



March 2004



Elk Ridge City Newsletter

www.elkridgecity.org

Message from Mayor Fritz

It is never easy to introduce an unpopular subject but such is the necessity today. The City of Elk Ridge has a problem regarding run-off water following major storms. Our engineering study indicates the cost for developing the retention pond and running a thirty-six pipe from the corner of Oak Ridge and Park Drive would be approximately \$350,000. Other phases would increase the cost even more but there are no immediate plans to address anything other than the phase one issue. The Council has wrestled mightily over the issue with an even split in votes for and against establishing a storm drain fee. The Mayor cast the tie-breaker in favor of establishing a \$3. per/household monthly fee dedicated specifically to the maintenance and cleaning of the existing system and development of phase I. A sunset clause is attached which requires the issue to be addressed again in 3 years when we have sufficient experience to justify either a reduction or increase in the fee to meet needs. To put numbers to the projected costs, consider the following:

\$350,000 bonding @4% over 20 years equals approximately \$2100 a month to retire the bond. At 500 households, the proportionate share would be \$4.25 but in addition to the principal amount there are other costs associated with bonding. The real figure to cover the costs would more closely be represented by a per household figure of \$5.00. Now of course numbers can be twisted, turned, and tortured but the reality of it is the monthly fee should be more closely be around \$5.00. The figure of \$3/month will cover maintenance of cleaning each year but does very little to address the issue of establishing a drainage control system. Short of a miraculous gift of money, the problem is going to rear its head again if or when we are served with a court order to cease and desist permitting water to run onto private property to the north of the city.

Last year we cleaned out most of the collector sumps which in many areas were nearly full of sand, dirt and gravel. We will carefully observe the impact of the cleaned out sumps on run-off to see how much urgency there is. We are also building a rock-lined ditch along Park drive to trap as much water as possible and permit it to percolate into the soil before it reaches the spill-over point at the junction of Park Drive and Gooseneck Drive. It is our hope to put off development of the retention pond for at least 3 years but if our intermediate efforts fail to stem the flow of water onto private property, we may be forced to take immediate and expensive action. I know full well the seriousness of raising fees (taxes) but there are very limited alternatives to this issue. The problem has been created by the combined requirement for curb and gutter and in some instances inadequate collector sumps. Unfortunately the argument will go, "Why should I have to pay for someone else's problem?" The answer (not a simple one) is the problem exists and we are stuck with resolving it. I hope the community will understand the difficulty the council had in making this decision but also understand the necessity of it.

VACANT LOTS

The city recently mailed notices of intent to enforce the ordinance pertaining to weeds and brush. While the letters were addressed to vacant lot owners the same ordinance pertains to all lots of record including those with houses on them. The difficulty I have as the administrator for the city is enforcement. Regarding the ordinance and especially the vacant lot owners who received our letters, please understand that the rationale for enforcement is safety. The greatest risk lies with those lots that are surrounded by houses. A fire can breach lot lines in seconds and several houses at a time could become involved almost simultaneously. It is the intent of the city to become involved only when it is apparent that the lot owner has chosen not to bring his property into compliance. The cost of entering the private property and performing the necessary work will be passed along to the owners. We have consulted with our city attorney regarding procedure and believe we are on firm ground to require compliance. Enforcement by the city will begin June 1st and will continue through the fall. If you are the owner of a vacant lot and maintain it as required by the ordinance then no other action will be necessary. Please feel free to call or write Mayor Fritz or Ernie Folks if you have any questions.

What to do and who to call if you see a mountain lion.

Wildlife Resources 491-5678
After hours call your local law enforcement. You may also log on to www.wildlife.utah.gov and go to 'cougar safety' for more information.

