



City of University Park

THE ARBOR

Number 63, July 2008 City of University Park, Texas, 3800 University Blvd., University Park, Texas 75205 www.uptexas.org 214-363-1644

UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

**Tuesday, July 22nd
5:00 p.m.
City Hall,
Modular Building**

**Tuesday, August 12th
5:00 p.m.
City Hall,
Modular Building**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- 08 Citizen of the Year named
- UPFD forms honor guard
- City creates separate Community Development Department



Residential fire sprinkler ordinance set to take effect



Beginning August 1, all new single-family homes and duplexes in University Park must be equipped with automatic fire sprinklers.

This past January, on a 5-0 vote, the City Council approved the ordinance requiring that step. To allow local builders and residents time to become familiar with the measure, the Council delayed enforcement of the ordinance for six months. As part of that familiarization process, the fire department recently conducted a workshop for area builders so that ordinance specifics could be discussed in detail. Representatives from residential sprinkler and piping manufactures were also on hand to answer questions

Some sprinkler system installations have already begun

By ordinance the City's fire marshal must review and approve each sprinkler system. Once the system is installed, fire department personnel must also test and inspect each system. As of late June, the fire marshal had reviewed design plans and given fire code approval to five single-family homes in University Park. The installation process is now underway at all five sites.

Additional information and background

Although homeowners will not be required to install sprinklers in conjunction with smaller-scale residential "add-on" projects, sprinklers will be required in existing one- and two-family dwellings when all new or previous additions exceed 3,000 square feet and when the total additions exceed 30 percent of the original floor area.

Three residents have been killed in residential fires in University Park since 2000. None of those homes was equipped with sprinklers.

From January 2000 to November 2007, there were 97 building fires in University Park. Seventy-seven percent of those occurred in one- and two-family dwellings.

In 2007, University Park issued 147 single-family construction permits. Industry officials place sprinkler system installation costs at between \$1.25 - 2.00 per square foot.



In 2007, the average price for a newly constructed single-family home in University Park was \$1.2 million. Using that average sale price, most sprinkler

installations are likely to amount to less than one percent of the overall value of the home.

Advocate for barrier-free facilities named 2008 Citizen of the Year



Chris Murzin has been named the City's 2008 Citizen of the Year. Chris has been at the forefront of local accessibility issues to help better the lives of those who are disabled or physically challenged.

As the parent of a child with special needs, Chris is acutely aware of how difficult it can be for those who are in a wheelchair or who are otherwise physically limited to go from place to place without difficulty. A former board member for United Cerebral Palsy in Houston, Chris and his family moved to University Park in 2006. Since that time he has helped the City to identify and improve the accessibility of curbs and sidewalks in numerous locations. He has also discussed accessibility matters with HPISD officials and PTA members.

Chris was nominated for the honor by a fellow resident. An attached letter read in part, "Perhaps his most significant contribution to date is his coordination of a citizen-based fund drive to build a barrier-free playground at Coffee Park." In assessing the need for such a facility in University Park, Chris points to the estimated six million children nationally - more than one in ten - who have a disability which makes it difficult or impossible to play on traditional playgrounds. Adults with disabilities also face difficulties playing with or supervising children due to design and accessibility shortcomings.

Traditionally, resident and corporate donations have funded park playground equipment in University Park. Due largely to the cost of a poured-in-place rubberized surface, for wheelchair accessibility, the cost of installing a barrier-free playground at Coffee Park is estimated at \$300,000.

In launching the fund raising effort and to increase community awareness, Chris recently coordinated a "What's the Buzz" event to collect donations from residents for haircuts and nail treatments. Chris and his friends also helped raise money for the barrier-free playground project on Independence Day when they participated in the City's first "Firecracker Fun Run." (Race registration fees were donated to the project).

In appreciation for his service to the community, following the annual July 4th Park Cities Parade, which he and his family rode in, Chris received a plaque from Mayor James "Blackie" Holmes.



The Murzin family (left to right) Caroline, Christina, Dutch, Chris and Jack.

The Citizen of the Year Award was initiated in 2005 by the City Council to heighten public awareness and appreciation for the many residents who work, often behind the scenes, to better the City's quality of life. The City acknowledges that while such residents aren't fueled by a desire for civic recognition, their efforts, whether aimed at protecting our local environment, beautifying our neighborhoods, increasing local opportunities for our youth or raising money for various worthy projects, all demonstrate a level of citizenship that helps make University Park such a special place to live.



Conceptualized drawing of Coffee Park's barrier-free playground.

Fire Department forms Honor Guard



Since last spring, the six members of the new University Park Fire Department Honor Guard have put in dozens of hours of practice preparing for their public debut. All their hard work has paid off. In the past several weeks, in addition to participating in the City's first

appreciation/awards dinner and welcoming ceremonies for the City's new Fire Chief, the group had the honor of leading the procession in the annual July 4 Park Cities Parade.

Envisioned by Engineer/Paramedic Rusty Massey and encouraged by Deputy Fire Chief Shane LeCroy, the group was established to honor the traditions of the fire service by representing the department at awards ceremonies, parades, area sporting events and certain memorial services and funerals. Prior to beginning their public duties, the honor guard attended a two-day seminar

hosted by the Lewisville Fire Department. Later this year the group plans to attend a week-long training session at the National Honor Guard Academy.

In addition to Engineer/Paramedic Massey, who is honor guard commander, the group includes Firefighter/Paramedic Paul Abel, Firefighter/Paramedic Brandon Ferguson, Engineer/Paramedic Terry Fowler, Engineer/Paramedic George Jones and Firefighter/Paramedic Joe Watkins. In keeping with the often solemn nature of their activities, Honor Guard members will be required to exhibit the highest degree of professionalism and character at all times.



Above: Honor Guard members participate in the recent Pinning Ceremony for Chief Randy Howell.

City creates separate Community Development Department



The City has created a separate Community Development Department, incorporating all aspects of planning, zoning and building inspection. This move reorganizes the Building Division currently

in the Public Works Department. This will improve the quality of service provided to the community and establish better and more thorough processes for planning and inspection functions.

Having served in various capacities with the City since being hired in 2004, Robbie Corder has been named

Acting Director of the new department. Under this new structure, all planning and building functions will report to Robbie, who in turn will report directly to City Manager Bob Livingston.

Factors driving creation of a Community Development Department

- With a director managing building inspections daily, the planning staff can concentrate on the myriad of zoning changes that are likely to be enacted by the City Council in the coming months.

See Development Department, Page 4

City news briefs

Fire Department provides free child safety seat inspections



Statistics compiled by State Farm Insurance indicate that four out of five child car seats are improperly installed. To help reduce that troubling figure, the University Park Fire Department has five certified child safety seat inspectors. Each can educate parents and grandparents on

the proper use, placement and installation of child safety seats (infant carriers, booster seats, lap/shoulder belts). This free service is available for residents of University Park and Highland Park and anyone else who lives in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and needs assistance.

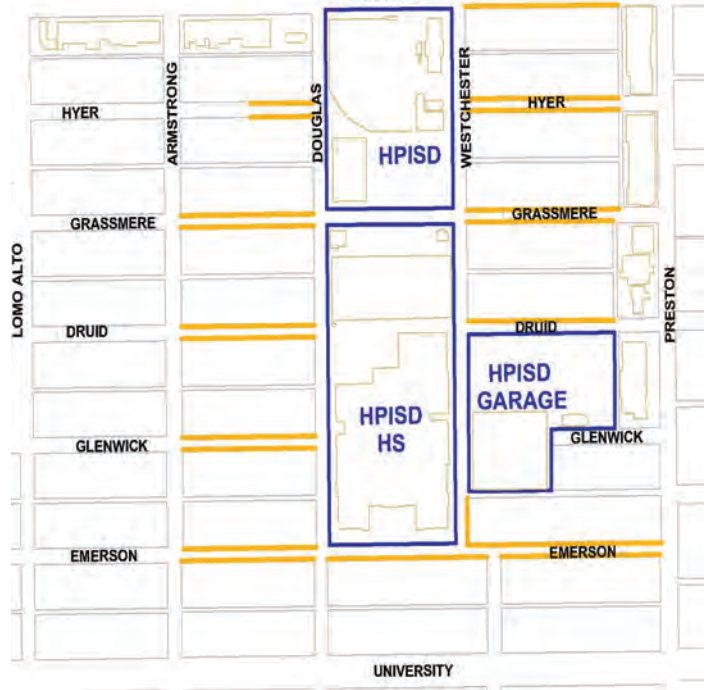
Since early 2007, when the department began offering these inspections, more than 100 reviews have been conducted, and a number of unsafe or outdated seats (manufactured more than six years ago) have been taken out of service. The program, currently offered by a handful of fire and police departments in North Texas, is made possible through a grant supported by the Texas Department of Transportation. Training is managed by the Passenger Safety Certification program at Texas A&M. Certified inspectors must successfully complete a combination of course work and hands-on training. Recertification is required every two years. To arrange for an inspection, call UPFD at 214-987-5383.

High school neighborhood parking stickers available August 1

Residents who want to park vehicles on one of the streets adjacent to Highland Park High School during the coming 08-09 academic year must have a valid parking sticker on the outside of the vehicle's rear window. This annual effort helps control students from taking up the limited amount of on-street space in those neighborhoods.

The 08-09 stickers, which display the University Park logo, will be available at City Hall beginning Friday, August 1. The stickers are free and are valid for the full academic year. Proof of residency is needed to obtain a sticker (limit of two per household). The stickers must be picked up at the Police Department at the City's Peek

Service Center, 4420 Worcola (just east of North Central Expressway, just south of Yale) during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday), or after hours at the police/fire dispatch window (first floor).



Parking sticker streets (marked in gold) as of August 1, 2008.

Development Department

Continued from Page 3

- Although the use of an outside contractor to perform plan reviews has reduced the backlog of plans awaiting approval, more attention is needed to coordinate this outside review.
- Since 2000 the City has issued an averaged of 120 single-family building permits (New Construction) a year. Despite the fact that the volume of building and remodeling activity is beginning to decline, a number of complex projects are on the horizon that will challenge the building review process.
- In the 1980s a similar reorganization was successful when the City created a separate Parks Department to improve the quality of services for the City's greenspaces.