



# Bunker Hill Village

## NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY THE CITY OF BUNKER HILL VILLAGE ■ WWW.BUNKERHILL.NET



Issue No. 2

June 2012

### ELECTED CITY OFFICIALS

Mayor	Derry D. Essary
Councilmember	D. Keith Brown
Councilmember	Susan B. Schwartz
Councilmember	John Glover
Councilmember	Jay Smyre
Mayor Pro Tem	S. Jay Williams

### OFFICE HOURS

11977 Memorial Drive  
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

We may be reached at 713.467.9762  
Municipal Court: 713.827.1772  
Fax: 713. 827.8752

### AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES

Please call the Memorial Villages Police Department at 713.365.3700 for after hours utility emergencies.

### “Stay in Touch”

New Features on Bunker Hill Web Site  
Take a look at:  
[www.bunkerhill.net](http://www.bunkerhill.net)

### HURRICANE SEASON TIPS

- Move or secure items such as grills, patio furniture, pool equipment and potted plants
- If asked to evacuate, do so!
- Be aware and never let your guard down

### WHO IS KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR

City Ordinance prohibit door-to-door solicitation unless the vendor has received a permit from the Chief of Police of the Memorial Villages Police Department which includes a photograph that must be visible. The chief of police makes an appropriate investigation of every applicant. The applicant can only contact residents between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. during daylight savings time.

The city council holds its regular meetings on the third Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. The agendas are posted on the website 72 hours prior to the meetings. Minutes of the meetings are also posted on the website after approval by the council.

### From the Mayor

The City of Bunker Hill Village is entering a very busy ten month period. A major project is currently underway and several more will begin within thirty to sixty days. Below I will discuss what you are seeing in and around our City.

### Strey Lane Drainage Project

We began a \$6,000,000 project in March to improve the drainage on the western boundary of the city. This project will involve installing large box culverts along the length of Strey Lane, continuing south along Memorial Drive then turning westbound on Pebble Hill and ultimately having an outfall into Harris County Flood Control Ditch W151. The construction began at the W151 outfall and is now proceeding eastbound along Pebble Hill and will soon turn northbound on Memorial Drive to Strey Lane and continue north to Taylorcrest.



This project is also replacing water lines along Strey Lane and a number of side streets thus providing improved utilities to a number of residents. The project is being staged to improve drainage from Pebble Hill north as the project progresses to insure no drainage occlusions occur along the route during construction. Once the project reaches the north end of Strey at Taylorcrest all outfalls from the western section of the city will be closed off to insure the city is protected from backflow through our drainage system from W151. As a resident of the western section of the city it will become increasingly difficult to drive Memorial south of the intersection with Strey Lane and then ultimately Strey Lane itself. This project will take at least another eight months, or possibly longer if weather delays the progress. Once finished, this system will be a significant improvement in drainage protection in the neighborhoods bordering W151. Unfortunately, the inconvenience is part of the process and we ask for your patience in dealing with traffic delays and the disruption of your clean and quiet neighborhoods for a brief period.

### Eastside Drainage

The City Council has approved a contract to clean out and perform other minor maintenance on the western side of Blalock Road. We hope this project will begin within the next sixty days. It will require less time and will be less intrusive than what we are doing on Strey Lane. This will involve mowing, cleaning, and grading the ditch as well as replacing and realigning certain driveway culverts that have succumbed to the effects of shifting soil and settling.

At the same time we are finishing preliminary engineering that will improve the flow of water through W 146 which runs from north to south approximately 150 yards east of Bunker Hill Road. This is a much more complicated fix since the majority of the drainage pipe runs through the back of resident's properties. Our engineers are designing a modification that will rely on in-line detention (again large diameter box culverts) to double the system's volume capacity. This work will not begin until the end of the summer.

### Water Rates

The rain we have received during the winter and spring of 2012 has been wonderful. However, the lakes that supply 80% of our water are under constant demand pressure and we will be watching the balance of our water supply carefully. The Subsidence District requires that Bunker Hill Village obtain no more than 20% of our water supply from groundwater sources. If we exceed that amount, there is a significant penalty. The cash position of our water system is in very good shape, however, those penalties or a service interruption from one of our four water wells could drain our cash reserves quickly.

*Continued on page 5*

## COP TALK

**Our Message:** Too often people tell us, "I thought something was wrong, but didn't want to call." Your police department is open 24/7! We would rather respond to 100 calls that turn out to be nothing, than to have one in which someone got hurt or a neighbor victimized because they didn't call.

The **Memorial Villages Police Department** can be reached at: 11981 Memorial Drive

**911** – Emergency

**713-365-3700** – Dispatch (put it on your speed dial!)

[www.mvpdtx.org](http://www.mvpdtx.org) – Website

[mvpdtx@mvpdtx.org](mailto:mvpdtx@mvpdtx.org) - Email

Identity theft is a growing business. As your information is more readily available online, the criminals get more high-tech in obtaining that information for illegal use. The days of people digging through your trash for one social security number has given way to online ways to access hundreds or thousands of people's information at once.

To perpetuate the problem, banks are always reluctant to participate in an investigation, which leaves no means of prosecution. For banks, it's just easier to write off the loss. The police department is often asked, "How can I prevent such an intrusion of my personal information?" While prevention is virtually impossible, you can reduce the odds of becoming a victim of identity theft.

The biggest one, DO NOT participate in Peer-to-Peer sites online (such as Lime Wire). People believe that these sites that offer "sharing" movies, music, etc. only share the designated folder. In fact, they provide access to all of your computer files.

Secondly, never answer an email that asks for personal information, even when it looks like the right website. Financial institutions do not contact you this way for this information. Thieves set up fake websites to gain your trust.

When buying online, use a reputable source. Look for the <https://> in the beginning of the address line. This "s" means secure.

When buying with a debit or credit card, keep site of your card. Often criminals will slide your card through a reader and keep your information. This happens most in restaurants where the waiter has to take your card somewhere else to run the charge.

There are a lot more things you can do to reduce your risk. First and foremost, check your accounts and credit report regularly and report any suspicious activity.

### EMERGENCY MASS NOTIFICATION

***Our Emergency Management Coordinator, Bat. Chief, Howard Miller of the Village Fire Department will collect and facilitate these messages.***

DeltAlert already possesses a substantial database that contains some residential contact information. But, you may want to access the opt-in site and review or supplement your contact information. There is no charge for you to participate. We hope that you will take time to participate in this program, so that we may better communicate with you during an emergency. To update your information, go to [www.villagefire.org](http://www.villagefire.org). On their homepage, scroll down until you see Emergency Mass Notification and DeltAlert Opt-in Link.

### TREE REMOVAL PERMIT

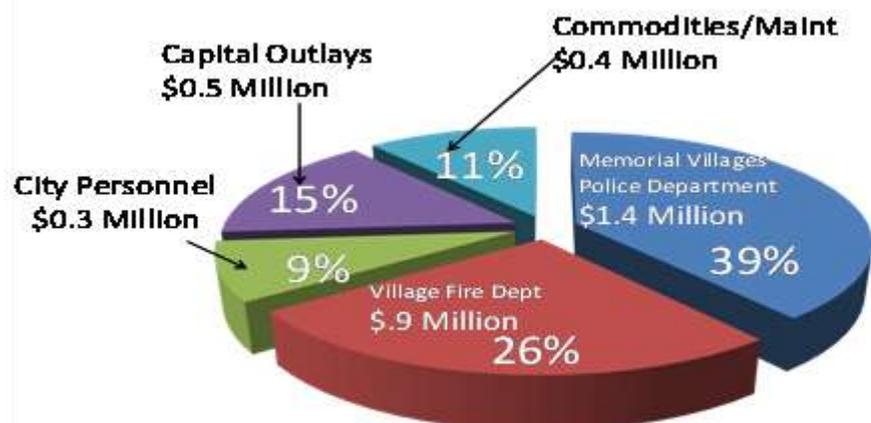
A tree permit shall be obtained prior to any tree being cut down. Permits are free and generally issued within a day from the date the application is submitted.

The application can be obtained on-line at [www.bunkerhill.net](http://www.bunkerhill.net). Removing a tree without a permit could result in a costly citation being issued.

### FINANCIAL CORNER

The city just completed its annual audit ending December 31, 2011. Belt Harris Pechacek, LLLP, the auditing firm, gave the city the highest level of assurance with a clean audit. An added confidence is the city maintains a 9 month operating reserve for emergencies such as hurricanes. To review the 2012 Budget or the annual audit ending December 31, 2011 please visit our website at <http://www.bunkerhill.net>

#### 2012 MAJOR BUDGETARY EXPENDITURES



## **“DID YOU KNOW”**

### **CONSTRUCTION QUIET HOURS**

Weekdays (Mon-Fri) except holidays  
Before 7:00 A.M. or after 6:00 P.M.

Saturdays, except holidays  
Before 8:00 A.M. or after 5:00 P.M.

Sundays and Holiday  
No work allowed

### **EARLY PLACEMENT OF YARD WASTE CAUSING A PROBLEM!**

Have you noticed in your neighborhood and throughout the city that some residents are placing their yard waste at the curbside one to three days before their scheduled day? If you cannot place the yard waste at the curb on your pickup day, ask the lawn crew to take it with them.

### **HARRIS COUNTY HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP OFF**

6900 Hahl Road  
Houston, Tx 77040 281-466-7360

Items accepted at the HHW facility include, but are not limited to household cleaners, yard/automotive products, pool chemicals, paint and paint related products, batteries, tires, items containing mercury (e.g. mercury thermometers, compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), and fluorescent tubes), aerosols, and small and BBQ size propane cylinders.

The facility does **NOT** accept the following items: electronics, traditional recyclables (paper, cans, plastic), any items used for business purposes, medical and biological waste, explosives (including ammunition and firecrackers), compressed gas cylinders, radioactive waste (including smoke detectors), household appliances such as washers, dryers, freezers, air conditioners, heavy trash or household trash. You can go to [www.Earth911.com](http://www.Earth911.com) to find a location where you can properly dispose of these items.

### **Online city services**

- **Sign up for newsletters and monthly crime reports**
- **Pay your water bill online**
- **Alarm registration**
- **Purchase permits**
- **Apply for tree removal permit**
- **Pay traffic tickets**

## **FROSTWOOD BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW SCHOOL**

Spring Branch ISD broke ceremonial ground Tuesday, May 8 at Frostwood Elementary. Susan Kellner, president of the board of trustees said Frostwood is one of the district's most visible locations and that architects were directed to make the design "fabulous". "And they did".

The new Frostwood will be positioned on the existing site but will be two-story with tall ceilings and lots of natural light.

Speaking at the groundbreaking, Mayor Essary said the city was "absolutely ecstatic" about the new Frostwood. He said Bunker Hill Village asked the district for two things, - solve the drainage problems and the traffic issues at Plantation and Memorial. When the plans were submitted, both things were included to the city's satisfaction.

The students will move to the south transition campus by Westchester Academy for 18 months. Demolition of the old building will begin almost immediately at the end of the school year



## **VFD PUTS NEW AMBULANCE INTO SERVICE**

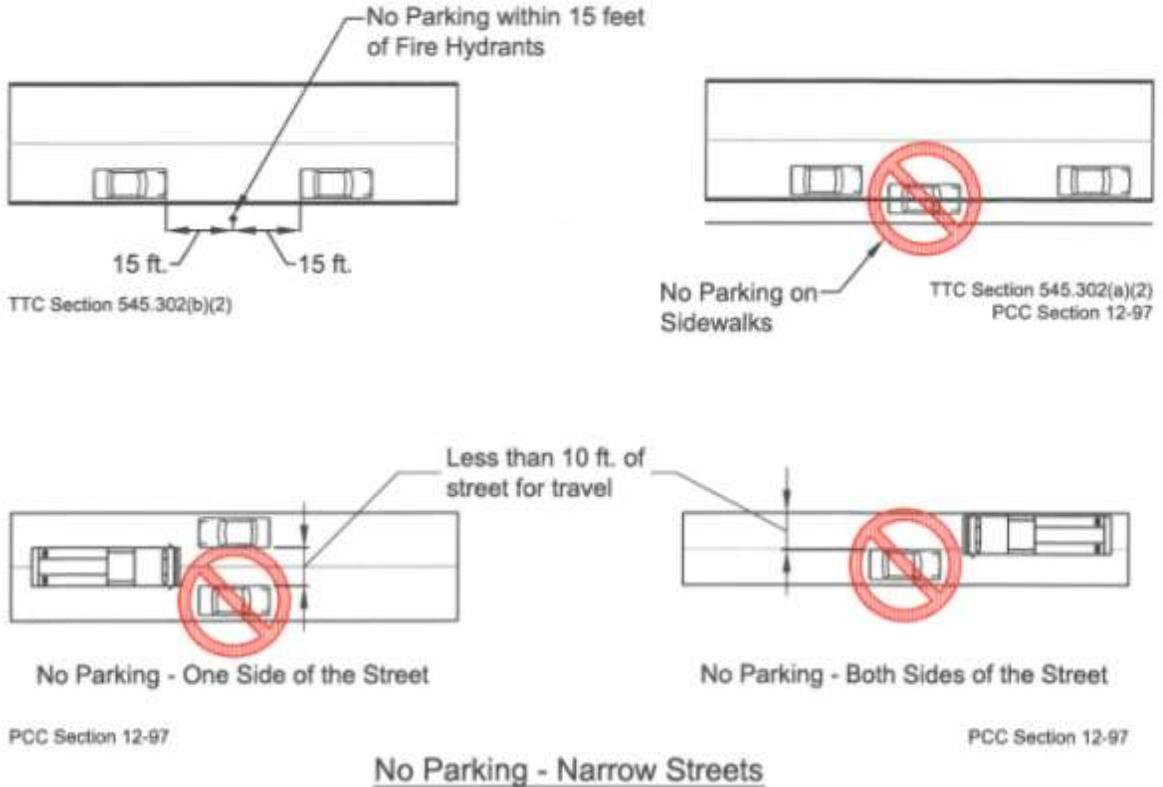
The Village Fire Department put a new state-of-the art ambulance into service in January. With roughly 50% more weight capacity, and a self-contained generator, this ambulance enables the Fire Department to respond and transport patients more safely.

In other VFD news, our own City Councilman, Jay F. Smyre will take over the Chairmanship of the Village Fire Department Commission effective April 26, 2012. Mr. Smyre has served on the VFD Commission for the past two years and will be responsible for overseeing the Commission for the next 12 months.

## **CONSTRUCTION AND REMODEL**

Prior to planning new construction or a remodel project, go to our website, [www.bunkerhill.net](http://www.bunkerhill.net) and click on "BUILDING PROJECTS" for information that will greatly assist you.

# The Parking Lot



The **City of Bunker Hill Village** canceled the May 12th general election due to no opposition. Incumbent Keith Brown continues to fill council position 1 and incumbent Susan Schwartz fills council position 2. Stepping down from Position 3 is Dave Ellis, who served for fourteen years. Taking over Position 3 is John Glover.

Council photographs were provided courtesy of Alexander Fine Portrait Design.  
[www.AlexandersPortraits.com](http://www.AlexandersPortraits.com)

## BUNKER HILL VILLAGE CITY COUNCIL

**KEITH BROWN  
POSITION 1**



**SUSAN SCHWARTZ  
POSITION 2**



**JOHN GLOVER  
POSITION 3**



**S. JAY WILLIAMS  
POSITION 4**



**JAY SMYRE  
POSITION 5**



**DERRY ESSARY  
MAYOR**



At the May 15, 2012 council meeting, a new water rate structure was approved. At the lower end of the usage table the increases are minor. However, for any customer that uses over 70,000 gallons of water on a bi-monthly basis, the new rate is a substantial increase. This has been done to encourage conservation as required in our Groundwater Reduction Plan. Water use studies tell us that for a 20,000 square foot lot, 70,000 gallons bi-monthly provides an adequate irrigation supply to keep a yard and plants alive during a normal Houston summer. The new water rate also takes into account the penalty this excess water usage has on our groundwater pumpage, (20% well water and 80% surface water from the City of Houston) and the upper limit of the take or pay contract we have with the City of Houston.

#### **Fiscal Year 2011 Financial Report**

At the May 15, 2012 council meeting, the 2011 Audited Financial Statements were presented and approved. The financial statements show that your city is in very good financial condition. 2011 fiscal year ended with a reserve of almost eleven months of operating revenue in our general operating account. The water utility account also carries a reserve of over \$ 500,000. We have in excess of \$ 800,000 in a General Mobility Fund provided by Metro, and the current capital projects along Strey Lane and on the eastside of our city are provided for by the bond issue approved and sold in 2011. In short our city is financially sound.

For those that feel that our reserves are excessive we need to keep in mind how quickly those reserves could be drained. A major hurricane similar to Ike in September 2008 could be a very expensive disaster. FEMA is great at debris removal, however if the physical assets for the city, water department, fire department, or police department sustained serious damage a timing difference with insurance coverage could tax our reserves. As far as the water reserve is concerned, the loss of one of our major water wells could significantly reduce the cash in the utility enterprise account within six months.

The city administrator is very important in the financial controls as they relate to the city. By statute, the mayor operates as the Chief Executive Officer of the City and the Chief Budgetary Officer. In both, the administrator and the mayor, Bunker Hill Village has very conservative financial management. The conservative nature of these two posts along with a very cautious and well informed council has resulted in our city having a superior credit rating which allows us to borrow money at extremely low rates.

As I look to the future I see one danger and one opportunity that must be considered. First, the Texas Municipal Retirement System continues to be an area of concern. Our city, police and fire employees are members of this retirement system and are counting on that system to provide for their retirement. As far as this mayor is concerned the quicker we move away from this state run retirement system the better for both the employees and the municipalities that own the police and fire department. This system, if it gets into trouble (trouble defined as having several years of less than 5% return on its investments) will look to the municipalities to make up the shortfall. The Texas Legislature in their wisdom mandated that municipalities had to make up shortfall in the retirement system. That is why we continue to watch unfunded liabilities with great concern.

In the area of opportunities the villages continue to squander a major opportunity to save taxpayers significant money. On a combined basis, the six villages have a population of just 19,000 citizens. There is no way that I would suggest consolidating the municipalities. There are philosophical, infrastructure, and tax base differences that would make that process almost impossible. However, we continue to duplicate functions that are highly inefficient. Just as one example, the combined villages maintain four emergency dispatch centers for a service area that covers less than eight square miles and has a population of only 19,000. From a cost standpoint that is highly inefficient. Municipal court, financial services, and inspection services are three other areas of potential consolidated cost savings. If just a fraction of the services were rationalized, millions of dollars of tax revenue could stay in the pockets of Village taxpayers.

For the villages to make progress on both of the above issues a new attitude must be adopted. The current relationship between the chief executives of the six villages has never been more contentious which precludes progress on almost all fronts. I hope this will change, however, you as a citizen need to know that this situation continues to cost you the taxpayer significant lost opportunities.



### **VILLAGES INDEPENDENCE FESTIVAL**

On Wednesday July 4th, the Memorial Villages are hosting the **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Villages Independence Festival**. The Festival includes a program which focuses on family, neighbors and patriotism and is free to all attendees. Therefore, the success of the Festival relies heavily on donations of money, items and most importantly – volunteer time.

The Festival begins with a parade at 9:00 a.m., from Memorial High School to the Memorial Drive Baptist Church grounds at 325 North Piney Point Road (the site of the Festival). Please mark your family's calendar and make plans to participate in this wonderful event. Parade participants may ride in their decorated cars, on bicycles or skates, or in wagons. The parade is followed by games, food, entertainment and visiting until 1:00 p.m