



Elk Ridge Bugle

Year 2002 Edition

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Well, it had to happen eventually. I made someone angry while acting in my capacity as Mayor. I regret that it happened but I knew six months would be stretching it. I would like to think it will be the only time it happens but we know better. Perhaps I can take a little space and explain some of the difficulties in administration that lead to hurt feelings. First and foremost, the position of Mayor is one in which a single person attempts to remedy all the wrongs in the City and make everyone happy at the same time.

Usually neighbors work out the problem between themselves. Neither may be perfectly happy with the compromise but they can live with it. Life or death is seldom the issue, just annoyances. The Mayor on the other hand must respond to the concerns of the whole City and sometimes intervene between neighbors.

For example, let me address an issue that will become contentious in the weeks and months ahead. It is the subject of nuisances that go beyond annoyance. Obviously things that devalue property, detract from the appeal of a neighborhood, and in some instances represent a health or safety issue, these subjects are collectively referred to as 'nuisances' in the City ordinance.

The difficulty comes when one interprets nuisance. To paraphrase an old saying, 'one man's junk is another man's treasure'. In another example citizens express concerns about a specific issue such as construction equipment parked in residential zones for prolonged periods. This includes backhoes, construction grade trucks, track-hoes, etc. The owner of such equipment claims, 'Property Rights' when asked to remove the equipment.

To paraphrase a typical call to City Hall, 'Property Rights?' what about my rights to the pursuit of happiness, etc. My neighbor with the (trucks, backhoe, track hoe, bulldozer) fill in your choice - starts the machine at 6 am and lets it warm-up for a half hour while the smoke pours into my bedroom. I moved into the country for "peace and quiet."

Now here is the interesting part. In the absence of outright confrontation, the owner of the offensive equipment assumes no one objects. Question: How do you tell a friend he's creating an eyesore, the same guy you worship with, maybe fish with? How do you say, Bob, you are a friend, but I want you to remove your (fill in the blank) because its ugly and not appropriate for a residential neighborhood?

Now where does the City Council and Mayor come in? We receive a statement of concern (complaint) and we are expected to enforce any ordinances on the books that apply. In the case of construction equipment, ordinance____, states specifically that

_____. The oath of office for the Mayor is straightforward; enforce the ordinances of the community.

Sounds pretty easy doesn't it? Suppose though, one of your friends has a big construction device in his yard, another friend has a half-dozen old cars and some stranger down the street has two unregistered vehicles sitting on jacks with the wheels removed, which do you enforce first, friends or strangers? The issue boils down to this, selective enforcement of the ordinances is wrong. Another issue is, should the City enforce only upon complaint, or ignore the whole issue and hope no one will notice? For many years the latter choice has too often been the rule.

For those who are on the receiving end of enforcement, the City is a bad guy, a power hungry Gestapo. I hope there is middle ground for evaluation of an effort to make the community more pleasant overall. Really, can anyone seriously think junk cars or construction equipment enhances the appearance of a community?

When I took office in January of this year a legal process was already in progress regarding construction equipment. I choose to permit it to run its course to test the strength of our ordinance. One of the property owners is a person I would like to think of as a friend. Two others who are definitely friends will be asked to remove their construction equipment too. It will be a citywide application of the ordinance. Both construction equipment and unregistered or derelict vehicles will receive equal attention. If the citizens disagree with the ordinances, approach the Council and ask for an amendment.

Now, on to the well financing, we have final approval pending a few conditions that we can easily meet. We will also go before the water board on August 9th with our request for an additional \$75,000 to cover unanticipated costs including a higher than expected bid. I think we will be drilling by the 15th of October. It has been a long process. When you deal with government money, you are asked to mortgage your house, kids, and yes even the dog.

On a personal note: Do I still enjoy being the Mayor? You bet. Some of the nicest people in the world live in Elk Ridge. I get up in the morning looking forward to going to the office. I have the pleasure of working with some great people, inside the office and out. Thanks Elk Ridge for the privilege of serving.

Vernon L. Fritz

Mayor

Loafer Canyon Road

It's been a long time in coming but we are about to repair the faults in the new road. We have been delayed in doing so because of two circumstances. The first being that we were advised to wait until the summer heat had dried out the subsurface to see if any more surprises awaited us. That period has passed. The second was that one of the contractors refused to stand behind his work, and we have had to work through that process. That story continues. Bids for the work have been solicited, an award of a contract has been presented and we expect work to begin within two weeks. Driveways should be finished shortly after the road repair is completed.

Loafer Canyon Road has become a heavily traveled road due to these improvements. The recent improvements make Loafer Canyon a viable alternative to 1600 West for making our way into Salem and Spanish Fork. Unfortunately many of us drive at speeds far exceeding the 25 miles per hour posted speed limit. One of our neighbors from Loafer Canyon attended the most recent City Council meeting to ask that we do something to slow traffic through his neighborhood.

Please be thoughtful of our neighbors and their children who live along Loafer Canyon and other roads in the City. Two summers ago my driving habits were forever changed when I witnessed two children hit by a driver who was hurrying to get through a yellow light. The driver certainly didn't intend to do harm but his momentary lack of careful planning driving habits changed the lives of one family. Sometimes we speed intentionally because we're in a hurry and sometimes it is because we're just not paying attention. Please obey the posted speed limits in Elk Ridge. We will be stepping up the police enforcement of our speed limits shortly after you read this – PLEASE SLOW DOWN!

Vernon L. Fritz
Mayor

Job Opening

The position of Public Works Assistant has become open. This is a full-time/part-time position. Applicants must be 18 years of age with a High School Diploma and must live within a ten-mile radius of Elk Ridge. A CDL License will be required. A background in construction, snow removal, backhoe operation and asphalt work is helpful. The salary range is \$9.00 to \$14.00 per hour.

If you are interested, please send in a resume and/or come to the City Office to fill out an application. For more information please call the City Office at 423-2300. Applications will be accepted through August

Thank You.....

We would like to thank the Fire Department and all those who volunteered their time and efforts to making this year's City Celebration a success! Thanks for everything you do to help keep this celebration a memorable tradition in our community. THANKS!

Fire Department Spotlight

Marie Jo Stout has lived in Elk Ridge for 6 years. She has served on the Fire Department for 2 years and for the past 6 months as an EMT. She works from her home translating English to French. Marie Jo and her husband Doug (also a firefighter) have 2 boys and 4 girls. She enjoys rock climbing, running, and reading. She would like citizens to realize there are many ways for them to volunteer. "If not for volunteers, there wouldn't be a Fire Department." We have great appreciation for Marie Jo and her family's sacrifices to serve us.

CPR classes are beginning again. For information please call Kamile Peterson at 423-2205.

**PLEASE REMEMBER NO WATERING
BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 10:00 AM
AND 6:00 PM. WE APPRECIATE YOUR
COMPLIANCE TO THIS LAW. THANK
YOU!**

