

The Commissioner's Corner

Augmenting Metro Police patrols will benefit City

THE Board of Commissioners has begun exploring ways to improve police protection and presence in Forest Hills. It is important to note that this is not a reaction to a sudden spike in crime. Forest Hills has been, and continues to be, a very safe place to live.

We do, however regularly receive reports of slow (and at times, no) response from Metro police to burglar alarms, 862-8600 (non-life-threatening calls) and even 911 calls. We feel that augmenting police patrols in Forest Hills will not only dramatically improve response times but will provide other benefits to the City

Among these benefits are:

- Traffic calming and reduced speeding
- Better enforcement of City ordinances
- Crime deterrent due to increased police visibility
- Increased property values due to increased safety

We are currently studying two alternatives. One would be to contract with Metro Nashville for additional police patrols, paid for by the City. (Oak Hill has entered into such a contract which is scheduled to begin July 1st to run for a period of five years). In our opinion there are several drawbacks to going this route, the most notable being the costs measured against the benefits. The cost for one Metro officer and a car under this contract is \$70 per hour. To have one officer on the streets 24 hours per day, 7 days per week would cost over \$600,000 per year.

City Hall update

Commissioners approved at the April 16 meeting creating a committee of residents and a volunteer architect to suggest design and architectural features to begin the process of building a City Hall.

The new building would be on the northeast corner of Old Hickory Boulevard and Hillsboro Pike, property the city currently has under a 50-year lease from Nashville Electric Service.

Last fall the city funded a preliminary engineering site plan review for a 4,000-square foot building on the same site.



John Lovell
Vice Mayor

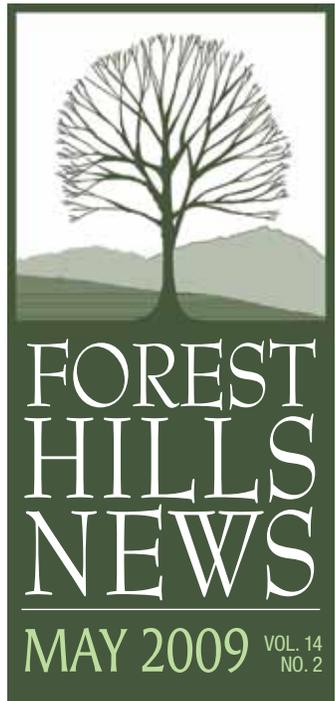
While the City can afford this (see Commissioner Tim Douglas' article on page 5), the Commissioners have some serious reservations about the effectiveness of one patrol car covering our 40 miles of road and 10 square miles of land.

A second alternative would be to contract with another satellite city's police department. Preliminary figures suggest that this route would allow us to double the amount of coverage (two cars round the clock) we would receive under the Metro contract for approximately the same cost. We also see other benefits such as continuity of officers, more control over their deployment and ready access to a court system.

The Board of Commissioners is actively exploring our options in an effort to make Forest Hills an even safer, better place to live.

What's your opinion?

Email comments on the police proposal or your anecdotes and feedback on Metro services in Forest Hills to policecomments@cityofforesthills.com

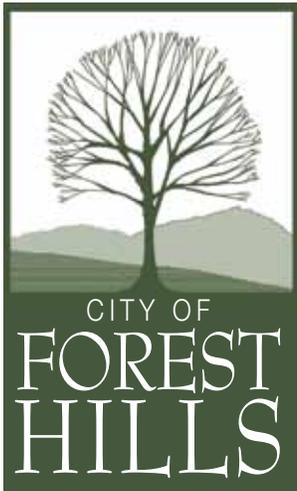


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Twenty cherry trees planted

Parke Brown and his crew plant a cherry tree at the Forest Hills boundary. See page 4.



CITY OF
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William G. Coke, Mayor H 665-1992

John Lovell, Vice Mayor H 371-1716
w 292-9925

Tim Douglas H 221-4323
w 385-7000

City Attorney

Matthew Foster w 256-0500

City Engineer

Brad Bivens w 383-8420

Planning Commission

E. Warner Bass, Chair w 742-6210

Winston Evans, Vice Chair w 259-4685

James C. Gardner III H 665-0936

Em Ghianni H 373-1359

Carroll Kimball 665-8998

Sandy Moore H 373-0239
w 850-2723

George David Waller III H 373-2360

The Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioner also sit on this commission.

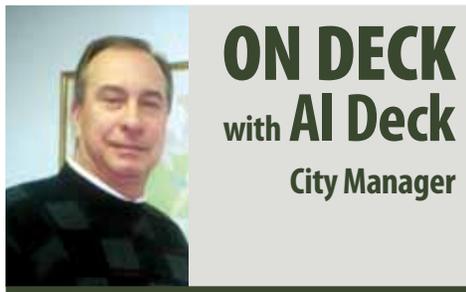
Board of Zoning Appeals

Janie Rowland, Chair H 665-0642

Lanson J. Hyde III H 370-5896
w 550-2600

Jim Littlejohn H 371-0008
w 385-4144

Commissioners meeting
agenda hotline
298-5389



ON DECK
with Al Deck
City Manager

**Three streets
set for repair
this summer**

Tyne Boulevard

The City anticipates repairs along two areas of Tyne.

Area One: Two sections across Tyne, near Beaugard and near Robert E. Lee.

Area Two: About 200 feet of the east bound lane of Tyne, near Stuart Glen

Area One repairs will cause Tyne to be reduced to one-lane traffic. Area Two repairs will cause Tyne to be closed for at least three days.

We anticipate the work occurring during June, with completion by June 26. Because the bidding process is ongoing, we do not have exact dates for this project. As soon as the start date is set, the City will broadcast a message from the website.

Beddington Park

Repair of a utility cut across the in-bound lane, from the Granny White entrance.

Ash Valley

Repair of the in-bound lane, from Tara, cracked section along the sewer line.

Register for email messages

If you are not registered to receive informational messages from the website, please register NOW. Visit cityofforesthills.com and, at the bottom-left corner of the page, enter your email address in the block where it says, "Receive City e-News – Join Email List."

State agency helping City with long-term planning

The Forest Hills Board of Commissioners has approved a one-year partnership beginning July 1 with the Tennessee Office of Local Planning, to help the City with long-term planning issues.

The state agency will provide professional

**Metro replacing
water mains on
Harding Place**

The Metro Water Department will be replacing the water main along Harding Place from Granny White Pike to Belle Meade Boulevard beginning June 8.

At a neighborhood informational meeting May 12 at Julia Green Elementary School, Water Department officials said work will be staggered to avoid rush-hour traffic.

Streets will be reduced to one lane while 12- and 16-inch water main replaces the 8- and 12-inch lines, many of which were installed in the mid-forties and early fifties. Homeowners will be connected to the new service and can expect to be without water for about four hours when workers are in their area.

Lawns will be reseeded when necessary. Temporary paving will be replaced upon completion of the project, expected to take about six months barring weather delays.

**City makes changes
to zoning ordinance**

Forest Hills has amended four sections of its zoning ordinance to better achieve the objectives of the City.

Ordinance 09-186 was recommended by the Planning Commission, reviewed at a public hearing, and approved by the Board of Commissioners at the May 7 meeting.

The ordinance makes several changes to regulations, including:

- New setback rules for corner lots
- New restrictions for accessory buildings
- New requirement that garage doors not face the street
- New definitions of front, side, and rear yards

assistance in putting ordinances and guidelines in place to lead the City's growth in coming years. This may include suggestions for Land Trusts in the City and other issues.

The City will pay \$7250 for the yearlong services.

Coyotes growing bolder in Forest Hills

Ronette Jones on Hillsboro Pike reports that her 50-pound dog was bitten by a coyote recently.

“There were two of them and they were in my back yard, which is almost totally wooded,” she said. “My dog approached them, and I called him off and into the house. Once I got him inside, I realized that the one coyote had actually bitten him in the hindquarters,” she said. Fortunately, her dog’s rabies shots were up-to-date.

The coyotes apparently are getting used to human contact. “They were just outside my back door and were not particularly afraid of me when I yelled for them to get away,” Jones said.

Any size animal may be at risk. “I knew they’d go after the smaller dogs and cats, but I did not expect them to trouble the bigger animals. Guess I was wrong!” said Jones.

Coyote facts

Although coyotes mostly survive in the wild, more and more Forest Hills residents are spotting the animals, which now live in every county in the state.

Coyotes are not really a big problem, says Craig Harper, wildlife specialist with the Agriculture Extension Service at the University of Tennessee. He says coyotes’ arrival in the state has filled a vacant ecological niche once occupied by the red wolf, which preyed on rodents and other small mammals.

In the summer, coyotes’ diets consist mainly of fruits, vegetation, and insects. In the fall and winter they consume more meat, feeding primarily on rodents, but may take

other small animals. Coyotes can be very hostile in protecting their young, and may be dangerous to dogs when doing so. They are usually afraid of humans, but are growing bolder.

Coyotes are generally private animals who fulfill their duties in the ecosystem, and need not be hunted.

“Many people think that coyotes are hunting for deer, quail, or turkeys,” Harper said. “While they may occasionally take a fawn, they’re actually helpful to ground-nesting birds like quail and turkeys by preying on nest predators such as raccoons and possums.”

“Studies have shown that few quail nests are disturbed by coyotes,” he said. “It’s mostly the black rat snake, raccoons, and possums that raid quail nests. So, where present, coyotes may actually help to increase nest success.”

Follow these simple guidelines to keep coyotes at bay if you live near a wooded area:

- Don’t leave pet food outside.
- Walk pets on a leash, especially near dusk or dawn, when coyotes are more likely to be seen.
- Keep outdoor garbage lids closed tightly.
- Don’t leave food outside and unattended for a long period of time.
- ▶ Keep coyotes fearful of humans. If one sees you and does not run away, yell and cause a commotion.



Keep an eye on your pets so they don’t become coyote dinner.



The first tornado siren is installed at Percy Priest School.

Tornado warning siren installed, another planned

The City of Forest Hills has installed a tornado warning siren at Percy Priest School on Otter Creek Road.

A second siren will be installed within six weeks at the NES substation at Old Hickory Boulevard and Hillsboro Pike. NES has agreed to allow the storm warning siren on their property, next to the substation.



Nashville Tree Foundation president Betty Brown and Friends of Warner Parks executive director Eleanor Willis present a handcrafted wooden bowl to Warner Bass in recognition of his Victor Johnson Award.

Twenty trees planted on Hillsboro Pike as part of first Cherry Blossom Festival

The City of Forest Hills has planted 20 cherry trees on either side of Harding Place at the gateway entrance to the city on Hillsboro Pike as part of 100 trees to be planted for the first Nashville Cherry Blossom Festival.

Hiroshi Sato, the Consul-General of Japan in Nashville, presided at the inaugural festival on the Public Square at the Historic Metro Courthouse April 18 when several cherry trees were planted.

A Forest Hills resident and honorary co-chair of the Nashville Cherry Blossom Festival Committee, he said the goal is to plant 100 trees a year for 10 years. Each year 20% of the cherry trees will be planted within Forest Hills.

Clay Jackson, chair of the Forest Hills Cultural and Natural Resources Committee, said the Festival project coordinates perfectly with the City's plan to plant trees along Hillsboro Pike, south of Harding Place. He estimated that the city will need to purchase 142 additional two-caliper trees about seven feet tall, with the goal of planting this fall.

This spring, weeping Yoshino and Akebono cherry trees have been planted in Centennial Park, the median of James Robertson Parkway, the Public Square and Riverfront with Nashville Tree Foundation providing funding for 33 of the trees.

The cherry trees will provide a backdrop for the annual festival.



Japanese Consul-General Hiroshi Sato, a Forest Hills resident, plants a cherry tree on Public Square with Randall Lantz from Metro Parks.

Tree Foundation recognizes Bass for forest efforts

Warner Bass, chair of Forest Hills Planning Commission, received the Nashville Tree Foundation's Victor Johnson Award for his contributions to the Nashville's urban forest at the annual High Tree Party at historic Spring Hill Cemetery recently.

The award is named for the late president and chief executive officer of Aladdin Industries for the impact he had on Nashville's landscape by setting the standard for tree-friendly developers.

"Warner Bass shares Victor's reverence for trees, is passionate about the environment, and epitomizes the Foundation's mission—to preserve and enhance Nashville's urban forest," said Eleanor Willis, a founding member of the Nashville Tree Foundation and executive director of Friends of Warner Parks.

Planning Commission since 1987

A member of the Planning Commission since 1987 and chair since 1995, Bass was one of the founders of Friends of Warner Parks in 1987. He was president of FRIENDS for many years, led the fund raising five years ago to purchase 130 acres near the Park to keep it out of the hands of a developer of multi-family homes, and currently chairs the committee to raise funds to add the 324 acres of undeveloped forest land known as the Hill Tract to the Warner Parks.

Currently Bass is chair of the group that is \$1 million short of the \$10.8 million needed to buy the old growth forest that is appraised at \$17 million. The City of Forest Hills pledged \$100,000 to the campaign in honor of Bass for his stewardship of the city and his work with FRIENDS.

An attorney, Bass is a board member of Land Trust for Tennessee, Tennessee Performing Arts Center since its inception and former chair, Civil War Preservation Trust, and Tennessee chapter of the Nature Conservatory.

Willis presented the grandson of Edwin Warner, for the whom the park is named, a handcrafted bowl made from wood rescued from a maple tree at Warner Parks.



Tim Douglas
Commissioner

Where does the money come from?

IN A RECENT *Green Hills News* article, I responded to a "Ticked Off" column that claimed the Commissioners were not being responsible in their spending plans for the City. I explained that we CAN afford to pay for a police force and build a city hall; and at the same time, we should be able to operate at a surplus and have over \$7 million in the bank, after all is said and done. How can we do that, especially when we levy no property tax? Where does the money come from?

Fund balance of \$9 million

In the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008, the City had \$1.483 million excess revenue over expenditures. (From the audit, revenue was \$2,916,000; and expenditures were \$1,433,000.) Our fund balance at the end of the year grew to almost \$9 million. Our fund balance has grown rapidly over the past several years due to large surpluses. Prudent and conservative financial management has placed Forest Hills on sound financial footing, but the growing wealth of our citizenry has contributed to our increased revenues from Hall Income Tax proceeds.

In the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008, Hall Income Tax revenue was \$1,341,000 while total revenue for the City was \$2,916,000. So, Hall Income Tax is a substantial part of the City's revenue. Residents of the State of Tennessee pay a 6% tax on dividend and interest income. The State keeps $\frac{5}{8}$ of this money for its General Fund, and the State remits $\frac{3}{8}$ of this money back to the City from where this tax was paid. So, the State remits to Forest Hills $\frac{3}{8}$ of the Hall Income Tax paid by Forest Hills residents. (Well, not exactly. If you live in a home that is held in a Trust, for example, and that Trust is administered by a financial institution that has a non-Forest Hills address, this money does not get remitted back to Forest Hills.)

Your Commissioners are concerned—and you should be too—that the State will enact legislation to take away the $\frac{3}{8}$ Hall Income Taxes remitted to the City. What accounts for the other 50%-plus of our revenue sources?

In fiscal year 2008, Forest Hills generated about \$470,000 in interest income

from the City's reserves. However, with the decline in interest rates, this amount will decrease despite the fact that our reserves have increased.

Also in fiscal year 2008, Forest Hills generated about \$440,000 in sales tax revenue. This revenue comes from three principal sources: state sales tax sharing, Davidson County sales tax sharing, and gasoline taxes. In Tennessee, the State sales tax is 7%. The Davidson County "local option" sales tax is 2.25%. So, Davidson County residents pay a total sales tax of 9.25%.

The State shares a portion of its 7% sales tax with cities, and the shared portion is distributed back on a per capita basis. In addition to the State sales tax sharing and some gasoline taxes, Davidson County shares 50% of its sales taxes and returns this to the local government. Revenue from sharing the Davidson County local option sales tax exceeded \$100,000 in 2008, and this revenue should continue.

Revenue generated from fees, permits and similar sources was \$284,000 in fiscal year 2008. This was slightly less than 10% of the City's revenue, and this amount will decline substantially in the current year because of the drop off in residential construction and renovation. And incidentally, the Commissioners are planning to study our fees, permits, and penalty payment structure to ensure that it is appropriate and consistent with surrounding cities and what is normal and customary. We intend to study this once our ordinance is codified, probably beginning in June or July. Other miscellaneous revenue sources are varied, and constitute less than 10% of the total revenue of the City.

Over 6 years' reserves

Expenditures in fiscal year 2008 were about \$1.433 million. At this rate, we have over six years' reserves in our account balances. There were three main areas of expenditures.

The City spent \$752,000 in fiscal year 2008 on streets and roadways. This is for paving, curbing and re-surfacing existing roadways as this work is required; and this amount includes \$142,000 of state street

aid. The Commissioners may elect to defer some of this work at times, but the City must maintain streets and roadways in order to make Forest Hills a desirable place to live.

Public works expenditures amounted to \$239,000 in 2008. Examples of these expenses include money spent for the chipper service, tree trimming, street lights, and maintaining Bison Meadows Park. As we plant Yoshino cherry trees along Hillsboro Pike, construct gateways at various entry points into the City and enhance our landscaping and public open spaces, these costs will likely increase.

General government expenditures were \$438,000 in 2008, and those expenditures consisted of salaries for the City Manager and his assistant, legal bills (\$125,000), engineering costs (\$70,000), other administrative expenses (\$100,000) and related items. In summary, all of the City's expenditures were for streets and roadways, public works and general government expenditures as outlined above.

So, we find ourselves with a healthy reserve balance, approximately \$9 million. This balance built up over the past several years under the stewardship of Mayor Charlie Evers. Bill Coke and John Lovell were actively involved in overseeing the City's finances as well; and City Manager Al Deck and his assistant, Cynthia Despot, have done a good job of managing our assets. But most importantly, it is the citizens of Forest Hills who have directly contributed to our financial well being through their payment of Hall Income taxes to the State, $\frac{3}{8}$ of which get remitted back to Forest Hills.

The Commissioners want property values to increase. We are in the midst of re-writing our Comprehensive Plan, seeking to enhance the City's natural beauty and open spaces. Yes, we can afford a police force (at an annual cost of less than our average annual surplus for the past four years) and a city hall (while maintaining a reserve balance in excess of \$7.0 million)—and all that, with no property tax.

Commissioners authorize reward

The 911 caller who provided the crucial tip to catch the “wooded rapist” who committed several crimes within Forest Hills will receive the \$10,000 reward offered several years ago.

With the recent conviction of Robert Jason Burdick, the Commissioners voted unanimously to award the informant \$10,000 for helping locate the rapist.

Abiding by the terms of the award, the board elected to keep the name of the person anonymous.

“We’re glad it’s been solved because it was really an awful situation for the city,” said Mayor Bill Coke. “Nobody knew when he was going to attack again.”

FOREST HILLS CLEAN TEAM

Saturday, June 13

7–8 a.m.

Percy Priest School
1700 Otter Creek Road

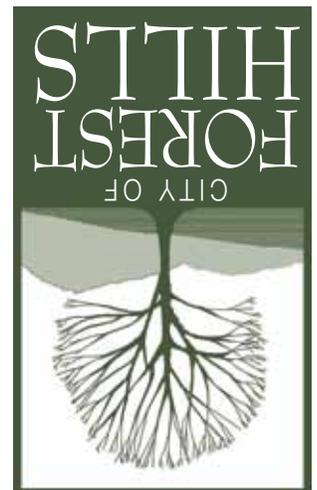
Bring 5 friends with you—a good turnout will spiff up Forest Hills until September.

Thank You
Clean Team Volunteers

We are making a difference in Forest Hills.

Sally Huston • 373-9214 • hustonmkt@comcast.net

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