

September, 2019 Column

It has been one heck of a month being mayor of our fair City of Seguin. Many things of great importance seem to have converged all at once – finalizing the yearly budget, interviewing City Manager candidates, all topped off by the GBRA dam crisis. Besides all that, there's been a lot going on, and a lot of it is stuff I can't even talk about...yet.

With all that in mind, what I'd like folks to remember is that I and the city council members all have careers and families outside of city government with all the attendant drama, emotions and crisis that we all face day-to-day. All of this requires a lot of what I call "mental 180's". In other words, completely switching roles and emotions back-and-forth throughout the day.

Hey, I'm not complaining. It's actually gratifying and stimulating to be busy solving problems that matter. That's why we run for office. However, it is difficult for constituents to realize that we have to multi-task. All I can say is thank God for electronic calendars that beep and text and tell me where to go next! (I honestly didn't mean for that to rhyme, but I kind of like it!)

Typically, when a citizen brings an issue to either me or a council member, it is of utmost importance to that citizen. They are at their wit's end, and finally decided to call me or a council member. They want action NOW! I understand that, and always try to make sure I respect the citizen's feelings.

In reality, most problems can be solved with a quick phone call to city staff - but there are occasions when our minds, our attention and our time are focused on something totally different, and making that "mental 180" can't be done in an instant. All I'm asking is to please be patient with us, we're human.

A few other thoughts...

As I said, we are winding up our annual budget process, and it appears our tax rate will remain the same at \$.5412 per \$100 valuation. Yes, I know that evaluations will rise and will raise your taxes. But keep in mind that your net worth has also risen, and that is not a bad thing. Believe me, you don't want to live where property values decline. Many of our infrastructure problems were neglected for so long because we did not have the property wealth to pay for them. Rising property values are allowing us to pay for the much-needed improvements to our streets, drainage and quality of life venues like our parks and library. You can literally see the attractive, improved conditions in every part of the city. It means we are building wealth, and making Seguin a better place to live.

Speaking of making the city more attractive, I spoke to over 400 TLU students at their annual "Hot Dogs" volunteer event this past Saturday, as I do every year. All these young people, most of whom are from outside Seguin, gave up their Saturday to go out into our city as volunteers and help make Seguin more pleasant and attractive. Their jobs included mowing and clearing debris, and helping various groups with their projects. Most of their efforts aided non-profit organizations and neighborhoods in need. They even helped out at our animal control facility. Thanks, TLU for being such a great part of our community!

Thankfully, the judge has issued an injunction to stop the de-watering of our lake system. We've got some time now to figure out what can be done. I can tell you that some very talented people in our area have come up with some very creative ways to repair the dams for a lot less than the original estimate of \$35 million each. However, I think it will take a lot more creativity to come up with a way to pay for the repairs, regardless of the cost... We'll see.

Gosh I love this town!