

Weekly Recycling Collection Starts April 4

The City Council recently voted to improve recycling collection service for City residents. Starting the week of April 4, Texas Disposal Systems will begin collecting the recycled material carts every week instead of every other week as previously offered.

Recycling collection will continue to occur on the first day of garbage collection. For example, if you garbage collection occurs on Tuesdays and Fridays, then your recycling will be collected on Tuesdays.

We hope you enjoy this service from the City of West Lake Hills!

You can recycle...

- All **paper** including newsprint, magazines, office paper, boxboard and corrugated cardboard
- Unbroken **glass** bottles of any color
- Any empty metal **cans**
- All **plastic containers** labeled Type 1 through Type 7 only

Please don't recycle...

- Styrofoam
- Plastic shopping bags
- Batteries
- Pizza boxes, frozen food packaging or anything that has absorbed food, grease, oil or other chemicals
- Broken glass, light bulbs, jagged metal, medical or hazardous waste



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THE CITY OF WEST LAKE HILLS
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Wastewater System CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

system at the \$11.8 million price point.

• The **Legal Subcommittee** includes Council Member Spencer Stevens, Mayor Dave Claunch, Wastewater Commission Chair Steve Hudson and the rest of the City's negotiating team. The subcommittee has been tasked with exploring various provisions of our current

contract with the LCRA and other legal options including the City's power of eminent domain to acquire the system by condemnation.

Both subcommittees will report back to the City Council at its April 27th meeting (7:00 p.m. at City Hall). A public hearing will be held to consider input from the community. Please come and share your thoughts!

The City of West Lake Hills
 911 Westlake Drive
 West Lake Hills, Texas 78746



City Council Considers All Options for Acquiring Municipal Wastewater System from the LCRA

The City has been negotiating with the Lower Colorado River Authority for more than a year attempting to acquire the City's municipal wastewater collection system. A negotiating team appointed by the City Council has worked closely with LCRA staff to identify the various components of the LCRA's asking price. The team has made numerous suggestions to the LCRA on how those cost elements could be minimized so that the City could purchase the system at a fair and equitable price. All were rejected.

In November, 2010 – and with no advance notice to the stakeholders of the 32 LCRA-owned water and wastewater systems – the LCRA Board adopted a Resolution declaring that owning and operating the systems is no longer consistent with the LCRA's mission and declaring its intent to sell all 32 systems to the highest bidder.

Throughout the negotiations with the City, the LCRA has refused to budge on their asking price. In December of 2010, the City Council authorized an offer of \$16.5 million which was presented directly to the LCRA Board of Directors by Mayor

Dave Claunch. Although the offer was 3% less than the LCRA's asking price, City leaders believed that the amount was fully consistent with previous LCRA Board decisions to sell water and wastewater systems – most notably the LCRA's decision to accept an offer to purchase the Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment plant that was less than the LCRA's original asking price.

bidder, then the City needed to know what the system was truly worth on the open market.

The Red Oak appraisal report was presented to the City Council in early March. It showed that the system is worth only \$11.8 million on the open market. (A copy of the appraisal is posted at www.westlakehills.org.)

Armed with this new information about the System's true value, the City



The Lower Colorado River Authority recently announced that water and wastewater systems are no longer consistent with its mission. Here's a picture of a wind turbine facility the LCRA built in far West Texas.
Photo courtesy of the LCRA Corporate Archives EU00516.

Council made another offer to the LCRA, this time for \$11.8 million.

When the LCRA leadership rejected that offer without even discussing it with their Board of Directors, the City Council began considering other options for acquiring the System.

The Council recently voted

to form two sub-committees:

• The **Finance Subcommittee** includes Council Members Andrew Schwartz and Stan Graham and former Council Member Kit Webster and has been tasked with further exploring the options for financing the system and the impact on wastewater rates of acquiring the

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Bee Cave Road Update

City officials recently secured the final donation of right-of-way and utility easements necessary to proceed with widening Bee Cave Road (FM 2244) at Redbud Trail. The project will add a center turn lane to Bee Cave Road on both sides of Redbud Trail and a dedicated right turn lane for eastbound traffic to enter St. John Neumann Catholic Church.

Over the next few months, utility crews will begin relocating water, phone and electrical lines along the south side of the roadway near this intersection.

Since Bee Cave Road is a state highway, the Texas Department of Transportation will manage the entire construction process which should begin in earnest later this summer. The project is fully funded and should be completed within a year – hopefully much sooner!

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to start securing the donation of right-of-way and utility easements along the remaining portion of Bee

Cave Road that runs through the City. A group of commercial property owners are donating their time to help City leaders reach out to the all of the property owners along the roadway in the coming weeks.

Property owners will be asked to submit a non-binding Letter of Intent that specifies how much right-of-way and easement area they are willing to donate to the City in order to expand the road to include a center turn lane and possibly sidewalks through that part of town. Once we have determined how much additional right of way we can reasonably gather, TXDOT will proceed with the final design process within those parameters.

Funding has not yet been identified for that portion of the roadway, but TXDOT is committed to the design process which should help put the project in a good position to receive future funding when it becomes available.

Keep your fingers crossed!

Sign Up For City's Mass Notification System

The City of West Lake Hills' mass notification system allows us to send a recorded message to all residents and businesses within a matter of minutes. We occasionally use it to contact residents in the event of an emergency or to pass along other useful information regarding city services and events. The mass notification system's database can contact up to three phone numbers and two e-mail addresses for each

person on the list, using voice, email or text message.

If you'd like to update your phone number in our system or add your mobile number or email address, please go to the city website (www.westlakehills.org) and click on the link entitled "One Step Notification" or call Mark Littrell at (512) 327-3628. Your contact information will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with any other parties.

Help Prevent Oak Wilt

Oak wilt disease, a fungus that kills oak trees, continues to threaten many areas of Central Texas, including West Lake Hills. It's important that we all work together to prevent this disease from taking hold in our community. The disease can spread among trees through their root system, by insects that carry it to open wounds on the tree bark, or by pruning with contaminated tools.

Remember that when making cuts on all oak trees (live oaks, Spanish oaks, red oaks, etc.), all cuts, large or small, must be treated with pruning sealer as soon as they are made, as required by City Ordinance. Be sure to disinfect your cutting instruments with chlorine bleach in between trees.

The proper time to prune is during the heat of the summer or the cold of the winter. Both the trees and the beetles that spread the disease are mostly dormant during those times which helps reduce the risk of infection. Conversely, insects are quite active during spring and fall, so it's best to avoid pruning during those seasons.

Be careful about storing infected firewood on your property. Make sure all firewood is fully cured and kept dry. Only store enough firewood for use in one season to prevent rotting wood from becoming infected and spreading the disease. If you must store firewood, be sure to cover the entire pile with clear plastic and seal the edges with dirt, thereby trapping insects and containing any spores that may exist in the wood.

For more information, check out our website at www.westlakehills.org, or contact our City Inspector and Arborist Christy Shull at 327-3628.

The Quest to Identify the Jackson Family Cemetery

*By City Council Member
Spencer Stevens*

Many among us might know of the Eanes Cemetery that was established in 1874 on land that is now adjacent to Eanes Elementary School. But who among us knows of an early 20th century cemetery located in Las Lomas?

That's right, the Las Lomas subdivision is the home of a cemetery that is the final resting place for some of the earliest African American settlers in Travis County.

In 1984 and in the midst of developing the final plat and obtaining the necessary permits from the City of West Lake Hills, the developer of Las Lomas noticed what they thought resembled a gravesite headstone on a section of the northwestern boundary of the 108 acre tract that they had recently acquired. Concerned about the obvious sensitivities to a potential graveyard on their land and knowledgeable about Texas cemetery laws, the developer engaged the cultural resources unit of a local engineering firm to locate and define the boundaries of two cemetery

reservations that were first mentioned in 1885 deed records.

The engineering firm set about its task by (1) reviewing map and deed records acquired from Travis County and the Texas General Land Office, (2) conducting an on-the-ground field survey by its archaeological staff, (3) performing oral interviews with local historians, current and former landowners in the project area and individuals who might be acquainted with descendants of the former landowners, (4) reviewing available courthouse and library records, including probate records, newspaper articles, death certificates and mortuary records, (5) conducting interviews with descendants of the original owners of the cemetery, and (6) finally, using remote sensing, ground-penetrating radar to determine the exact locations of individual burials and thereby establishing the boundaries of the cemetery.



ABOVE: The pathway from the street to the Jackson Family Cemetery.



LEFT: A headstone marking the grave of an early settler.

All of the techniques employed by the engineering firm led them to the conclusion that they had identified an historic cemetery known as the "Jackson Family Cemetery." The Jackson Family Cemetery contains the remains of some of the earliest African American settlers and their descendants in Travis County. In 1916, during a smallpox epidemic in Austin, the area around the cemetery was used as a hospital and a burial ground for a number of individuals who perished as a result of the smallpox outbreak. The analysis of the ground-penetrating radar scans indicates that as many as 46 individuals have been buried in the Jackson Family Cemetery.

Interviews with Jackson family descendants reveal that at least 17 members of the Jackson family were interred in the cemetery. As a result of the engineering firm's work, the Jackson Family Cemetery has been recorded as an archeological site with the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory.

Upon receiving this definitive information, the developers of the Las Lomas subdivision proceeded to mark the Jackson Family Cemetery on the official plat filed with the City of West Lake Hills and Travis county deed records as well as dedicate a permanent access easement to the cemetery.

The Jackson Family Cemetery and the access easement is situated between the properties located at 700 and 702 Las Lomas Drive. Title to the one-half acre cemetery lot as well as its care and maintenance is entrusted to the Las Lomas Residential Owners Association.

The investigation, delineation and preservation of the Jackson Family Cemetery was a true "Indiana Jones" moment in West Lake Hills history!