

COMMISSIONERS: James V. Hunt, Sr., Mayor • Rusty Moore, Vice-Mayor • Bob Weigel
Louise Bryan • Haley Dale • Beth Reardon, City Manager • Vince Higgins, Interim Chief of Police

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



NEWSLETTER TO RESIDENTS OF BELLE MEADE JANUARY 2021

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY PROJECT BEGINS IN 2021

The City of Belle Meade has contracted with the historic preservation firm of Thomason and Associates of Nashville to complete an architectural and historical survey of the city. This effort expands on previous surveys conducted by the Metro Nashville Historical Commission in 1993. The survey will include updating photographs and architectural information for previously surveyed properties and the completion of new survey data and photographs for properties constructed in the 1940s to the 1960s.

Survey teams will be working on this project for the next several months with completion scheduled by June of 2021. Surveyors will be taking photographs from the public right-of-way as much as possible but there may be instances where front yards may need to be accessed in order to get clear views of the property. Surveyors will also be leaving questionnaires at each new surveyed property requesting any historical information known by

the owner. The surveyors will be carrying identification including a letter from the city explaining the purpose of the project.

At the conclusion of the project a survey report will be completed discussing the architectural and historical development of Belle Meade in the 20th century and identify those properties or areas which have particular significance. This information will be used for future planning by the city and to complete of the Conservation Overlay and Design Guidelines used as a resource by the Historic Zoning Commission.

Funding for the project is provided by the City of Belle Meade and by a grant from the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Questions concerning the survey may be directed to City Manager Beth Reardon at 615-297-6041 (breardon@citybellemeade.org) or to the project director Phil Thomason (615-385-4960 (thomason@bellsouth.net)).

BELLE MEADE TOGETHER – THE FUTURE OF BELLE MEADE



Belle Meade Together is the City's first long-range plan to preserve the beauty of Belle Meade while addressing neighborhood lifestyle issues. The plan is the culmination of efforts to maintain the architectural integrity of the City. Beginning in 2019, the Commissioners prioritized protecting Belle Meade's unique character by creating an Historic Zoning Commission, adopting a neighborhood conservation overlay, and implementing a Tree Ordinance.

In late October, more than 120 residents joined Belle Meade's first-ever Virtual Town Hall meeting where Commissioners, City

staff and the Kimley Horn consulting firm outlined the collaborative approach, demonstrated the online mapping tools, and answered more than 50 questions. An additional 70 residents joined in-person sessions later in the Fall. Furthermore, the website has hosted more than 1,200 visitors and over 300 total comments. The majority of comments are focused on beautification, traffic and walking. Thank you for your participation in the community engagement. You are Belle Meade Together. The challenge is to create beautiful and safe solutions that Belle Meade residents have come to expect from their verdant infrastructure. The solution will be to engage experts in the field of landscape design and engineering to maintain our beautiful meadow for future generations.

WATER AND SEWER RATE INCREASES – “THE MORE YOU USE, THE MORE YOU PAY”

Many residents experienced very high water/sewer bills this past year and we have spoken with staff from Metro Water & Sewer (MWS) Finance Dept. as to the reasons for this. A new tiered rate structure went into effect January 1, 2020, with scheduled increases for several years. The main reason for this new rate structure is to allow MWS to begin making much needed infrastructure improvements to its aging system. The tiered rate structure that began with a rate change in 2020 will increase by

4% in 2021, 3% per year for years 2022-2024, and revert to an annual CPI adjustment after that. The tier system means customers who use more water pay more.

The rate structures below were determined by MWS's Cost of Service Study. The volumetric rate per ccf of water is higher for the higher-use tiers. Using additional water in the summer for irrigation often places customers in the higher tier. MWS

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reports that 69% of their customers use 6 ccf or less each month. Customers who called to report extremely high bills were using much larger amounts of water—over 11 ccf—and much of their water use was in the highest tier.

2021 Water Rates by Volume

0 – 2 CCF	\$0
3 – 6 CCF	\$3.64
7 – 10 CCF	\$4.37
11+ CCF	\$5.46

* MWS bills in ccf
1 ccf (100 cubic feet) = 748 gallons

MWS states that residents who only have a domestic meter and also have an irrigation system may benefit from installing an additional meter which measures water used for the irrigation process. If you are interested in learning more about this, please

call MWS at 615-862-7225.

Residential customers receive 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 and 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 (Jan.-March) plus 30 percent will be the maximum sewer charges billed.

More information on the water and sewer rate increase can be found here:

<https://www.nashville.gov/Water-Services/2020-Rate-Restructure.aspx>

This site also has a Simple Rate Calculator (Excel spreadsheet template inside a Zip file) which is a useful tool in understanding how summer water use with a tiered structure affects your water bill.



FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT – INTERIM CHIEF VINCE HIGGINS: QUESTIONS ABOUT BELLE MEADE’S VIDEO SECURITY SYSTEM? READ ON . . .



The City has been utilizing its Video Security System (VSS) for about four years, and it has proven to be an invaluable aid to the Police Department in solving crimes and an immense reassurance to citizens. Still, we often hear questions as to what information the VSS records or maintains and if citizens can be “tracked” on the system.

The VSS includes License Plate Recognition (LPR) cameras and high quality video recording cameras. None of the cameras in the VSS are accessed unless there has been a crime committed or the Police Dept. receives a valid request for information. The contractor for the VSS states it achieves three goals: first, to deter; second, to provide real-time monitoring of activity (LPR cameras); and third, to provide a high degree of evidentiary value.

Investigator Tom Sexton has written an excellent informational article, below, on the LPR cameras. LPRs immediately notify the Belle Meade Police Dept. when a vehicle tag number that has been entered in the national database is captured on camera in Belle Meade.

The LPR system only gathers data that is publicly displayed on an automobile using a public roadway. This information consists of a combination of numbers and letters and contains NO personal data in any form. The LPR system does not capture faces or the interior of a vehicle as a rule. As a rule, only the rear of the vehicle is captured, which is where the license tags on most vehicles are located. The length of time this data is retained by law enforcement is strictly regulated by Tennessee state law. Currently, the data can be kept for a period up to 90 days. Belle Meade does NOT sell or give captured data to any private citizen or business and complies with Tennessee law.

Should the LPR camera database be “hacked”, the only information that would be obtained is tag numbers, times and possi-

bly the location of the camera. The LPRs access information from the National Crime Information Center, or NCIC, which is overseen by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation CJIS division. This access is strictly regulated and audited on a regular basis to prevent misuse. The number of people that are authorized to enter a tag number into the LPR system is very restricted. This significantly reduces the number of people who have access to the system and reduces the potential abuse of the system.

The Belle Meade Police Dept. has used the LPR system for almost four years and no complaints have been received of improper use. In that time, well over a MILLION dollars’ worth of stolen property has been recovered. The Dept. has been given advance notice of criminals coming into the Belle Meade area and has prevented crimes from being committed. A multitude of felony warrants originating from other jurisdictions have been served and violent criminals apprehended. People reported as missing and endangered have been located much to the relief of their loved ones. The Dept. has provided information to other law enforcement agencies in the region that has allowed them to solve violent crime cases and make arrests.

In closing, remember that the LPRs are merely tools. They are devices that sit silently on a pole 24 hours a day. They do nothing more than truthfully answer the question “Have you seen this number?” They have no bias towards anyone and no personal agenda. After giving the answer, they record the question and answers along with any other data base that may be used in conjunction with the answer. The LPR system is a valuable law enforcement tool. The extremely low possibility that it could be misused should be weighed against the certainty of its proven value to law enforcement and the safety of law-abiding citizens.



RECAP OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING



The Commissioners took action on the following items at the December 16, 2020 meeting:

- Approved the appointment of Doug Hale as a BZA alternate board member
- Approved the following invoices over \$5,000:
 - Hodgson/Douglas Landscape Architects \$ 5,581.80
 - Kimley-Horn (Master Plan) \$ 10,585.00
 - Jones Brothers Construction (paving) \$203,665.00
- Approved the FY 2019-2020 Audit Report prepared by Kraft CPAs
- Approved the proposal from Kraft CPAs for a 3-year engagement for audit services
- Deferred action on FY 20/21 employee compensation
- Approved staff request to add security camera upgrades to city hall interior and obtain pricing on security door installation in City Hall lobby.

The Commissioners took action on the following items at the Dec. 28, 2020 Special Meeting:

- Approved 2% salary increase for F/T employees effective Jan. 1, 2021. No increases were originally budgeted at July 1st due to uncertainty of COVID effects on revenues. A one-time “catch-up” payment for all employees was also approved.



The Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Audit of the City's finances has been approved by the Board of Commissioners and can be viewed on the website

<https://citybellemeade.org/finance/>

If you wish to review a paper copy or have questions, please call Finance/HR Director Leigh Mills, 615-297-6041.



FROM THE BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

“ASK A GARDENER”

Dear Clematis,

The house that we bought in 2018 has pretty gardens during spring and summer. But after July, most everything has stopped blooming. Do you have any ideas for plants that would provide color and flowers for cutting into the fall?

*Hopefully,
Wistful on Westview*

Dear Wistful,

No need to be wistful – you can be a wishful gardener! “Fall freshness” is not an oxymoron in Nashville. We are fortunate to have a long growing season. There are many perennial plants that put on a show in the fall, but they take a while to fill out and make a statement.

Your timing is perfect right now to buy bulbs that you plant in the spring after the last frost. These will bloom in late summer and fall; some of them even continue until the temperature

drops below freezing. My favorites are dahlias, cannas and lilies such as Surprise Lilies and Spider Lilies.

None of these plants take up much space; you can plant bulbs here and there in sunny spots and experiment with color combinations. When your summer-blooming plants are finishing, your spring-planted bulbs will be ready to get your attention.

You can plant bulbs in the ground or in containers, just a few inches deep. You can buy bulbs at our local garden centers, but the best selection is from online specialty nurseries. Their websites also have helpful information and tips for successful growing.

Here are a few sites to start your research:

<https://www.longfield-gardens.com/>

<https://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com/>

<https://www.brecks.com/>

<https://www.dahlias.com/>



Have fun and enjoy your fall harvest,
Clematis

CERES SOCIETY DONATIONS – DECEMBER 2020

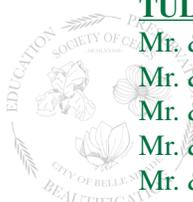
Dr. & Mrs. David Glassford
Mr. & Mrs. E. Dan Smith, II

MAGNOLIA SOCIETY - \$500 - \$999

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Chapman
Mr. & Mrs. David Nosbusch

TULIP SOCIETY - \$250 - \$499

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Blackburn
Mr. & Mrs. James Harris
Mr. & Mrs. Richard McKinney
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Sheffield
Mr. & Mrs. James Spradley, Jr.



REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2021

**All Meetings Held at Belle Meade City Hall
via ZOOM**

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, February 17th at 4:00 pm

Wednesday, March 17th at 4:00 pm

Historic Zoning Commission

Tuesday, February 9th at 3:00 pm

Tuesday, March 9th at 3:00 pm

Board of Building Code Appeals

Tuesday, February 9th at 4:00 pm

Tuesday, March 9th at 4:00 pm

Municipal Planning Commission

Tuesday, February 16th at 4:00 pm

Tuesday, March 16th at 4:00 pm

Board of Zoning Appeals

Tuesday, February 16th at 5:00 pm

Tuesday, March 16th at 5:00 pm

Agendas are available online at www.citybellemeade.org



The City staff sends a BIG "Thank You" to all the residents who sent Employee Fund donations and delicious treats to us during the holidays. We truly appreciate your thoughtfulness and are grateful for your generosity. It is a pleasure to work in Belle Meade and provide services to all of you! Please do not hesitate to call on us when you need assistance.

CITY OF BELLE MEADE
4705 Harding Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37205

return service requested