



City Currents

Summer 2015



Meet Your New City Council

On May 2015, West University Place voters elected the new City Council to serve for a two year period. The results of the election were:

Mayor:

Susan Sample

Council Members:

Bob Kelly, Mayor Pro Tem

Burt Ballanfant

Brennan Reilly

Mardi Turner



Mayor Pro Tem Bob Kelly



Bob Kelly and his wife of 46 years, Linda, have lived in West University Place for 40 years, during which time they raised two daughters: Colleen, a physician, and Susan, an immigration attorney. Bob has

served West University as Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Charter Review Committee member, Parks and Recreation Board member, WU Rotary Club Community Service Excellence Award, President of the West U Elementary PTA, President of the West U Soccer Club, President of the Lamar High School Athletic Booster Club, board member of Tri-Sports Association, board member of the Pershing Middle School and Lamar High School PTA's and head coach West U Girls' Soccer and Softball teams for more than 10 years; he was three times awarded the Certificate of Appreciation from HISD. Bob served five years as a Captain on active duty with the United States Air Force, and holds B.B.A., M.B.A., and J.D. degrees. Bob is rated AV, the highest rating for legal ability and ethical standards, by Martindale-Hubbell and is a Life Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. Bob practiced law in-house with several major corporations for more than 30 years.

Council Member Brennan Reilly



Brennan Reilly and his wife Helena have lived in West University Place for more than 15 years. They have four daughters who currently attend The Arbor School, West U Elementary, Pin Oak Middle

School, and St. Agnes Academy. They attend St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church. Brennan received a B.S. in Economics from Texas A&M University in 1991 and a J.D. with honors from the University of Texas at Austin in 1994. He was admitted to the Texas Bar in 1994. He owns his own law firm with a practice devoted to employee benefits matters. Brennan is active in the West U Community. He is a past member of the West U Parks Board and the Rice Pocket Park Task Force. He is currently a member of West U Rotary, and has served as club treasurer, foundation treasurer, and board member. He is also a current member of the board of the Weekley YMCA, serving on the Outreach Committee. For the last ten years, Brennan has volunteered with the AARP Tax Aide program to prepare tax returns for free at the West U Senior Center. Brennan has also been active with youth sports, serving as a coach and coordinator for Houston Express (formerly West U) soccer club.

Mayor Susan Sample



Susan Sample is serving her first term as Mayor of the City of West University Place. She previously served two terms on the City Council, serving as Mayor Pro Tem in both terms, before being elected for Mayor in May

2015. She is a native Houstonian and has been a West U resident since 2005. A product of HISD schools, Susan went on to do her undergraduate work at Rice University and obtained a law degree and a masters in accounting from University of Texas. She currently works as an attorney for Shell and previously for Fulbright & Jaworski in the Tax Controversy section.

Prior to being elected to city council, Susan served on the board of directors of Friends of West U Parks. She currently serves on the board of SPARK Park as vice president and is a sustaining member of the Junior League of Houston. Professionally, she serves on the boards of the Houston CPA Society and the Texas Society of CPAs. She is also a 10-year committeeman with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Susan is married to Michael Larsson, who actively serves as a member of West U Rotary, and has three year-old twins.

Council Member Burt Ballanfant



Council Member Burt Ballanfant was elected to the West U City Council in May 2015. Mr. Ballanfant is a fifth generation Houstonian who graduated from Lamar High School and the University of

Texas and University of Texas Law School. After law school, he joined the United States Attorney's Office in Houston where he was twice named an outstanding Assistant United States Attorney. He has been an attorney for Shell Oil Company since 1980.

He previously served on the METRO Citizen Advisory Board and has been a 30-year mass transit user in Houston. He served six years on the West University City Council, the last four as Mayor. During that time, he has also served as President of the Harris County Council of Mayors and Councils.

Among other civic activities, he was a member of the Battleship Texas Commission and President of Concerned Citizens for Washington Cemetery Care while that historic cemetery was merged with Glenwood Cemetery. He is married to Sarah Cobb Ballanfant and has three children; Andrea, Ben and Amy.

Council Member Mardi Turner



Mardi Turner was elected to the City Council in 2015. She has been a resident of West University Place for more than 20 years with her husband, Mark. She has a degree in mathematics from Northwestern

University and masters in business administration from Rider University in New Jersey. Mardi has a background in information technology, specializing in the design and implementation of large banking systems. Mardi served the City as a member of the Traffic Task Force, the Recycling and Solid Waste Management Committee, the Parks and Recreation Board and the Recreational Facilities Master Planning Citizens Task Force. This last group helped with design decisions for both Colonial Park and the Recreation Center. She has also been a volunteer/docent at the Houston Zoo for fourteen years.





Civic engagement is a topic that often comes up when I meet many of you. What is the best way to get involved? How do we stay informed on city projects? Where should I go to make sure my voice is heard? These are questions that come up and many believe attending a City Council meeting or emailing your City Council is the best way. We agree; it is a way of reaching us. But there are many other more efficient ways to interact with your city government without sacrificing time at home. With the launch of the new city website www.westutx.gov you are now able to leave your feedback on the West U Sidewalk platform; an online board where opinions are respectfully submitted on timely topics. Your City Council will be listening and reviewing the comments posted on this board. Don't have a question, but would like more information on city financials? You can now access live, up to date financial data on the City's OpenGov platform on the new website. You can access historical data on city financials or simply look for expenses on a certain project or topic. Our goal is to be as transparent as possible and to offer you the opportunity to interact at any time and from anywhere. I look forward to hearing your thoughts!

West U Online

We are now online! The City of West University Place launched in June its new website www.WestUTX.gov. The website underwent a redesign process and has added functionality for residents to interact with city government. The new site has a cleaner, easier layout to navigate. Citizens and their local government will be able to communicate and interact in enhanced ways through the new featured modules:



- Participate in community discussions on upcoming projects by visiting West U Sidewalk; an online platform with topics designed to inform you of upcoming projects and gather your input or questions.
- Newsflash: sign up to receive email and text alerts when information is posted on our website. From community events to emergency alerts, the information comes to you!
- OPENGOV: a new financial data platform that provides residents and city officials unprecedented access to the city's budget information. The powerful visualization software transforms volumes of raw data into actionable insight and information, enabling better analysis and understanding of the city's budget.

With the new website, the City of West University Place will be able to increase its community engagement and enhance the communication between residents and the local government.

Visit our site today to learn about the new tools at your fingertips. Stay connected to your community and the things that matter most to you.

Parks and Recreation

Friends of West U Parks

October 3 and 4 is the weekend for the next highly anticipated family campout known throughout our community and beyond. This will be the 9th year for the campout which has become instrumental in raising funds for the continued improvement and development of West U parks. Campers can look forward to an afternoon of fun activities such as live catch and release fishing, pony rides, an obstacle course, and much more, thanks to Friends underwriters, sponsors and in kind donors who make this event possible. Kelly and Sean Butler, Kristine and Joaquin Martinez, and Kara and Curt Schaefer are the event co- chairs for F & F 2015. "We are excited to have these dynamic and hard working couples co-chairing one of the neighborhoods' most popular events," says Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond. Registration for the campout will be online only. To be eligible to participate in the event, you must be zoned to attend West University Elementary School, or be an underwriter or sponsor at the Outback level or above. Returning 2014 camper registration will be on August 18. New camper registration will be on August 20. Registration details will be emailed and available on the Friends website, www.westuparks.org. To receive any Fathers & Flashlights emails, please visit the Friends website and sign up to receive the newsletter. If you have received emails in the past from Friends and your email address has changed, please email or call the Friends office at (713) 662-7430 or email Donna LaMond at DLaMond@WestUTX.gov.



Friends Star Citizen Awards were presented at the May 13 Friends board meeting and annual appreciation luncheon. Awards were presented to the Cheng family, the Gilder family, the Gumbert family for co-chairing Fathers & Flashlights, Michele and Charles Still, Adrienne and William Vanderbloemen, and Christi and John Young for co-chairing Park Lovers' Ball 2015 held last February which raised over \$263,000 (net) for our parks. A Star Citizen Award was

also presented to Susie Boyce for her many contributions to Friends over the years. Susie has served on the Friends board since 2005. Mayor Bob Fry presented the awards.

Park Lovers' Ball 25th Anniversary — Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 13, 2016 as we celebrate 25 years of the ball at the Omni Hotel, co-chaired by Judy and Comfort Cheng and Michele and Paul Marvin. The event will collectively honor all of the past Park Lovers' Balls chairs.



Special Events

Members Only Dive-In Movie

Colonial Park Pool will close at 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 18 and reopen from 7:30–9:30 p.m. for special Colonial Park Pool “members only” dive-in movie. All attendees must have a current Colonial Park Pool membership in order to enter the facility. Like other Dive-In Movies, the whole family can enjoy the movie from either the grass or the pool, but unlike other dive-in movies, members have it all to themselves. For more information about the showing, please visit www.westutx.gov/events or call at Colonial Park Pool (713) 662-7460.

Members Only

July 18
Big Hero 6, Rated PG

Dive-In Movie Series

Join us at Colonial Park Pool from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. on August 7 and 21 for this year’s Dive-in Movie Series. Enjoy a family friendly movie from the grass or pool. Admission to the movie will be complimentary; however, if you or your children would like to enjoy the movie from the pool, regular pool admission fees do apply. For more information about scheduled movies, fees and event details please visit www.westutx.gov/events or call at Colonial Park Pool (713) 662-7460 or the West U Recreation Center at (713) 662-7420.



Dive-in #1
August 7
Dolphin Tale 2, Rated PG

Dive-in #2
August 21
Toy Story, Rated G

Fall 2015 Class Registration

Discover a new craft or polish a skill for great benefits without investing a lot of time or money. Most fall classes begin in September and include dance, tennis, pilates, yoga for adults and kids, swimming, gymnastics, CPR, and so much more!

***Priority Registration (for those enrolled in classes within the past 30 days)**

Tuesday, July 28 –Monday, August 3

*online registration is not available

Resident Registration

Thursday, August 4

Non-Resident Registration

Thursday, August 6

Complete your registration online at www.westutx.gov/reg or come by the Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire, to sign up. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, personal checks, and cash are accepted. For more information, visit www.westutx.gov/parks or call (713) 662-7420.



Facility Maintenance

The West University Place Recreation Center will be closed August 23 through August 31 for annual maintenance.

West U Recreation Center swimming pool users may use the UTHHealth Auxiliary Enterprises Recreation Center swimming pool, located 7779 Knight Road in Houston, during the closure per our exchange agreement. You must show your valid West U Rec Center Membership Card for entry. Log onto www.uthouston.edu/recreation-center, or call (713) 500-8420 for hours and updated pool schedule information. Please note this exchange is for pool and locker room use and not valid for weight room, cardio room, racquetball membership or other areas of use.

During the closure, customers may call or visit Colonial Park Pool to sign up for classes, make tennis/racquetball/pavilion reservations, purchase memberships, or get general Parks and Recreation information. Recreation Center staff will be temporarily relocated on-site at Colonial Park Pool, 4130 Byron, to conduct day-to-day business during the closure week.

The West University Place Recreation Center will resume normal operational schedule at 12:00 p.m. August 31, 2015.

For more information, please visit www.westutx.gov or call:

- West U Rec Center: (713) 662-7420 (this number will be rolled over to Colonial Park Pool during the closure week)
- Colonial Park Pool: (713) 662-7460

Vegetation Continues to Cause Problems for West U Drivers and City Vehicles

One of West U's greatest features is the abundance of trees and shrubs throughout the City. Unfortunately, it is also a growing problem that not only affects motorists daily, but also City services ranging from public safety to trash/recycling collection and street sweeping.

It is important to remember that the care and maintenance of vegetation in the right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner. Many property owners are unaware that they can be held liable for damages caused by vegetation hanging to low or extending into the roadway. Additionally, property owners can also be held liable for contributing to accidents when vegetation obscures a regulatory sign (i.e. stop sign) or interferes or blocks a driver's visibility as they are approaching cross traffic at an intersection.

Regulatory Sign Obstruction:

City crews provided a courtesy trimming at this location due to the severity of the obstruction, but it is up to property owners for on-going continual maintenance.



Regular trimming is required around and in front of regulatory signs (i.e. stop, speed, school or park zone, etc.) to ensure the vegetation does not obscure the sign from view. A good way to verify if the vegetation needs to be trimmed is to look at the sign from four property lots away (approx. 200' ft.), if the full sign cannot be seen, the vegetation

needs to be trimmed. This may also mean that owners up to four lots away from a stop sign may need to trim vegetation as well.

Above are a before and after photos of a stop sign sight visibility obstruction.

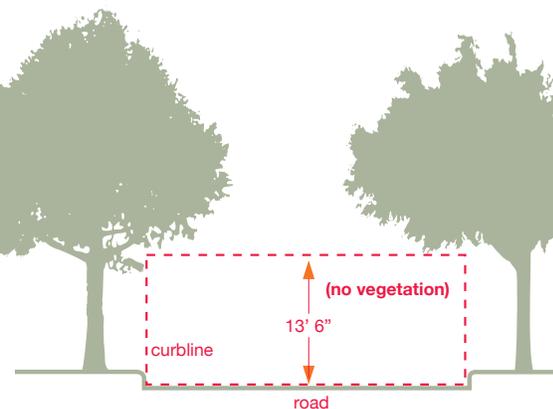
Clearance Over Roadways:

The City requires vegetation over the roadway be maintained at a minimum height of 13'-6" extending from curb to curb (see diagram 1). This ensures adequate clearance for all types of vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances, garbage trucks, street sweeper, etc.) that are on the road daily providing essential City services or simply passing thru.

A good rule of thumb when determining if you need to trim your trees is to look at the street-lights, if the limbs are below the top of the light, then they need to be trimmed. The top of the light is approximately 15 feet above the street.

Remember to provide continual ongoing maintenance throughout the year to ensure your trees are the proper height and your shrubs do not block any regulatory signs.

If you have any questions concerning road or sign clearance or tree height, please contact the West U Public Works Department at (713) 662-5839.



Minimum Road Clearance

The care and maintenance of all trees in the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner.

How to Increase Revenue from Our Recycling

We all know recycling is good for our planet. In addition, recycling also provides economic benefit to our City by generating revenue from the sale of recyclables as opposed to the expense of trashing these valuable commodities. Analysis of our curbside recycling has shown that approximately nine percent of what we placed in our bins didn't belong there (it either couldn't be recycled at the facility or belonged in the trash). This contamination rate of nine percent reduced our recycling revenue. In 2014, our City received almost \$34,000 from the sale of more than 2,000 tons of curbside recyclables. Our revenue stream would have been even greater had we been more careful in what we placed in our bins and making sure all items conformed to our curbside guidelines. Use the chart below to help inform you and improve your curbside effort for everyone's benefit. We would also ask you to refer to the recycling information posted on the City's website at www.westutx.gov/recycle.

Material	YES / NO Blue Bin	Information
Cardboard, food boxes, cartons, mail, paper, metal cans/tins, glass bottles and jars, plastics #1–5, #7	✓	Place in your blue bin for recycling. Items should be empty and rinsed if necessary. Leave tops on plastic bottles.
Plastic Bags/Film	✗	<p>PROBLEM: Plastic bags and film interfere with the sorting process and can even bring the process to a complete halt until the bags are untangled from the equipment.</p> <p>SOLUTION: Recycle plastic bags, newspaper sleeves, cleaners' bags, packing pillows, bubble wrap at your local grocery store or at the City of Houston Consumer Recycling Center (COHCRC) on Westpark.</p>
Styrofoam	✗	<p>PROBLEM: Cannot be recycled curbside. Slows down the sorting process.</p> <p>SOLUTION: Recycle at COHCRC on Westpark or take block Styrofoam/peanuts to local pack and ship for reuse.</p>
Food Waste & Scraps	✗	<p>PROBLEM: Food can contaminate otherwise good recyclables, causing them to be trashed and revenue lost. Food cannot be processed with clean paper and can ruin a newly made product. Too much contamination is the reason manufacturers reject tons of recyclable paper each year.</p> <p>SOLUTION: Compost vegetable and fruit scraps in your backyard, along with coffee grounds, tea bags, leaves and yard waste.</p>
#6 Plastics	✗	<p>PROBLEM: Currently, #6 plastics cannot be recycled locally. Including them with your recycling slows down the recycling process and results in increased costs for the City as well as reduced revenue.</p> <p>SOLUTION: Find a creative reuse for #6, reduce use or trash it.</p>
Household Hazardous Waste	✗	<p>PROBLEM: Including HHW with your recyclables can result in an entire truckload being trashed. They can completely contaminate a load of recyclables, cause fires at the recycling plant and posing danger to those working the sorting line.</p> <p>SOLUTION: Obtain a voucher from the City for proper disposal.</p>
Paper with Excessive Grease or Food on it	✗	<p>PROBLEM: Food and grease can contaminate otherwise good recyclables and cause them to be trashed. Revenue is lost.</p> <p>SOLUTION: Remove all food waste from containers. Pizza box bottoms with excessive grease should not be included in recycling.</p>

City Currents

A Newsletter for the citizens of
City of West University Place

Summer 2015



City of West University Place
3800 University Blvd.
West University Place, TX 77005

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CITY OF WEST U OFFICIALS

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS Mayor Susan Sample
Mayor Pro-Tem Bob Kelly
Burt Ballanfant
Brennan Reilly
Mardi Turner

CITY MANAGER Michael Ross
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GENERAL INFORMATION (713) 668-4441

CITY WEBSITE www.westutx.gov

City Currents is a quarterly publication
and is printed on recycled paper.

For questions and comments about *City Currents*,
contact Maura Leon Barber at (713) 662-5384 or
mleon@westutx.gov.

Design by Minor Design

Pet Etiquette

Warm weather encourages us to enjoy the outdoors, often bringing our pets with us. Help keep your dog and our City safe by keeping your dog on a leash or in an enclosure at all times. Besides being the law, using a leash prevents your dog from running into traffic or accosting other pets, and it keeps other people safe from unwelcome interactions with your dog. While out walking, please be sure to clean up after your pet to avoid spreading disease and waste. It is the law to do so. You are also required to register your pet with the city's Animal Control Officer. The cost is \$20 for a lifetime registration.

Bring a copy of the pet's rabies vaccination papers to the Public Works Building, 3826 Amherst, and fill out the registration form available there. You will receive a tag to keep as proof of registration. Your pet should wear the tag along with the rabies tag to help Animal Control identify your pets should they leave your yard or become lost. Periodically, make sure that all enclosures where your pets are kept are secure. For more information or to ask questions, please contact the Animal Control Officer at (713) 662-5831.

Benefits of Being 65 years old in West University Place

Did you know the city of West University Place provides a discount on trash removal if you are 65 years or older? A trip to the Finance Department, located at 3800 University Blvd, with a document that has your birth date and current address (a copy of your driver's license) is all you need to begin this process.

Do you require assistance with your trash removal due to physical limitations? Please contact the Community Building (713) 662-5896 or stop by 6104 Auden Street for specific details.

Need to register your pet? As a senior resident you also get a discount on this service. To receive this discount, bring your same documentation and a copy of your pet's rabies vaccination certificate to the Public Works office located at 3826 Amherst (up to three pets per house).

Do you pay property tax? The city also gives \$185,000.00 exemption off the appraised value of your property. To qualify, you will need to visit the Harris County Appraisal District website at www.hcad.org/pdf/forms/2014/11-13.pdf and complete the form, requesting the appropriate exemption; surviving spouse exemption, age 65 or older exemption and the general residence homestead exemption.

Looking for something for you or your parent to do? The Community Building offers an array of activities, lectures, trips, and classes. If you need additional information about any of these services or programs, please contact the Community Building at (713) 662-5896 or the website at www.westutx.gov/seniorservices.

