

City of Hillcrest Village

Mayor's Update

The mayor's update is a report to the residents of Hillcrest Village that provides information on Council Meetings and other items that impact the Village. Working with the City Council these updates will be open and give transparent insights into the Village operations.

Mayor Brad Dawson

Regular Session Hillcrest Village Council Meeting
June 17, 2024

1. The Operations Report was presented by Caleb Cristofaro from Municipal District Services, LLC.
 - a. This report provides information on monthly water distribution and the sanitary collection systems. This includes the city water plants and wastewater plant.
 - b. Updates to service line leaks and sanitary sewer line repairs are reported.
 - c. The Council reviewed bids for the repairs necessary to the small equipment buildings at the water plants and at the sewer plant. These repairs are necessary to be able to continue insurance coverage on those buildings that house equipment necessary for infrastructure operation. The council voted to proceed with repairs.
2. Marshal Shohn Davison presented the May Marshal's Report.
 - a. Monthly cases included calls for service, traffic citations and warnings as well as vacation watch checks.
3. Travis Hobbs, Emergency Management Coordinator, discussed planned workshops for the upcoming hurricane season.
 - a. Travis reported on a seminar he and the Mayor attended at the Brazoria County Emergency Management center in Angleton.
 - b. Travis reported on a meeting Alderman Mondragon, Alderman Smith, Travis and the Mayor had with Alvin Emergency Management to discuss cooperation between the cities should a weather event impact our area.
4. The monthly financial statements were reviewed and entered into the minutes of the meeting.
5. Resident Larry Morehead requested a place on the agenda to discuss his concerns about enforcing the city ordinances concerning abandoned vehicles, parked boats and trailers in driveways and on easements along city streets. The council heard his complaints and a discussion on possible remedies ensued.
6. Sealed bids for the purchase of the city's retired police car were opened and the winning bidder will be notified to complete that purchase.

7. A discussion on some administrative items was next. The council agreed to purchase a stand alone hard drive for backing up city records, the interlocal agreement with Brazoria County Health Department was renewed and Brazoria County's CDBG, HOME and ESG programs were discussed with no action being taken.
8. The council discussed the need to seek bids from licensed and registered contractors to handle debris management in the event of a natural disaster. FEMA has refined their requirements that must be followed so the city can be reimbursed for the costs of cleanup after an event. The city attorney, Chris Duncan, will be drafting bid requests and posting them in the specific places required to receive bids for such work.
9. The council then heard from Caleb Cristofaro, of Municipal District Services LLC, about some changes to our agreement with MDS the council had requested. The renewal date of the contract needs to be moved to July 1 so that next year's price structure can be budgeted for when the city does budget planning in August/September every year. The council then heard a proposal concerning MDS handling the water billing going forward. More on this in my comments at the end of this update.
10. City Attorney Chris Duncan presented an outline of the procedures, equipment and steps required should Hillcrest Village desire to set up a municipal court. More on this in my comments at the end of this update.

B. Follow up/old business

1. Alderman Mondragon presented an estimate, obtained through the County Roads and Drainage, to repaint the white intersection stop sign stripes throughout the city and to refresh the centerline stripping on Fairway, West Crestmont and Main St. The discussion was tabled until budget planning for the 24/25 budget year meetings in September.

This Mayor's Update summarizes the recent meeting of the newly elected City Council. Council meetings are held every third Monday at the City Hall located on 200 W. Timberlane Dr. next to the city park. This report does not replace the official city council minutes which are always reviewed and approved at the next council meeting. Those minutes are archived on the city website as required and readily available.

Referring back to item 9 on the agenda concerning MDS handling the water billing going forward. Many on the council believe this would be an opportunity the city has not had before.

1. The meter reading process would be streamlined electronically as opposed to the manual method of handwriting water usage on a piece of paper that is then given to the office that manually types it onto the bill you receive. There will be less chance of human error as we saw last year in a cluster of water bills on E. Larkspur that caused concern and stress throughout the village.
2. 24 hour/7 day a week emergency hotline where a resident can call to report a broken waterline or any other service interruption. As it is now, the city office closes on Friday at 11:00 and is closed every weekend and holiday. So, this will give us a rapid response service we currently do not have.
3. This move makes sign up for service and bill paying easier. You have the option of receiving water bills via email, text or by snail mail. You can sign up for new service online. You can pay your water bill online or at a drop box to be installed at city hall

specifically for water bill payments. That will eliminate the necessity to drive to Alvin for those that prefer to pay by check but do not want to use USPS.

4. Finally, and most importantly, the city will save on some expenses related to the current system. Those funds can be used to catch up on deferred maintenance of infrastructure equipment and machinery that we are now experiencing.

My thoughts on item 10 concerning installing a municipal court. Those that attended the state of the city address at the end of February may remember the citizen survey that was passed out and then linked on the city website. The results of the survey revealed a strong majority of residents consider the overall appearance of the city as their number one issue.

That includes trees hanging down in the streets so low as to touch your vehicle as you drive down the street, grass higher than the state of Texas law allows that enables all manner of snakes, rodents and other critters to live and thrive. That is a health and safety concern. Junk cars parked in yards and driveways that have not moved in years. That too is a health and safety concern.

Hillcrest Village is a Type A general law city. That means if it is a Texas state law, the city can adopt that law into its ordinances. In the founding of Hillcrest Village back in 1963, many of the things I just mentioned were Texas state laws then and originally made into city ordinances. The ordinance language has been updated as the Texas laws have been updated. Hillcrest Village is not and never can be an HOA (homeowners association). Only a subdivision can be a HOA. Hillcrest Village is the only city in Brazoria County that has no Municipal Court

Believe it or not, Hillcrest Village used to be "out in the country". Unfortunately, development is happening all around us. With a new 83 home subdivision going in on Fairway Dr across from the golf course and the continual development of homes to the south of us, our Main Street has become a thoroughfare to other areas. How many of us have witnessed people running stop signs, speeding down main street at 45-50 mph in a 30-mph zone? This behavior is only going to become more commonplace as more people settle around us. Currently, when the marshal issues a traffic citation the fine is paid at the JP court. Zero dollars come back to Hillcrest Village yet Hillcrest must bear the cost of traffic enforcement on our streets.

In my view, the implementation of a municipal court is not to make the city money. There are laws against that. It is more about the quality of life we all wanted when we moved here. A quality of life we will be letting slip away unless we act now.