

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

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## HAPPY 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

### RECYCLING NEWS

**The Recycling Contract** for the city for the next three years was recently up for renewal by the City Council. In order to make a decision I reached out to find out how Sherwood residents felt about recycling. I found that overwhelmingly they wanted to continue the recycling program. However, many were concerned that the recycling was not really being recycled.

I submitted a list of questions to the Mayor asking questions such as what percentage of the collected material was being recycled. After waiting for days for a reply and the answers to my questions, I reached out to Kathy Webb who serves on the Little Rock Board of Directors after **(Next Column)**



reading the Arkansas Democratic Gazette article about their consideration of the same contract. She let me know that she found out that the information stated and reported at their meeting was not accurate. She put me in touch with Jordan Johnson for Waste Management. I had a conference call with him and he was happy to answer all those questions and then some.

What percentage of the amount collected through the recycling program actually gets recycled? 70% of the materials received are recycled. Two year and a half years ago that percentage was 50%. They feel that this is due to their aggressive, targeted educational program. The amount of waste put into the recycling bins that is not recyclable has greatly decreased. The biggest problem has been contamination. This includes dirty recyclable materials as well as things like carcasses of dead animals that can contaminate the bulk of a load.

Since the China market has dried up, where are the recyclable materials going? Are there any local markets for

**(See RECYCLING, Page 2)**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

**(RECYCLING Continued)** the recyclable materials? The metals, such as aluminum cans, goes to Alabama. The clean and dry paper/cardboard goes to Southern Arkansas/Northern Louisiana. Plastics go to plants in both Alabama and Georgia. The glass goes to Kansas City. These are the current locations but locations can vary depending on demand. I personally like that this was being handled regionally.

Glass was in the original contract but was taken out. What changed? He said that the Regional Solid Waste Board consisting of the cities of Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Sherwood had voted to re-include glass in the next contract. Since the last contract, they found a manufacturer in Kansas City that will transport it from Little Rock to Kansas City and use it in their fiberglass product. Glass does increase the price of the contract due to costs of handling and sorting. (Little Rock did price other options and the lowest price outside of Waste Management was \$3 more).

Why has the cost of recycling continued to increase? The contract cost covers the collection and processing of the recycle materials. The increase is due to several reason. Certainly, the cost of labor has gone up quite a bit due to both minimum wage and the lack of qualified drivers available in the central Arkansas area. If the cost of any products from non-recycled products is low then the purchase price of the recyclable materials to also make that product must be minimal or even zero to make economic sense on the market. An example of this... if oil prices are low which is used to make plastics, then the demand for the recycled plastics is also low. If oil prices are high then the demand for plastics that can be recycled increases and thus rises. There are also costs to maintaining the MURF (Material Recovery Facility) which is the large state-of-the-art machine that separates the materials.

**(Next Column)**

Unfortunately, objects like grocery plastic bags get caught up in the machine and shut it down. Also, there are frequent propane tanks that get put in the recycling and then explode, shutting down the operations while clean up and repairs take place. The costs of all businesses are going up...insurance, electricity, fuel, etc.

Which material is the most recyclable out of those collected? In other words, which has the most demand? The answer was until recently, plastic. As we all know, oil prices are historically higher so this will come around again.

As a City Council person, I get calls from time to time about drivers being careless and leaving messes. How should this be handled? Mr. Johnson said that citizens should call **501-565-0191**.

Mr. Johnson said that Sherwood does the best job in recycling properly out of the three cities. I asked at the workshop if Waste Management could look for a way to reward the community or communities that are recycling the best and thus being the best producer for Waste Management. Mr. George Wheatley, the Regional Manager representing Waste Management, promised to look at this seriously before the next contract and stated that Mr. Johnson had brought this up as well.

The new contract passed the Council 8 to 0. It passed the North Little Rock as well. In Little Rock, it comes up for the second reading July 7<sup>th</sup>.

I hope that this information was helpful. The contract amount is \$4.29 per month for 2020 without glass and will then go to \$5.39 for 2021 with glass, \$5.58 for 2022 with glass and \$5.78 for 2023 with glass. **MJH**

**Planning, Progress, Participation**

# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## TRANSPARENCY! AGAIN, TRANSPARENCY

This month's City Council meeting was not videoed and put out for public viewing. Unfortunately, this also included the entire workshop on the recycling contract with Waste management. This I find disappointing and do not understand why Mayor Virginia Young is so against transparency and allowing the public to have full access to public meetings. You can request a copy of the audio recording through the FOI process where you can listen to the council meeting. However, you do not get to see much of the background material that went into the city council members' decision. This is just not necessary.

I have always said and continue to say...an informed citizenry is a more invested citizenry. **Government on all levels should be open, informative, and accessible.** We can have different opinions and look at issues from different perspective and through different lenses. This is one of the reasons for this newsletter. I want you all to understand the process, what is occurring, and why, and the reason that I feel the way I do about any given issue involving the city. Do I think everyone reading this will always agree? No, but that is okay. I value all of your opinions and sincerely ask for your input. I may not always agree but it is important to be open to new and differing thoughts and ideas.

On a related topic, under new business, I brought up that we need a long-term solution to conducting public City Council meetings in a world without a COVID vaccine. I brought up again the idea of using plexiglass to put in between council members, the Mayor, City Clerk, and City Attorney. Department Heads can wait in a room nearby and be brought into the Council Chambers as requested for questions. This would free up seating for the public. Chairs can be set 6 feet apart unless in a family unit. **(Next Column)**

**(Conitued from Below)** Masks can be required and screening instituted like in other city buildings.

The COVID situation is not going away any time soon. Let us find ways to safely conduct the public's business and keep the public involved. Several City Council members spoke up such as Kevin Lilly and Marina Brooks that this idea of using plexiglass would allow more citizens the opportunity to participate. **MJH**

## PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

### June 8, 2020 Meeting

I asked if the new playground equipment for Indianhead Park had been ordered. It had not but the Parks Director said that it was on his list to start working on. He said that it is in this year's budget.

I asked about the Indianhead Pool. He said that he had requested that it be opened but he had not gotten approval from the Mayor. He was hoping to get it opened after opening the Fairway Pool. I asked if the slide from the Harmon Center that is not being used, could be moved out to Indianhead Pool to create a fun attraction. The Director stated that the problem was that it does not fit through a door. I asked if it could be disassembled and reassembled out there. He said he would look into it.

The Parks Director followed up about a possible park in Miller's Glenn that I had brought up at the previous meeting. He stated that he had talked to developer Steve Deere and there is the opportunity to build a 9 to 10 acre park. **MJH**



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## STREET COMMITTEE REPORT

At the June 11th Street Committee Meeting, I spoke on behalf of the sidewalks that I submitted for review for 2021. I submitted Indianhead from Laramie to Lucy Lane, Oneida St., Deerfield, Houston, and Shosoni. I stated that I was dismayed at the last rating process when it did not reflect the desires of the neighborhood for these sidewalks, the traffic counts, speed of traffic, safety issues (especially the blind curve of Indianhead), and various pedestrian attracting amenities. City Council Member Kevin Lilly said that perhaps the committee needed to reconsider the sidewalk rating system this next time.

Some work has been done on the Baring Cross/Kohl's Extension Road. However, it looks like the road that started in November still has quite a bit of work left to be done for completion. Maybe July will see the completion of our first road from the Bond monies.

Richard Penn, the City Engineer, did report that they are attempting to do the sidewalk engineering for Mohave, Deerfield, and Prembroke in-house. This would be a large cost savings and, if our city can start engineering sidewalks, then perhaps we can get more sidewalks, more quickly for even less cost.

On the Maryland widening, it was reported that AT&T will have their lines relocated by August 1st. Perhaps that long awaited project will finally be able to begin! It was reported that the Extension part of Maryland might be able to begin this fall. **MJH**



Due to COVID 19 Sherwood's 4<sup>th</sup> of July event will be scaled down. No food or drinks will be served and no entertainment will be provided other than the fireworks display. You may however, bring your own food and drink. There will be limited space with social distancing. The Sherwood Forrest parking lot will open at 7 pm. The fireworks will go off sometime between 9-9:15 pm. **MJH**

## ArDOT State Highway Department Public Hearings of Interest

Sherwood Residents interested in the widening of Hwy 107 between General Sameuls Road and Hwy 89 in Northern Pulaski County and the possibility of a better arterial East-West connector (not freeway) in north central Sherwood offering better connection to I-40 and perhaps Hwy 67/167 are encouraged to participate in Virtual Public Hearings for presentations and public input on these projects.

Copy these links into your browser to participate

### North Pulaski East-West Connector

[www.ARDOT.gov/East-West-Connector](http://www.ARDOT.gov/East-West-Connector)

Now through July 19<sup>th</sup>

### Hwy 107 Widening: General Samuels to Hwy 89

[Hwy107.TransportationPlanRoom.com](http://Hwy107.TransportationPlanRoom.com)

Now through July 12th



# Mary Jo's Heye-lights

## Mrs. Mary Jo Heye-Townsell

### *My Wedding Announcement*



I am happy to announce that Tab Townsell and I got married on June 6, 2020. As a mom of four boys, I did not want to have a completely different last name from them. Therefore, my new last name will be Heye-Townsell. The name of this newsletter will not change. And my large all-male family has become larger and more diverse with the addition of Tab's daughter, Riley.

Tab is the former long-time Mayor of Conway serving for 18 years of tremendous growth. And yes, he brought roundabouts to the city. As mayor, he revitalized downtown, oversaw major street improvements, built popular sports complexes, extended the trail system, recruited high tech jobs, restaurants, and major retail. He is currently the head of Metroplan, the transportation planning authority for central Arkansas. He is a great asset for our city and a wonderful source of knowledge for me to draw from.

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