“Wear a Mask - Protect Yourself - Protect our Community”

Message from Mayor Suzanne de Leon

Even though the constant battle with COVID-19 that has consumed us for most of 2020, city leaders and staff continue to stay diligent to the everyday tasks to ensure our city stays safe and solvent.

After many budget workshops that were held via Zoom, at last month’s council meeting your City Council unanimously approved the City’s Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2021. The budget is balanced with a contingency fund. You can review the FY21 budget on the city’s website at www.bhtx.gov. Many thanks to David Harris, Delia Sanchez, Lisa Merlo and also to our former Finance Director, Floyd Messick, for putting in many long hours and late nights to get this balanced budget to us for approval! Special thanks to the City’s finance committee including Councilmembers Lamar Gillian and Stephen Lara for their time digging into the numbers.

As has been previously reported, our sales tax is down from this time last year; however, we are mindful of this and are watching city spending. The Finance Committee will meet monthly until after the first of the year and will present an update at each council meeting to keep council informed on the financial state of the city. Please remember that the best way to support your city financially is to shop the businesses of Balcones Heights so that your sales tax dollars stay here!

Some tasks were already planned and approved and one of the very important jobs is the designing and reconstruction of Hillcrest Drive. Staff has recently contracted to get some patch work done to help certain areas from completely failing but as you know, the entire street is in bad need of complete repair. We will keep you updated as this progresses.

Message from Mayor de Leon page 2

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ANNUAL BUDGET

The Balcones Heights City Council unanimously approved the new City budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 during the August 24, 2020 regular City Council meeting. The virtual meeting was held via Zoom.

The budget will raise more revenue from property taxes than last year’s budget by $1,139, which is 0.6589% increase from last year’s budget The property tax revenue to be raised from new property added to the tax role this year is $1,525.

The adopted tax rate is $0.583 per $100 of valuation and is the current tax rate – the same rate adopted last year. City Council plans to use the increase in revenue for the purpose of maintaining City services, economic development, and addressing long-term infrastructure needs.

Full details of the approved FY 2020-2021 Budget can be found on the City’s Web site, https://bhtx.gov/city-services/city-news/fy-2020-21-approved-budget-tax-rate
Another update is that your property taxes remains the same as last year, what this means is that, effectively, your City Council lowered the city portion of your property tax bill. The City tax bill for your average home of per $100 of valuation is $0.583. We know this is a tough time for many people and your City Council responded.

Please welcome our new Finance Director, Anthony Holland. Anthony has been with Johnson City as Chief Administrative Officer/City Secretary since 2013. He has an extensive and impressive resume in city finances and we are happy to have him join the Balcones Heights family.

Finally, I urge you all, please complete the Census 2020 as soon as possible. Responding to the 2020 Census is simple, safe, and easy and provides billions of dollars in federal funding to your community. You can respond by visiting [2020census.gov](http://2020census.gov), calling 844.330.2020, or by mailing in your census questionnaire.

The percentage of our residents who have completed the Census is very low and by not having an accurate account of residents, money is “left on the table” and this will affect so many aspects of city government. The deadline is **September 30, 2020**.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments, or you are unsure exactly how to complete the Census or don’t have access to a computer, please contact Chrissie at 210.957.2992 or chrissie@bhtx.gov.

Thank you for taking this seriously – because it is serious. It’s important and we need an accurate count!

Wishing you all blessings, good health and happiness.

Suzanne

P.S. Please shop Balcones Heights!!
Balcones Heights crafting new land use plan with Fort Worth consultant

By W. Scott Bailey – Senior Reporter, San Antonio Business Journal

Balcones Heights, a bedroom community near Loop 410 and Interstate 10, is at its economic crossroads.

Balcones Heights is crafting a comprehensive land use plan as part of larger strategic vision to draw more investment, while enlisting the state transportation department to improve pedestrian safety.

Balcones Heights awarded a contract to the Mitchell Planning Group in Fort Worth to develop the new land use plan — more than a decade after the city completed work on a broader master plan. Now, city leaders must deal with the economic fallout from Covid-19 and the longer-term effect the pandemic could have on previous development strategies.

"We've got to reshuffle the deck," said Lorenzo Nastasi, director of economic development for the city of Balcones Heights. "It has to look at ways to best use the land that it has."

With undeveloped land in short supply, Nastasi said it's important that Balcones Heights leaders take a fresh look at what types of businesses can generate the tax base needed to fund essential services and infrastructure needs, as well as how the community can work green space into the development mix if it wants to attract and retain more residents.

"We've got acres and acres of asphalt," Nastasi said.

One of the challenges facing Balcones Heights is considerable pedestrian traffic on both sides of a busy segment of Fredericksburg Road. There is a stretch between Hillcrest Drive and Crossroads Boulevard where people can't cross the street without risking their lives, Nastasi said.

City officials are working with the Texas Department of Transportation on potential improvements, including construction of a pedestrian island halfway between two of its busiest intersections along Fredericksburg Road. They are also pursuing an exemption from state highway restrictions along the stretch of Fredericksburg that passes through the city, with the idea that it will enable them to enhance walkability and connectivity, Nastasi said.

Balcones Heights has also engaged Texas Creative to launch a new branding campaign and is considering expanding the community's popular summer jazz festival to include more events throughout the year.

"We are trying to find new ways to bring energy," Nastasi said. "It's about finding those opportunities where they exist and sticking our foot in the door until we can push it all the way open."
An update for our patients

At Methodist Healthcare, we remain diligent in our fight against coronavirus (COVID-19), and want to provide you with an update about the thoughtful and deliberate steps we’re taking to return to standard operations during this ever-evolving pandemic. We recognize these are uncertain times, and you may have concerns about receiving medical care, even more so than normal. As always, the health and safety of our patients, caregivers and communities is our top priority.

The precautions we’ve taken and the new protections we’ve put in place make our clinical care facilities among the safest possible places to receive healthcare at this time. Over the past few months, our facilities have maintained strict standards while following updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As we carefully prepare for the re-opening of many postponed services, we have introduced enhanced precautions to ensure a safe environment for all involved, including universal masking, isolating COVID-19 patients, enhanced screening, and virtual visitation policies. Urgent healthcare needs, including those unrelated to COVID-19, should not be ignored during this time. We are here for you and we are well-equipped to handle any health concern you may have.

Steps we’re taking to keep you and our clinical teams safe:

- Screening processes in place for all patients, visitors and clinicians before entering facilities.
- Separate care locations for COVID-19 positive patients and those under investigation, who are masked and escorted to designated locations. Non-COVID-19 patients, including those receiving outpatient care or undergoing scheduled procedures, are treated in separate areas and assigned caregivers who are not concurrently caring for COVID-19 positive patients.
- Universal masking required throughout our facilities, which exceeds CDC guidelines.
- Heightened infection prevention policies, including the removal of high-touch items such as magazines, toys and vending machines from our facilities.
- Food and drinks prohibited in clinical units to prevent the spread of illness.
- Updated visitor policies, including limitations, which have been in place for the duration of the pandemic, remain in place across our facilities.

However, precautions should not stop when you leave our facilities. To protect yourself and others, it is imperative you continue to follow the current guidance from the CDC regarding social distancing and hand hygiene. These important infection prevention measures help keep you, and your loved ones, safe.

Methodist Healthcare remains focused on providing you with outstanding care. We know these circumstances may not be what you anticipated when it comes to your healthcare, and we recognize the worry this pandemic may have created for you or your loved ones. Thank you for trusting us with your vital care. We are committed to protecting the health and safety of the patients we so proudly serve, today and every day.

Every effort is made to ensure our website information remains up to date. As specific guidelines and policies continue to evolve, please call our facility at 210.575.0355 for updated information on enhanced safety protections.

For necessary protection of Methodist Texsan patients and staff against COVID-19, the following implementation of visitor restrictions are at all of their facilities in the San Antonio region:
Admitted Patients and ER – NO Visitors

Single Visitor policy in place for the below:
- NICU
- OB
- Pediatrics
- End of Life
- ER

These restrictions should not prevent anyone from seeking medical care. Our Emergency Department remains open to all 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more the latest information on how we’re keeping our community safe, visit Methodist Hospital Texsan - 210.736.6700  https://bit.ly/37Ti4nW
What to do when you (and your kids) are online at home

Jennifer Leach - Associate Director Division of Consumer & Business Education, FTC

If you have kids in school, there’s a good chance they’re kicking off their school year…in your living room. All the while, you might be working away, yourself, in some carved out corner at home.

The start of a new school year is a good time to double-check your online set-up at home, since lots of people might depend on it. Here are a few things to check or consider.

**Secure your router.** Does it still have the same default name and password that it came with? You’ll want to change that, and be sure you’ve turned off remote management. Then log out as the administrator once the router is set up.

**Update your software.** That means updating your browsers, operating systems, and apps. Then, set them to update automatically.

**Use strong passwords and two factor authentication (when available).** And while you’re teaching your kids about the importance of a strong password, remind them NOT TO SHARE their password with their friends.

**Update and protect your phone.** Make sure your phone’s security is up to date and you have your data backed up. (Backing up is good advice for your computer, too.)

**Don’t watch pirated content.** Hackers are using illegal pirated content as a way in to your devices and wireless network. So If you have content-hungry kids at home who have found free ways to stream content, learn more about what the pirates look like, what the hackers can do, and what you can do to stop them.

**Make use of privacy and security tools.** If you’re hosting a video conference, or just participating in one, check out the privacy and security options your platform provides, including ways to keep unwanted visitors out of your conference.

**Don’t open unexpected video conferencing invitations or click on links.** It might look real, but is it? Check with whoever invited you to be sure (and not by replying to that message). Scammers are using fake invitations to load malware onto your computer or phone.

I know you’re facing way bigger headaches than these right now. But taking a few minutes to check your systems now can save you from even bigger headaches later on.

To vote in Texas for the November 3, 2020 election, you must be registered to vote by **October 5, 2020**. If you have not yet registered, don’t worry, I can help! Please note the important eligibility information to vote!!

To be eligible to register to vote in Texas, a person must be:

- A United States citizen;
- A resident of the Texas county in which application for registration is made;
- At least 18 years old on Election Day;
- Not finally convicted of a felony, or, if so convicted must have (1) fully discharged the sentence, including any term of incarceration, parole, or supervision, or completed a period of probation ordered by any court; or (2) been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disability to vote; and
- Not determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be (1) totally mentally incapacitated; or (2) partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.

**IMPORTANT - Early voting - Tuesday, October 13, 2020 – Friday, October 30, 2020**

Only a few weeks left - contact me right away - call my cell **210.612.0191** or email me gcantu@bhtx.gov.
OCTOBER 24 IS DRUG TAKE BACK DAY
DEA TEAMING UP WITH THE BALCONES HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
DRIVE UP - DROP OFF - DRIVE AWAY

SPIRIT HALLOWEEN STORE OPEN IN WONDERLAND OF THE AMERICAS
Through the vast merchandise assortment and memorable visual presentation, Spirit Halloween stores provide a truly impressive, unique and unforgettable shopping experience. In addition to being a fun and interactive event for shoppers, the location offers complete selections of costumes and accessories for infants/toddlers, children, “tweens, teens and adults.” The store is located on the 2nd level.

ROGERS PARK
Playscapes and Skateboard Ramps OPEN
Please follow CDC guidelines for COVID protection.

HAVE YOU JOINED NEXTDOOR YET?
If not, do these simple steps and stay informed!!
Join your neighborhood - BALCONES HEIGHTS
To connect with your neighbors, you'll need to create an account on Nextdoor. You do not need an invitation to join Nextdoor. If you did receive an invitation, please follow the instructions below and enter your code when requested.

- Web
- iPhone
- Android
Enter your residential street address* and email address. You must verify your email address. Select Find your neighborhood.
Balcones Heights has a Nextdoor website for your neighborhood, you will automatically be assigned to that neighborhood.
Complete all of the required fields.
Click Sign up.
Finally, verify your address.

For questions or comments contact Newsletter Editor: Chrissie Kolb, Community Relations Manager chrissie@bhtx.gov

City Council Meeting Date Changes:
4th Monday, December 27th – Change to 3rd Monday, December 20th

OCTOBER 2020
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CITY OF BALCONES HEIGHTS
HOLIDAY SCHEDULE
Fiscal Year 2020-21
October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

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<th>Holiday</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>VETERAN’S DAY</td>
<td>November 11, 2020</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>THANKSGIVING</td>
<td>November 26, 2020</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>FRIDAY AFTER</td>
<td>November 27, 2020</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<td>CHRISTMAS EVE</td>
<td>December 24, 2020</td>
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<td>NEW YEARS EVE</td>
<td>December 31, 2020</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW YEARS</td>
<td>January 1, 2021</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY</td>
<td>January 18, 2021</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRESIDENT’S DAY</td>
<td>February 15, 2021</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>BATTLE OF FLOWERS PARADE</td>
<td>April 23, 2021</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL DAY</td>
<td>May 31, 2021</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDEPENDENCE DAY (Observed)</td>
<td>July 5, 2021</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>LABOR DAY</td>
<td>September 6, 2021</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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For questions or comments contact Newsletter Editor: Chrissie Kolb, Community Relations Manager chrissie@bhtx.gov
Monday September 21 thru Friday September 25

Bulky item & brush collections are provided two times per year. For this cycle - bulky and brush material may be put out as early as **Friday, September 18, 2020** – but material must be out no later than **7:00 a.m. on Monday, September 21, 2020** as that is when services commence.

Bulky item collection is provided to all City residential solid waste ratepayers. To find out if you are current on your account contact C-6 Disposal at 210.375.0066.

If you are a resident and current on your account, you are eligible to receive this service. Material must be out no later than 7 a.m. on the Monday of the designated week. Once the truck has passed, it will not return.

**BULKY PILE/BRUSH GUIDELINES:**

Bulky/brush items must be set out no later than 7:00 a.m. of the first day of the scheduled collection.

**Place bulky/brush item piles within two (2) feet of the curb.** Bulky/Brush piles are limited to 8 cubic yards (6' height x 6' width x 6' length). See photo below for a visual of these size limits.

Residents electing to use landscaping or lawn maintenance service to trim trees should have that contractor take the trimmings with them.

- Do not place on curb! Please do not block sidewalks!
- Do not place bulky item piles in front of parked cars, near fences, trees, mailboxes, beneath overhead wires or power lines, low-hanging tree limbs, or on top of water meters.
- Do not place material at the curb after crews have passed by your house. The truck will only pass by once.
- Brush left by commercial tree trimmers or landscapers will not be collected as part of this pick up.

**BULKY ITEMS INCLUDE:**

Bulky items include stoves, refrigerators, water tanks, washing machines, discarded bathroom fixtures, household furniture, mattresses, television sets, and other bulky waste materials commonly found at a residence. Items such as swing sets, plays capes, basketball goals, trampolines etc. must be disassembled before being placed curbside.

**BULKY ITEMS DO NOT INCLUDE:**

Household Hazardous Waste, medical waste, infectious waste, motor oil, tires, batteries, paint, construction debris, remodeling debris, demolition debris, roofing material, dead animals, animal waste, rocks, dirt, stable matter.

**VIOLATIONS:**

Residents will be in violation if any of the conditions below are found:

- Pile contains construction materials (waste resulting construction, remodeling, repair or demolition operations
- Pile contains household hazardous materials, dead animals or stable matter with weights or volumes greater than those described above.
- Pile is obstructed by obstacles, set out directly under powerlines or on top of water mains, placed on sidewalk.
- Pile is set out after crews have passed by your house.

**BULKY ITEM DISPOSAL ALTERNATIVE PICKUP:**

Residents do not have to wait to receive their bulky item collection to get rid of bulky items; C6 disposal offers other services to dispose of these materials (billed separate of quarterly residential trash bill).

**MISSED COLLECTION DUE TO LATE SET OUT:**

If you missed your scheduled collection, call C6 Disposal at 210.375.0066 as soon as possible to learn about other disposal options.

Questions: - Contact C-6 Disposal Systems, Inc. - 210-375-0066
EVERYONE COUNTS!!  There is still time to fill out your census. If you misplaced your census form, or for questions about the Census Bureau, surveys, data products, or general information: Call the Census Customer Service Center at 1.800.923.8282 or 301-763-INFO (4636.) or go to the website: 2020census.gov

SEPTEMBER 2020 CALENDAR

September 22 Planning & Zoning - 6 p.m., if needed
September 28 Regular City Council Meeting 6 p.m. ZOOM
All September & October listing subject to change - see www.bhtx.gov for updates.
Like us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BalconesHeights

SEPTEMBER 2020 CALENDAR

October 6  National Night Out - CANCELLED
October 12  Columbus Day
October 22  Planning & Zoning - 6 p.m. if needed
October 26  Regular City Council Meeting 6 p.m.
October 31  Halloween

BALCONES HEIGHTS MAYOR & CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

Left to right: Miguel Valverde, Councilmember Place 5 & Mayor Pro-Tem; Stephen Lara, Councilmember Place 1; Mayor Suzanne de Leon; Lamar Gillian, Councilmember Place 4; Gloria Cantu, Councilmember Place 2 and John Halpin, Councilmember Place 3.