

# Mayor's Update

## Mayor Frank Reilly



Dear friend,

As I write this, snow flurries are falling in Granite Shoals. A couple of days ago, the thermometer was in the low 80's.

Speaking of change, this week we welcome Judy Miller, who will serve as the city's first permanent city manager. Ms. Miller will take the helm from John Hatchel, who has served as our interim city manager since last June. Mr. Hatchel was preceded by our first interim city manager, John Gayle, who served in the temporary post for over 4 years. These two gentlemen brought with them decades of experience in the city management profession, and laid a solid foundation for the city for years ahead. The city has been truly blessed to have their service for the past 5 years, and I have learned an immense amount from them both. The city will welcome Ms. Miller, and honor Mssrs. Hatchel and Gayle at a reception on Tuesday, February 8, 2011 from 6 to 7 p.m. at city hall. I hope you can join us.

Ms. Miller herself also brings many years of city management experience to Granite Shoals. Many of you may know her from her tenure in Marble Falls, where she served first as director of planning, then assistant city manager, then city manager. She has also worked in the cities of Odessa, Ballinger, Madisonville, and Sonora. She retired from Marble Falls a couple of years ago, but found that she missed the day to day challenges of city management, so we are lucky to have her join us.

In other changes, at our last city council meeting, the city council approved the submittal of a \$500,000 recreational grant application to Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. The city will make its required match to that grant by using part of the 131.6 acres in the municipal complex, which will allow the city to leverage the land without having to expend funds for the park improvements. Proposed improvements include baseball and soccer fields, an amphetheater (the stage of which will double as a covered pavilion), improvements to the complex entrance (including a kiosk with city and park information as well as for postings), a basketball court, sand volleyball, tot playscapes, a splash park, two covered tennis courts in the old quarry building, and picnic areas. The ball fields will be irrigated, and the irrigation system is being planned so that it can later tie into the city's proposed sewer system to use reclaimed water, should the system be built. Other acreage at the complex is being reserved for irrigation and a small wastewater treatment pond that will blend into the surroundings. The city will learn sometime in August whether this grant will be provided.

The city council will decide on a name for the park at the municipal complex during its

February 22 meeting. If you have any ideas for the park name, please email them to me, or place them in the box we have set up at the city's utility department payment window at city hall. In addition to the general public, we are soliciting ideas from the children at Highland Lakes Elementary School.

In related news, Granite Shoals native Olympian and NCAA track star Leo Manzano is working with the city's volunteer architect, Marley Porter, to design hike, bike and running trails. The general plan is to have an approximate two-mile path around the perimeter of the park at the municipal complex, with a smaller half mile loop around the large pond in the center of the property, and finally with a series of walking nature trails. Leo is not only donating his time and expertise, but he has also agreed to lend his name to the trails, and his foundation will host youth events at the trails. The city has applied for a separate trails grant, which will use our own granite gravel as a trail base, keeping expenses down, and providing the city's match for this grant.

The first two kids' Quick Start courts have been completed at the Andy Roddick Foundation International Tennis Center at the municipal complex, and the U.S. Tennis Association kicked in the final \$5,000 needed to complete the courts. Even more exciting is that the USTA, which sanctions official coveted tennis tournaments, has said that they will work with the Foundation and will sanction tennis tournaments at the tennis center. The USTA's state director says that a single tournament can bring in as much as \$1 million into a local economy. If the city builds a sewer system that will support some hotel rooms, additional restaurants and service amenities, Granite Shoals can reap the benefits of the tournaments. Until then, Marble Falls, Horseshoe Bay and Kingsland will receive most of those benefits, but the tournaments will put Granite Shoals on the map.

As I've previously noted, the Andy Roddick Foundation will maintain the courts and the others to be built at the municipal complex. We will seek similar partnerships to help the city maintain the other park features, and already have a commitment from a soccer group to maintain the soccer fields. The city will also design for and build maintenance into the bids for construction to keep maintenance expenses at bay.

On the short term rental front, on February 8, the city council will discuss placing the issue on the ballot in the form of a non-binding referendum at the May election, which already has the mayor and three council members on the ballot. We will also not fully consider the proposed ordinance until the February 22 meeting.

Over the past few weeks, I've had questions raised to me about the city's development agreement with Barnett Ranches, LLC, which the city council unanimously approved last April. The land subject to the agreement is about 1,300 acres of the former Barnett Ranch that basically surrounds the city's 131.6 acre municipal complex, that was also formerly part of the ranch. It includes property on both sides of 1431 and both sides of Phillips Ranch Road. Almost all of the land is outside of the city limits. Development agreements between landowners outside of city limits are common with cities. In fact, the law requires a city to offer a development agreement to rural landowners prior to annexing the property. This agreement is not unusual, except that

There seems to be a misunderstanding by some that the city's proposed sewer system is governed by that agreement and that the developers will be able to force the city to change the plans set forth by city council resolution to provide phased in sewer service to the entire city. Neither statement is true, and the city staff, consultants and I would not have agreed to any such agreement.

The development agreement only relates to the provision of city services to the land subject to the agreement, and not to the rest of the city. If that property is developed, the developers will have to pay the city for the expanded capacity in the city's proposed sewer plant as the city will be dedicating the entire plant capacity to existing city residents. The developers will also have to pay for all of the water lines, sewer lines and other infrastructure on their property. The city will have impact fees in place to cover costs to the city.

What the development agreement does is give the city 15 permanent acres of land for the

treatment plant, freeing up that amount of acreage at the city's municipal complex that the city can use for drip irrigation, and a temporary grant of 25 acres to get the city through at least the first two permitting cycles for the sewer plant. After about ten years, if the system is built, the city will likely need to acquire significantly more acreage for effluent disposal, if by that time, either the TCEQ has not lifted its archaic ban on the return of reclaimed water to the watershed, or the developers have not built a golf course.

If anything, if the land subject to the development agreement is in fact developed, the development will only help the city speed up the planned extension of service to city residents as the developers will fund increases in the plant's capacity, and more users on the system will help distribute the cost of the system among more people. The city will need to do a rate study to determine how much to charge out of city residents who are subject to the development agreement, but since city taxpayers will be paying for the plant for the city, I would expect a monthly charge to be far higher than the proposed \$35 per month that the city plans to charge in-city residents. The residents subject to the agreement will also pay out of city water rates.

The agreement allows the developers to create a municipal utility district (MUD) within the land owned by the Barnett interests (and only on that land, not on land owned by others). The MUD will issue bonds to pay for the development's water, sewer and drainage infrastructure (including presumably what they will pay to the city for the water and sewer capacity they will need for their project), and the landowners in the MUD will repay those bonds with their own property taxes. After those bonds are paid off, the city can annex the property (actually, the city can annex earlier but it would have to assume the MUD debt, which is a very unlikely scenario). The land within the MUD will not receive any city services, except for water and sewer. If other services are provided, such as fire, they will pay the city for that service in accordance with the city's new policy of charging out-of-city subdivisions. By the way, the MUD may not be created, or the development may not occur. Those are decisions to be made by the landowners. Regardless of whether the land is developed or the MUD is created, the landowners have donated the 15 permanent and 25 temporary acres to the city, which is an unusual and valuable gift to a city in a development agreement. The land gifts can and will, however, go away if the city does not build a wastewater treatment plant in the very near future.

I hope this answers some of the concerns I have heard about the development agreement, but if you have any other questions, please feel free to directly contact me by email or phone. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the benefits that this agreement provides to Granite Shoals and its residents.

The Dollar General store on 1431 is putting its goods on its shelves tonight, and they hope to be open within a few days. This is the first major franchise of any sort (other than gas stations) for our city, and shows that the city is now getting noticed. We appreciate Dollar General for working with the city to make this store's exterior show off the city's new standards for commercial structures. All of the other structures on 1431 predate our current ordinances.

It is a pleasure to serve as your mayor, and as always, I welcome your input, comments and concerns. Feel free to email me at [mayor@graniteshoals.org](mailto:mayor@graniteshoals.org).

If you wish to be removed from these mailings, just let me know, and if you know of others who want to be added to the distribution, please email me.

Sincerely,



Frank M. Reilly  
Mayor

This newsletter is prepared and paid for by Mayor Frank Reilly and he is solely responsible for its content. The views presented herein are his and do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Granite Shoals or any of its officials.

Pd. pol. adv. by Frank Reilly.

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