



Mayor's Monthly Newsletter

Written by Mayor Rod Erskine

erskine@ci.jersey-village.tx.us

February 2015

2014 Crime Report

I have reviewed a report on 2014 crime statistics for our city that was prepared by our Police Chief, Eric Foerster. In general, statistics for crimes handled by JVPD indicate that over the past several years, incidents are generally decreasing, and arrests are up – fewer crimes are being committed in our city, and more criminals are being caught. I recently presented some of this information to the Jersey Village Women's Group, and think it is important that all residents have the opportunity to see the actual data for themselves. I have placed an item on the agenda for the February 16, 2015 City Council meeting where Chief Foerster will present his report to council. The meeting starts at 7:00PM in the Civic Center, and I hope you will be able to find the time to attend. Since this is a presentation to council, Chief Foerster will not be able to take questions from the audience. However, if you submit any questions you have to me, I will forward them to the Chief prior to the meeting, or ask them myself.

Discussions on social media are often heavy on opinions and light on facts, and can result in misperceptions around the actual amount of crime that is occurring - even the news media has misreported recent events in our city. This meeting will provide an opportunity for you to see the official statistics for yourself. Our police department does a great job in the city, and many of you have complimented them for their efforts that result in low levels of crime relative to other areas - but we can help make it lower. As residents, we are the first line of defense. Promptly calling 911 to report suspicious activity is critical - don't put yourself at risk, leave the investigation to professionals. Don't make yourself an easy target - lock your doors, lock your cars, and be aware of your surroundings. While the rate of crime may be trending down, it is important to focus on further reductions. Even a single incident is one too many, especially if you are the victim. While totally eliminating crime is an unrealistic expectation in today's society, our actions can cause criminals to look elsewhere for easier targets.

Issuance Of Debt To Fund Hwy. 290 Expansion

I have received a number of comments regarding council's approval to issue \$8M in Certificates of Obligation at January's council meeting. The city is obligated to acquire easement, and to pay for the relocation of our utilities into that easement as part of the Hwy. 290 expansion project. TxDOT reimburses us for the relocation, but receipt of those funds is well after we pay the contractors for the project. Additionally, it is the city's position that TxDOT must reimburse us for the costs of acquisition of the easement - a position TxDOT has opposed to date. The city recently won a summary judgment in court against TxDOT, but they have appealed the ruling and it will likely be several years before the case works its way through the system. In the interim, we will have to pay \$2-3M for the easement.

The size and timing of these billings creates a short term cash flow problem for the city. While total costs are not known, the \$8M represents what we believe is a worse case scenario. By having these funds available, the Certificates of Obligation will alleviate the cash flow problem for the city. The notes are callable (meaning they can be repaid in part or whole at any time) and the city will pay off the debt as we are reimbursed in the near term, and not hold them to maturity. I also want to be clear that by law, we are prohibited from using these funds for any other purpose other than the freeway expansion costs - they cannot be diverted to other projects.

Until next month.