



CITY OF JERSEY VILLAGE, TEXAS

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MAYOR'S LETTER AUGUST 2012

Written by Councilman Rod Erskine

A CALL FOR CITIZEN ACTION – HIGHWAY 290 NOISE MITIGATION EFFORTS

First, I would like to thank Mayor Hamley for giving me the opportunity to write the Mayor's Letter this month. Many of you are concerned about the increase of noise in the village that will be associated with the expansion of Hwy. 290, and some of you have addressed council directly on the issue. Council shares your concern, and along with city staff and the law firm of Blackburn / Carter, has been attempting to work with TxDOT to obtain some level of acceptable noise reduction. **However, now is the time for our citizens to play a key role in this effort.**

While not a publicized news item, TxDOT has recently applied for and received approval from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation to do a "focused reevaluation" of the current Environmental Impact Statement associated with the Hwy. 290 plan. Of key importance, this process allows for a period of public comment, including two yet to be scheduled public hearings. Concerned citizens can either speak at the meetings, or submit written comments to TxDOT officials via a letter. Additionally, this is also an opportunity to let our elected state officials know where we stand. Council is asking you to provide your comments to these officials. In an attempt to make this convenient, a draft letter will be posted on the Jersey Village home web page along with mailing addresses for TxDOT and elected officials (<http://www.jerseyvillage.info/>). You can simply print the letter, sign it and put it in the mail, or download a copy and edit the content yourself. Alternatively, send me an email and I will reply to you directly with the documents (rerskine@ci.jersey-village.tx.us).

As background, during the August 15, 2011 council meeting, we (including Mark Maloy and Joyce Berube at that time) passed a motion for the city to obtain specialized legal services to assist us in our efforts. This action led to JV retaining the services of the firm of Blackburn / Carter who have a history of working on behalf of cities with TxDOT on municipal noise issues, and the necessary technical expertise in noise studies. Meetings with Blackburn/Carter have been properly held in Executive Session in order to preserve our client/attorney privilege should litigation in court result. I can report to you that we have had extensive internal discussions around our desires for the types of mitigation and desired level of reduction, and that Blackburn / Carter have been in regular contact with TxDOT. Unfortunately, we have yet to come to an agreement with TxDOT.

In the Mayor's June newsletter, he described a number of instances when the citizens of Jersey Village stood up and made a difference on issues just as big as this. Examples include the proposed routing of the Sam Houston Tollway through the center of Jersey Village and the proposed extension of Gulf Bank to Senate Avenue. Citizens of Jersey Village stood up to bureaucratic "Goliaths" to defeat these threats to our quality of life. This is a critical time for the noise mitigation effort, and council is asking you to stand up again by taking a few minutes to make your opinion known. Your combined actions may have an impact on the city for decades to come.

Rod Erskine