



COMMISSIONERS: James V. Hunt, Sr., *Mayor* • Bob Weigel, *Vice Mayor* • Gray O. Thornburg, *Cathy Altenbern, Boyd Bogle* • Beth Reardon, City Manager • Tim Eads, Chief of Police

City Hall (615) 297-6041 / Police Dept. (615) 297-0241 / www.citybellemeade.org

NEWSLETTER TO RESIDENTS OF BELLE MEADE JANUARY 2017

COMMISSIONER RETREAT FEBRUARY 15-16, 2017

Belle Meade's Board of Commissioners will hold their 6th annual retreat beginning on Wednesday, February 15 and concluding the afternoon of Thursday, February 16. This annual retreat has been the best opportunity to review past goals and objectives and to develop future goals and objectives. Some of the major topics at this year's retreat are:

- Examine the results of the SurveyMonkey sent to residents in November with emphasis on:
 - o Video Surveillance System—do we go forward? If so, what is cost per location? Limited locations? All locations?
 - o Alarm systems—Have all residences with alarm systems listed Belle Meade Police as first responder with their alarm provider? Do we register every residence with an alarm? Do we fine residents with excessive false alarms? Do we issue a permit? Is there a fee for the permit?
 - o City Speed limits—need to change any streets?
- Sidewalks on Harding Place—Both sides of street? Costs? Concerns?
- Page Road lot—landscaping plans
- Communications—Effectiveness; priorities; by department; using social media such as Facebook, NextDoor, Twitter, other; New resident welcome brochure; Upgrades of both website and mobile app
- Capital Budget planning including enhancements to financial reporting
- Personnel review. Transition/retirement planning (City Manager, Legal Counsel, others)
- Recruitment for new members of Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals including eligibility by experience, residency and willingness to serve
- Effects of Zoning changes in 2016

If anyone has suggestions for topics in addition to above, please submit them by emailing

Jim Hunt at jhunt@citybellemeade.org or
Bob Weigel at bobweigel123@gmail.com



FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT – CHIEF TIM EADS:

Happy New Year! I hope everyone has a wonderful and safe 2017. Please continue to practice prudent home security by locking your doors and setting your alarms anytime you are going to be away, even if only for a few minutes. If you are traveling out of town, please take advantage of our House Check Service. While you are away we will conduct extra daily patrols of your home.

This is a good time of the year to check with your alarm provider to confirm that the Belle Meade Police Department is listed as the primary law enforcement agency to respond to your alarm activation.

Please continue to Park Smart by always locking your vehicle and removing anything of value or securing it where it cannot be seen.

If you do not participate in the Neighborhood Watch Program, I encourage you to do so. If you do not know who your Block Captain is, you can contact our NHW Coordinator, Officer Dee Howell, at

dhowell@citybellemeade.org and she will be happy to assist you in making the connection.

Continue to immediately call in any activity that may seem suspicious to you at 615-297-0241. Never hesitate to give us a call even if you are unsure about what you are observing. Our officers are trained to assess the situation and make a determination as to whether it is legitimate or an illegal activity. We need your help in keeping Belle Meade safe for all who live here or may be passing through.

With it being winter months, make sure your tires are in good shape and your wiper blades are the type that resist freezing up. If you have to drive during snow and ice conditions, remember to keep extra distance between you and other vehicles to allow yourself plenty of time to stop slowly. Maintain a slow but steady pace to allow for better maneuvering in these hazardous conditions.



THANK YOU to all of the citizens who sent gifts of food to the employees over the holidays. We truly enjoyed sampling everything and appreciate your thoughtfulness. We must also thank the many generous citizens who sent contributions to the Employee Fund. Again, we are so grateful for your kindness, as these funds provide opportunities throughout the year for employee functions and gifts. The staff wishes everyone a safe and healthy 2017!

RECAP OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS



The Commissioners took action on the following items at the Special meeting on Dec. 9, 2016:

- Approved Ordinance 2016-8 on first reading, Amending Title 14, Section 204 of the City Code to (1) Replace the “Flat” as Used to Describe Flat Roofs and to Define “Low Slope” Roofs and (2) to Establish New Height Limitations for Residential Structures.

The Commissioners took action on the following items at the Regular meeting on Dec. 21, 2016:

- Deferred action on the parade permit request for the Ragnar Relay.
- Deferred action on the consideration of proposal from Hodgson Douglas for landscape architectural services for Harding Place sidewalks.
- Awarded the bid for five (5) in-car camera systems to Provision for a total of \$11,281.25.



- Approved the proposal for police vehicle equipment purchase and installation by Truckers Lighthouse for (12) Dodge Chargers at the price of \$21,431.88 and \$8,880.00, respectively.
- Approved the proposal for vehicle graphics by Grafix Shoppe for (12) Dodge Chargers at \$418.00 per vehicle and installation by Solar FX for (12) vehicles at \$125.00 per unit.
- Approved three (3) invoices over \$5,000
 - o Gibbs Brothers Construction for \$7,158.56
 - o Gibbs Brothers Construction for \$9,880.21
 - o Cherry Land Surveying for \$9,800.00
- Approved the Audit Report for F/Y 2015-2016.
- Approved the re-engagement of Kraft CPAs as the city’s audit firm for a one year term at the cost of \$20,500 for 2017.
- Approved Ordinance 2016-8, Amending Title 14, Section 204; Flat Roofs and Height Limitations, on second and final reading.

CITY HIRES FINANCE DIRECTOR



The City recently hired Aspen Collins to fill the position of Finance Director. She has over 14 years of experience in governmental accounting, having most recently held the position of Director of Finance with the Tuscaloosa Housing

Authority. Aspen and her family relocated from Alabama to Fairview, Tennessee last summer, where her husband is currently the city manager.

If you should have any questions about the City’s finances or budget, please feel free to contact Aspen at 615-297-6041 or acollins@citybellemeade.org.

Ceres Society Donations – December 2016

Chapman, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas
Ezzell, Mr. J. B.
Fillebrown, Mrs. T. Scott
Garrett, Mrs. Sam
Glassford, Dr. David
Jackson, III, Mr. & Mrs. Granbery



American Flag Sponsorship

Mr. & Mrs. Edgar Stuart
(In Memory: Mr. Raleigh Lane, Jr.)

METRO WATER & SEWER BILL Questions

The city staff has received several calls from residents stating their recent water and sewer bill from Metro Water Services (MWS) was much higher than previous months. After speaking with MWS staff, we believe the cause for the increase in billed amounts is due to several issues. First, MWS has a policy (see below) for residential customers that provides a “sprinkler discount” during 8 months of the year, from April through November. (The discount does not apply if you have a separate meter for irrigation in addition to your regular water meter.) Also, because this fall was unusually hot and dry, many homeowners were irrigating well past the normal time and using more water than in past years. The combination of more water use and the discount period ending resulted in higher water bills for many residents. If you feel that there may be other issues with your MWS bill, you may call their automated services line (615-862-4600).

Metro Water Service’s Policy for Seasonal Sewer Billing / Sprinkler Adjustments:

Sewer charges are calculated based on the amount of water used under most circumstances. An exception is made for residential customers during the months of April through November, when water is used to sprinkle lawns or wash cars. Since water used for these purposes does not go into the sewer, sewer service charges for residential bills are automatically adjusted during these months to reflect a “sprinkler credit.” The winter quarter average (January, February, and March) plus 30 percent will be the maximum sewer charges billed.



BUILDING & ZONING “Goodbye Volume, Hello F.A.R.”

The City of Belle Meade has issued building permits for years under the volume ordinance, which regulated what size home could be built on each lot. While this was a successful way to govern the size of homes allowed, calculating the volume was complicated, time consuming and required review by an engineer. Plus, Belle Meade is the only municipality that uses volume rather than square footage to determine the size of a house.

Over the years, the volume rule has become somewhat of a detriment as the design of homes and desired ceiling heights have changed in popularity. Simple dormers, porch overhangs and much wanted screened porches could not be added because there was not enough allowable volume in existing homes. These factors, when combined with a challenging topo, made designing and building a home more and more difficult, year after year.

An ad-hoc committee was formed this past summer to examine the need to change the way the City regulates the size of homes. This committee was comprised of all BZA members, a portion of the City’s Commissioners, a portion of the Municipal Planning Commission, architects, real estate agents and the building official. After no less than three formal meetings and months of discussion, a solution was formulated and agreed upon unanimously: **F.A.R. (Floor Area Ratio)**, which allows us to talk in square feet instead of cubic volume. Previously, home plans showing the volume figures had to be outsourced to an engineer for up to a month for verification and included a \$500 fee, paid by the owner or contractor. Square feet can be figured

in minutes with no cost or lengthy wait time. Homeowners and agents understand square feet and the formula is simple and easy to apply. These are important factors when you are making a decision to build, purchase or add an addition to a home.

Using F.A.R., you will first figure the total square footage of a lot. If the lot is under 40,000 sq. ft., you multiply by .225. If the lot is over 40,000 sq. ft., you will multiply by .196. This total is the square feet allowed on the figured property. The new square foot number will include the floor area in attic at a height of 5’6” and above whether it’s accessible or not but not include basements. It will include all heated and cooled spaces and garage. It will not include dormers, screened porches and porch overhangs. These will now fall under the hardscape number which has also changed to a total of 8% of the total lot with 2% of this allowed for a pool.

Adoption of the F.A.R. calculation does not necessarily mean more square footage for a house but it does mean more latitude for the addition of dormers, taller ceilings, screened porches, daylight basements and hardscape. The allowed footprint per lot including all structures on the property is still 12%. Homes will still be held to the current building envelope requirements and rear setback distances.

A new Ordinance amending Title 14 of the City Code to change the manner in which the City regulates the size of residential structures by relying upon the standard of “floor area ratio” rather than volume has been drafted and will be heard on first reading by the Commissioners at their monthly meeting on January 18, 2017 at 3:00 pm. For further questions, please call the office of the Building Official, Lyle Patterson, 615-297-2364.



The third-annual Weed Wrangle®—Nashville will be held on March 4, 2017 from 9 AM to 12 PM. Teams of volunteers will locate and uproot invasive plants at over eighteen public parks and green spaces around the city, including Nashville Zoo at Grassmere, Warner Parks, Greenways for Nashville, and many Tennessee State Parks and Natural Areas.

Invasive or non-native plants were introduced here decades ago for agricultural or landscaping purposes. Since then they have threatened to overtake Nashville’s native plant population. According to Steve Manning, President of Invasive Plant Control, Inc. and a consultant to Weed Wrangle®, “green is not always good.” Invasive plants and the pests associated with them degrade woodlands, threaten wildlife habitats, increase the risk of wildfire, and drastically alter the appearance of green spaces.

The best way to control alien plants such as bush honeysuckle, Chinese privet, autumn olive, English ivy, and winter creeper is hands-on removal in early spring when the plants have begun to sprout.

To keep the aggressive plants at bay requires active annual maintenance. In 2016 over 500 volunteers rooted out

unwelcome plants and shrubs in the Greater Nashville area. With more location partners in 2017, Weed Wrangle®-Nashville expects to clear even more public landscapes of non-indigenous plants.

About Weed Wrangle®

In 2015, **The Garden Club of Nashville** in partnership with The Garden Club of America's Partners for Plants program, partnered with **Invasive Plant Control, Inc.** to sponsor the first "Weed Wrangle" in Warner Parks, a 3200-acre city park composed of woodlands and natural area including old growth forest. Nine other partners participated in 2015. In 2016, the number of location partners doubled.

Inspired by Nashville’s successful Weed Wrangle (now a trademarked event), Weed Wrangles are held in Knoxville, Memphis, Chattanooga, Jackson, MS and New Orleans, LA among other cities.

For more information or to volunteer at a site near you: Visit www.weedwrangle.org or contact Steve Manning invasives@icloud.com

Belle Meade Newsletter

REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2017

**ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT
BELLE MEADE CITY HALL**

Municipal Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb 21st at 4:00 pm

Tuesday, Mar 21st at 4:00 pm

Board of Building Code Appeals

Tuesday, Feb 14th at 4:00 pm

Tuesday, Mar 14th at 4:00 pm

Board of Zoning Appeals

Tuesday, Feb 21st at 5:00 pm

Tuesday, Mar 21st at 5:00 pm

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, Feb 22nd at 4:00 pm

Wednesday, Mar 22nd at 4:00 pm

Agendas are available online at www.citybellemeade.org

NOTES & REMINDERS:

- The Wednesday, January 18th monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners will start one hour early, at 3:00 p.m.
- **During snowy or icy weather, please do not park vehicles in the streets. Parked cars or trucks along the roadside makes it very difficult for the snowplows to effectively clean the streets. If you cannot park in your driveway, please try to get as far off the road as possible if you must park alongside the street.**
- Some residents may have mistakenly received a notice from RR Waste Solutions that the trash or recycle service days will change. THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO BELLE MEADE RESIDENTS. THERE IS NO CHANGE TO COLLECTION DAYS.
- The Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Audit of the City's finances has been approved by the Board of Commissioners and can be viewed on the website, www.citybellemeade.org. If you wish to review a paper copy, please call Finance Director Aspen Collins, 615-297-6041.

CITY OF BELLE MEADE
4705 Harding Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37205

return service requested