



MARY ESTHER CITY REVIEW

www.cityofmaryesther.com

May 2005

Comments or questions? Call 243-3566.

CITY ADMINISTRATION

City Wide Curb Service Survey Results. Thank you for your excellent participation in the survey! The results were overwhelmingly in favor of **NOT** contracting with City Wide to provide the service to our residents, which means that you will not have a fee added to your bill each month. Of the 178 responses received, only 12 were in favor.

April Rains Update. What an unusual month! The "no joke" rains on the 1st filled our coffers abundantly with 9-11 inches, which wreaked havoc on the storm water drains in many places of our City.



Just a few days later on the 6th it started again, with 5 1/2 inches in just 3 hours and another 3 inches by morning settling on the streets with no where else to go. With over 17 inches of rain in less than a week, our storm water drains were tasked beyond capacity, and there were 6 residents who had rising water inside their homes, as well as one business and Mary Esther Elementary School. Many streets and yards contained knee deep water, which was gone for the most part within several hours.

Records from Eglin AFB show that this is the wettest March and April since 1940, with 25 1/2" just since March 26th and 38" already this year! Our average yearly rainfall is about 62 1/2", and we usually have about 19" at this point of the year. Last year was also above average, with just under 71".

The City maintains a storm water plan, and improvements are always included in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan and completed as funding becomes available, often ahead of schedule. We try our best to resolve individual concerns of our citizens, recognizing that **you** are the ones that we serve. The City Staff is

here to help you, and we encourage you to call and let us know of any unusual situations.

Grants Update. The two active FRDAP grants for improvements to **South Bryn Mawr Park** and **Oak Tree Nature Park** are still progressing nicely. Thanks to the Emerald Coast Archaeological Society, the footbridge at the Silver Sands Creek at Doolittle Boulevard has been safely placed and is nearly completed. The gazebo has been chosen for the South Bryn Mawr Park "triangle," but will not be installed until later this year. Neighborhood residents input on equipment for the park is still needed, so please come to the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting on May 3rd at 5:30 p.m. or call Sylvia Larsen at 244-5456 or Laura Aldrich at 243-3566, extension 11 for more information.

The CDBG project is in the engineering stage for renovations to the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

The Library grant is in the architectural design phase. Many fundraising activities are underway! Stop by or call for details. Your help is urgently needed!

Legal News. Ordinances 2004-13, **Xeriscape** (landscape requirements) (Jan. 05); 2004-14, **Rezoning for-PMDD** on Cash's and Hunan property (Jan. 05); 2005-1, **Cable Franchise** (Feb. 05); 2005-02 **Fire Prevention Protection** (April 05); and 2005-03, **Rezoning C-2 to R-2** (April 05) were all approved by the Council. In the consideration stage is 2005-04 regarding private lift stations.

Resolutions that were approved included 2005-01, **Legislative Priorities and Mandated Library Internet Filtering Opposition.** Resolution 2005-03 is up for approval at the May 2nd Legislative meeting, and is patterned after a Florida League of



Cities resolution which supports a 2006 ballot amendment to the Florida constitution requiring a periodic review of all sales tax exemptions and exclusions.

Two Proclamations were approved, recognizing **Municipal Clerks Week** May 1st through 7th and **May as Civility Month**. The City also recognized **National Public Works Week** on April 22nd in appreciation of our Maintenance and Water Departments.

FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION

Hurricane Reimbursement Status. We have started to see some of the reimbursement from FEMA and the State for the funds spent on debris cleanup and damaged property. To date the City has received \$226,369, or a little over 1/3 of our expenses. We are still working to get everything repaired.

Budget The budget cycle for FY05/06 is rapidly approaching, so if you are interested in how the City uses your tax dollars or have anything you would like to see done in the City in the next fiscal year please come to the workshops.



Utility Billing. If you have questions concerning your water bill just call 244-0152 anytime 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, enter your account number and the information is available to you. Remember, the City offers electronic debit for water bills. This feature has been working very well for the last two years, with about 13% of our customers enjoying this option. Questions or suggestions for the Finance or Administrative staff are welcomed. Please contact Tim Spellman, extension 18.

MAINTENANCE

The Maintenance crew is continuing with recovery efforts from the

hurricane and flooding, with several sinkholes and storm water drain challenges cropping up. Contractors to repair some of the items are still behind schedule, and we truly appreciate your patience with us as we are at their mercy.

Meanwhile, maintaining and improving the appearance of your parks and recreational facilities, highway medians and streets throughout the City keeps us very busy. The Southeast Oak Tree Nature Park foot bridge is nearly completed, and the Western bridge will follow soon after.

The pier at Misty Water Lane has been delayed in reconstruction efforts by DEP, but we are hopeful that will soon be resolved and water activities can resume there.

PLANNING/ZONING and CODE COMPLIANCE

Temporary Canopies and Carports: Canvas canopies stretched over a light metal frame, heavy metal frames with metal roofed carports and aluminum awnings are temporary in nature, but have been springing up all over the City. Most of these carports are located in the side yards; however, there were several carports located in the front yards.

Your Land Development Code (LDC) restricts what can be erected in the front yards. If your front yard is 25 feet from the front wall to the property line, chances are you do not have enough area to erect a temporary carport. The LDC stipulates, *“Accessory Structures: In all low density residential areas in the City, a detached garage or other detached structure whose dimensions equal or exceed two hundred (200) square feet may be constructed to within seven and a half (7 ½) feet of the side and rear lot lines provided the minimum front setback of the structure is seventy (70) feet from the front property line. Small utility sheds (under two hundred (200) square feet), screen pool enclosures, cabanas, greenhouses and the like may be constructed to within three and a half (3 ½) feet of the side and rear lot lines; open carports may be*



constructed to the side lot line. No accessory structure including open carports shall extend forward of the front of the dwelling or encroach into the required front yard” (Reference Article 7.15.01.J.3). The LDC was enacted in 1991.

There are several residents throughout the City who've had these temporary carports and/or aluminum awnings secured to the front of their homes without the required authorization, a building permit, and without regard to City ordinances. Most of our residents over the past several months have called to ask if these structures were permitted and if not, why. If you have such a structure on front of your residence, it may be a non-conforming structure and it may be required to be removed. The City has the obligation to right past wrongs, whether due to an oversight by City personnel or by an omission by the owner. The City will not force you to remove the non-conforming structure; however, if a catastrophic event damages the structure beyond economic repair, it

must comply with City ordinances and codes, which ban such structures from being reconstructed. However, there are avenues to pursue to allow for construction of such structures. One is to have the ordinances amended permitting such structures and another is to request a variance from the City Council.

If you are planning to purchase one of these temporary canvas carports or have an aluminum awning or a metal carport attached to your residence, check with the City Zoning Division to determine if the structure is permitted and where it can be located on your property. If you have any questions regarding temporary structures and locations, please call.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department is excited that soon, at no expense to the taxpayers, renovations to the Fire Station to accommodate a new ladder truck for the City will commence.



This is a result of the requirements for a planned mixed use development to be constructed at the site of Cash's Liquors and Hunan's Restaurant.

STEP-UP, Mary Esther!

The 2nd Annual Step-Up, Mary Esther fitness event at the Santa Rosa Mall was a success, with a 218% increase in walkers! Prizes were awarded to 15% of the participants from several Mary Esther businesses. Thanks to all who participated!



Regular Meetings

Last Mon.	7 p.m.	Workshop
First Mon.	7 p.m.	Legislative
Last Wed.	5:30	OTNPMAC
First Tues.	5:30	Parks & Rec.
Third Mon.	5:30	Code Enforc.
Second Tue.	6 p.m.	Trans. Cmt.

Check online for latest postings at <http://calendar.yahoo.com/cityofmaryesther>

STOP STORM WATER BACKUP

Did you know that those who live in Mary Esther are each responsible for keeping leaves, grass clippings and other debris out of the gutters, off the streets and sidewalks? Much of the problem that results in clogged storm water drains is caused by this, and often it is your neighbors who are affected!

Please help to prevent this by ensuring that no grass clippings are disposed of by tossing behind the backyard fence or are blown into the gutters or street. Composting your yard waste is a very ecological option. When a heavy rain is forecasted, you may want to check for debris buildup on grates for nearby storm drains. For more information, contact the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) on the internet at www.epa.gov/nps or www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater.

Water (Collections) Dept.

The staff has been working 7 days a week trying to keep up with repairs to the infrastructure caused by all of the storm water infiltration these past two months in addition to their normal workload.