



The Stafford Newsletter



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Mayor and Staff Address City Matters on Wednesday, January 23

“STATE OF THE CITY” PRESENTED AT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The New Year offers much promise for Stafford. This is bolstered by Congress barely averting plunging over the “fiscal cliff”, which had not this financial dilemma been avoided would have had serious negative impacts on our City’s economy.

As is the long-standing practice, the City will be conducting its annual Town Meeting on Wednesday, January 23, at 7 p.m., in the Civic Center, which will offer an insight into the condition of Stafford. The agenda offers the opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions on the pressing issues of the day.

The meeting will begin with the “State of the City and Goals for 2013” presented by Mayor Leonard Scarcella. City Department Heads will follow with highlights of activities in their respective departments. Following the reports, the general public will have the opportunity and be encouraged to make comments and ask questions pertaining to the following topics:

- a) City’s economy, zero property tax, sales and other taxes, and fiscal condition;
- b) Police and fire protection, emergency management operations, and homeland security;
- c) Redevelopment of Texas Instruments property;
- d) Stafford Municipal School District, elevating educational standards, security of its students, and defense against deadly weapons attacks;
- e) Zoning, building standards and regulations, and commercial enhancement of major corridors;
- f) Major highway improvements, streets, mobility, and commuter and freight rail;
- g) Stafford Centre and Stafford Civic Center;
- h) No smoking ordinance in most private businesses and public places;
- i) Houston Community College and educational opportunities;
- j) Stafford Municipal Educational Television Station, streaming video, websites, and expansion of intellectual technology;
- g) Parks and Swimming Pool;
- h) Municipal Court;
- i) Regal Ranch acquisition;
- j) Future water supply and sanitary sewer; and
- k) Other matters of interest to the City.

You are strongly encouraged to attend, participate in this event, and share your suggestions, comments, and questions.

The meeting will be televised live on S-METV, Channel 16 Comcast, AT&T U-verse, Channel 99, with rebroadcasts for those who are unable to attend.

NEW PROCESS UTILIZED FOR SELECTION OF PARADE MARSHAL

The City of Stafford annually nominates a Parade Marshal for the 4th of July parade. This year, the City is taking a new approach by soliciting your assistance in making recommendations for Parade Marshal.

Please submit your nominee along with a brief summary of his/her accomplishments - - with emphasis on the significant benefits accruing to Stafford from the efforts of the nominee - - to fes@cityofstafford.com

FINAL PUBLIC HEARING ON NO SMOKING ORDINANCE ON FEBRUARY 6

At a meeting last month, City Attorney Art Pertile presented a far-ranging, no-smoking ordinance which he asserted represented the collective position of City Council and which several members appeared to support while the Mayor and others had questions of concern.

The draft ordinance prohibits smoking in all places of employment and enclosed public places in the City except for bars and retail tobacco stores. The ordinance will take effect on July 1 and will impose up to a

\$2,000 fine for any violations.

A public hearing will be held on February 6, at 7:30 p.m., at City Hall, to allow interested parties to address the specifics of the ordinance. Following the hearing, Council will debate those matters addressed during the hearing as well as any other issues deemed pertinent to imposing such far-ranging restrictions related to smoking. After the discussion, Council would be free to make a motion in regard to the adoption of the ordinance with any amendments deemed appropriate.

UPRR Closes Present Street Intersection

CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR STAFFORD RESIDENTS WITH REMOVAL OF WAYSIDE HORNS

Following a chastising by Mayor Leonard Scarcella in October 2011 at a hearing before the Houston-Galveston Area Council on rail activities in the region in which the Mayor strongly criticized the incessant, constant, and often unprovoked wailing of the wayside horns at the Present Street and North Main intersection, Union Pacific Railroad announced last month and shortly before Christmas closed the Present Street intersection and removed the wayside horns which were causing much disruption especially in the late night and early

morning hours to our citizens.

Additionally, this crossing created havoc with the traffic signals especially when there was a train crossing through the intersection and motorists on Present Street were attempting to turn onto North Main.

With this closing, the train horns, wayside horns, and the signal disruption at this intersection have all been eliminated.

Challenging the Railroad is never easy. However, this time all parties agreed that this would be the best solution for everyone involved.



Present Street railroad crossing closed; wayside horns removed

ELECTIONS SET FOR MAY 11



*Mayor
Leonard Scarcella*



*Councilwoman
Felecia Evans-Smith*



*Councilman
Wen Guerra*



*Councilman
Fred Woolridge*

Four positions held on City Council, namely those by Leonard Scarcella, Felecia Evans-Smith, Wen Guerra, and Fred Woolridge, will be up for election on May 11. At SMSD, terms for Board of Trustee members Ed Castillo and Greg Holsapple will expire. There also is an open seat created by the resignation of ShaMekka Pratt-Simmons.

Persons interested in running for Mayor or Councilmember can pick up a candidate's packet in the City Secretary's office at City Hall, and

those seeking the SMSD Trustee positions can get them from Terry Loudenburg's office at the school's Administration Building. These packets will contain necessary forms and pertinent information to file for an office and to make proper reports throughout the campaign.

January 30 is the first day for filing an application for a place on the ballot, and March 1 is the last day to file for a place on the ballot.

More information will appear in the April issue of the *Newsletter*.

STAFFORD CENTRE ENHANCEMENTS GET GREEN LIGHT

The Board of the Stafford Economic Development Corporation has authorized the expenditure of approximately \$100,000 to add permanent and elaborate lighting to the Stafford Centre's Festival Field 2 which, among other uses, is highlighted during the annual 4th of July celebration.

After considerable discussion and some controversy, City Engineer

Charles Russell was granted the authority to solicit bids and bring back a specific proposal for these improvements to the SEDC Board in January.

With this addition, the Festival Field will be elevated in its use and functionality. If all goes as planned, these enhancements will be available for this year's Independence Day festivities.

City Offices Closed

Monday, February 18 – President's Day

Friday, March 29 – Good Friday

*****Reminder: Holiday Trash*****

When regular trash pickup falls on a holiday (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4 Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas), removal will be made on the next regularly scheduled day.

Tree Limb Service

The next tree limb service will be performed beginning Monday, April 1. Tree limbs cannot lay in a yard longer than 7 days prior to the pickup schedule.

2012 Alarm Permits Expired

2012 Alarm Permits expired on December 31. Renew by January 31 for \$15. The fee is \$25 on or after February 1. Alarm Permits are available at the Stafford Police Department. For questions, call 281-261-3955. The Alarm Permit Application can be found at www.cityofstafford.com under the section "Forms, Instructions, Fees" on the front page.



City of Stafford
2610 South Main
Stafford, TX 77477

83RD LEGISLATIVE SESSION BEGINS

On January 8, the 83rd session of the Texas Legislature officially began. According to authorities, education, water rights, and transportation head the list of issues likely to be addressed.

If past sessions are any indication, there will be about 5,000 bills filed during the session which runs through May 27. These bills will cover the full gamut of issues for which Texans have an interest or concern.

In order for the City to put its best foot forward in the session, and especially protect itself against legislation which could have a damaging effect on it, the City has retained two experienced legislative consultants and lobbyists, John Pitts and Marta Greytok, to represent the City.

Since education will head the list, John Pitts will be working with Superintendent Dr. Lance Hindt to

protect the interests of the Stafford Municipal School District and its relationship with the City in view of SMSD's being the only municipal school district in the state.

Marta Greytok is poised to address all subject matters which can benefit or damage the City.

Additionally, both Pitts and Greytok will collaborate when appropriate to address particularly important issues.

One such issue of primary concern to the City is the myriad of bills proposing to allow added exemptions from the sales tax.

Since Stafford has eliminated the property tax, the sales tax - which provides almost two out of every three dollars the City collects - is critically important to the fiscal viability of the City. Efforts to reduce revenues generated by it will be vigorously opposed.

EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR STAFFORD CENTRE

The Heaven & Above Baby & Family Expo – Jan. 20
Sugarland Home & Garden Show – Jan. 26-27
SMUSD High School Choir's "Bye Bye Birdie" – Feb. 1-2
Go Texan "Wranglers & Rhinestones" Dinner & Dance – Feb. 9
Wan Fen Hui Yun Chinese Opera – Feb. 15
The Greater Houston Train Show – Feb. 16
The Ultimate Doo Wop Show – Feb. 16
Fort Bend Symphony's Orchestral Masterworks – Feb. 17
Merle Haggard – Mar. 21
Ballet Forte's Spring Performance – Mar. 23-24
International Festival - Mar. 24

