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# CITY OF JERSEY VILLAGE, TEXAS

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## MAYOR'S LETTER JULY 2012

### INVISIBLE CHANGES IN THE VILLAGE

I am beginning my last year as your Mayor. It has been a privilege representing this great community and I am ready to start my last lap around the block. This all makes me wonder, who is preparing to take my place next May?

I like to look back at all that has taken place in the twelve years that I have worked on City Council. Many of the changes go unnoticed by most residents; they are mostly infrastructure improvements that make things work in your house. You don't notice when they work, but you certainly notice when they don't!

Since I began my tenure on council, Jersey Village made the move from well water to City of Houston water, fixed much of the old sewer system, rebuilt all of the city's older streets, replaced older water lines, developed some commercial property, purchased Jersey Meadows golf course and watched the county build several projects designed to keep flood water in the White Oak Bayou and out of your house. Things may look the same, but much of what you cannot see or do not notice is much better. On the whole, Jersey Village is a very different place than it was twelve years ago.

The process by which this is all accomplished, however, does not really change. The years tend to run together since the annual routine is quite repetitive. As soon as the city's elections are completed in May, we begin the budgeting process. This year, we invested a couple of nights listening to the needs of the city staff and sharing information about what council members felt should be priorities for the coming year. Taking the time to share this information allows staff to prepare a budget with all of those considerations in place. Next month we will spend several more nights going over the budget in detail; council examines every line and asks questions about the costs and priorities. This goes back and forth while we estimate what our revenues will be and determine our capital expenses for the year.

Included in the budget this year are numerous federal and state mandates that are almost all unfunded. The city is being forced to comply with several dozen new restrictions, costing us quite a bit of money. It appears that the lawmakers and bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. are working hard to control local cities and make sure we are protecting our citizens. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to balance our budget.