cases, a Land Use Plan change can be requested for the exact property description of a future rezoning request – and no one has to be notified yet. Then, when the rezoning request comes, the applicant and even the city officials can say "why, look here, the Plan says this is okay." And we often hear that rezoning requests are harmless because they are just following the city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This Land Use Plan change then becomes something like a self-fulfilling prophecy

The City Engineer stated that a Land Use Plan change has to precede a rezoning if the plan does not support the requested zoning. I disagree. Comprehensive Land Use Plans should be kept very general. Rezoning is very specific. Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Zoning Maps are not the same thing and Sherwood is using them incorrectly. I have objected to this official city process. It is not right. If the Land Use Plan must be changed first, then the neighboring people should be notified just exactly like they would be for a rezoning. If a property next to your home gets changed on the city's Land Use



Plan to allow multifamily or commercial or any other more intensive land use, the city just basically justified the coming rezoning request. This can and likely will directly impact your property value - even if the official zoning has not been changed yet. It is a material change.

There are currently no notification requirements for changes in city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan - even if those changes are highly specific. However, for transparency and fairness to all involved, this needs to be changed as soon as possible. People need to be notified.

Either that or Sherwood should start using its Comprehensive Land Use Plan as it should be and eliminate this very specific Land Use Plan amendment requirement. Currently, these Plan amendments just act like a "Rezoning Lite" but it still packs almost all the same calories. Personally, I like this option better. By not requiring a specific Land Use Plan amendment, neither the applicant nor the area residents are required to attend four separate meetings (two Planning Commission & two City Council meetings) to argue for or against any rezoning request. Let's keep it simple. MJHT

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## RETENTION PONDS

### AT THE INTERSECTION OF POLICY & ENGINEERING

Sherwood has its share of storm drainage problems. Most of these problems involve inadequate engineering, that is the wrong sizing of storm drain features when considering the extent of the watershed upstream or not properly calculating future development in that area. It can also involve the lack of overflow routes when the storm drain capacity is exceeded. This can mean people's homes and businesses get flooded to the tune of thousands of dollars of damage with no assurance it will not happen again. When these problems emerge in developed areas the cost of the fix at the location can be astronomical. A cheaper way to fix these issues is to go upstream of the problem areas – before all the land is developed – and build detention systems.

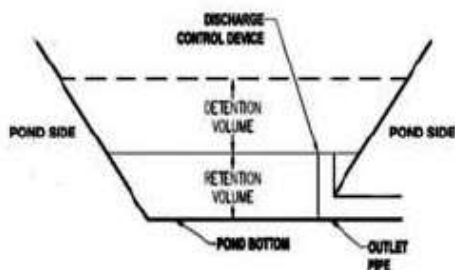
A detention system is an area that detains or holds water for a short time. This can usually take the shape of a dry pond with a drain pipe in the bottom to slowly allow water out. The outflow pipe is sized to only let out the amount of water the area downstream can handle. Any amount of water that flows into the dry pond that exceeds the capacity of the pipe begins to fill up the pond. Excess water is detained until it can flow out of the pipe at the regular rate. The storm water doesn't all rush to flood the problem areas.

Now, here is where good engineering ideas can intersect with progressive city policy: why doesn't the city go upstream from problem areas and purchase undeveloped land to build good detention systems? Let me give you one good example. In Millers Crossing at least one home repeatedly floods as the creek running under Overbrook Street overtops that street by swinging around the bridge flooding straight into the home before returning again to the creek on downstream. Widening the signature rock bridge would be expensive and could push more water and potentially more problems to other homes downstream. What if a detention system could be built upstream?

It just so happens, that the creek that causes these flooding problems runs through undeveloped land upstream. Actually, it runs through the back portion of the city-owned land leased by the CALS Amy Saunders Library. It is my understanding that the library would love to have a small lake and walking path among other features as amenities

behind their library. In this case, city could offer to build that small retention lake (permanent pool) for the library on the lease-hold land if the library allows the city to build a detention pond in the air space above the permanent retention pool. (See the included diagram). This is done by building the levy higher than needed for the retention pond. This would create a detention capacity above the retention pond. However, by putting the drain pipe at the bottom of the detention area, but on top of the retention pond, the detained excess water above the pipe is drained but the retained water below the pipe stays in the lake.

This is could be a "win-win" situation for the city and the library. The city gets a location for a detention system for no cost and the library gets their small lake for free. Even more, the flooding area downstream gets a little relief from excess storm water events. Perhaps I should say "win-win-win." MJHT



**Detention/Retention Systems like in the diagram above provide a year-round amenity as well as downstream flood mitigation**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## 900 Hundred Mini-Storage Units on Hwy. 107 in Gravel Ridge?

At the January 11<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting a rezoning request for Lot A of Wandering Ridge Subdivision passed 3 to 2. There was no public objection.

The rezoning then appeared before the City Council on January 24<sup>th</sup>. After much discussion, it was decided to table it for one month so that council members had more time to consider this. No one from the community spoke out against this proposal.

This mini-storage facility would back up against single-family homes in the Wandering Ridge Neighborhood. On two previous occasions, I had previously opposed mini-storage facilities when they were going to back up against neighborhoods in my Ward. I objected because this could affect those homes in terms of lighting, security, and property value. I do not want Gravel Ridge to have a different set of standards than the rest of our city.

Other concerns include the fact the city re tax revenue from mini-storage units nor does it grow our city. This is not exactly the type of commercial development we were hoping for. While this property is not directly on Hwy.

107, it runs parallel to and would be visible from the highway. This in essence is our gateway from the north. Is this the gateway we want?

The developer stated that there is quite the demand for facilities such as these, especially due to the air base. He also stated that he would put landscaping around it to enhance its appearance and, as the owner of a landscaping company, I am sure he can do a fine job. There is no question that these facilities are quite profitable and there is a demand. However, we have a very large facility on Maryland that has not opened. We do not yet know its impact on existing demand.

I believe strongly in the voice of the people. If you object to this project, then email the city council members and let them know. Or if you feel that this is needed, let them know as well. If there is silence, then the council must assume that there is no public objection. This will come back in front of the Sherwood City Council at its February meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Email addresses can be found on the city website or on the front page of this newsletter. MJHT

### Kimberly Mundell Named to BACA Board

Sherwood Resident and local bike advocate, Kimberly Mundell, was voted in as a board member for BACA (Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas) on January 6<sup>th</sup>. It is great that our Sherwood Community will now have more representation in this influential organization. Congratulations Kimberly!



Kimberly & friends on a recent ride

### Other News

#### Coming Soon

Wondering what's been going in near the Brockington & Kiehl intersection? **Splash Car Wash** is building a facility at 3610 E. Kiehl Ave. You can now enjoy it their service in Sherwood.

#### Head of Metroplan to Speak at Chamber Luncheon

Tab Townsell, Executive Director of Metroplan, will be speaking to the Sherwood Chamber of Commerce's monthly luncheon on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The luncheon was originally rescheduled for February 3 but was postponed by inclement weather. It will be held at the Greens at North Hills at 11:30 a.m. Topics to be covered will be who Metroplan is, how Sherwood engages with Metroplan, and the future of the East-West Connector. *Did I mention, he's, my husband?* Call the Sherwood Chamber of Commerce at [501-835-7600](tel:501-835-7600) for tickets.