

## EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 45

February 14, 2012

By John Hoffmann

**DEER PROBLEM STILL ON THE ROADS:** After killing 288 deer as part of the deer management program from December 27 to the last week in January it appears as if the original deer census was low. In January the deer struck and kill on Town and Country roads was actually up from 2011. In 2011 five were killed in January and 92 died as a result of accidents by the end of the year. Last month there were eight deer struck and killed.

		MONTH/ DAY	TIME	LOCATION
		January		
1	S	1	1928	SB 141 at Clayton Rd
2	S	5	1022	Mason and Clayton
3	S	8	0102	EB 64 W of 270
4	V	10	0219	WB 64 at Maryville
5	V	17	1946	Town and Country Lane
6	R	19	1733	Mason and Bramblewood Acres
7	S	29	0500	WB 64 at Maryville
8	V	30	2145	SB 141 S of Clayton

If you count the 288 deer just killed by sharpshooters, plus the 92 in 2011 in accidents and the 8 so far this year 388 deer have been killed in T&C in the last 13 months.

There are still so many deer that the accident numbers are increasing.

**THE FINAL DEER REPORT IS IN:** White Buffalo, the city's deer management contractor filed its final report. The report is on the city's website. Here is a link: <http://www.town-and-country.org/uploads/In%20The%20News%20Misc/Final%20Report%202011-12.pdf>

Of the 288 deer killed, the largest number came from Ward 2, with 119 deer killed or 41% of the 288. Wards 3 and 4 had 64 and 63 deer killed, while Ward 1 had 42 killed.

White Buffalo reported evidence of continued illegal feeding of deer by some residents that makes deer management more difficult.

They also named only one subdivision still with an over population of deer which they did not have much success in reducing because too few property owners gave permission to use their property. That subdivision was Thornhill Estates.

### **BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING FEBRUARY 13:**

**Residents given a slap in the face over parking at Longview:** The resolution to ask for a grant from the St. Louis County Parks Grants Commission to fund \$4,000 of a \$20,000 engineering study was on the agenda. Despite a heavy snow falling, a large group of people against the proposed parking lot construction were in attendance.

In the work session and the actual meeting several members including Fred Meyland-Smith, Nancy Avioli and Phil Behnen said the city should apply for the \$4,000 grant money to go toward a \$20,000 engineering study to expand the parking lot at the Longview Park. They reasoned that despite not having an accurate traffic flow study of the parking lot, the city could always withdraw from the overall construction grant request.

**WHY?** Why would anyone be willing to spend up to \$20,000 for an engineering study if you were not sure you wanted the finished project? Why would you be asking for taxpayer grant money if you have not done a study to prove if you need the requested improvement? Why would you spend tax money (both city and County tax money) to build a project that has widespread citizen opposition?

It has been clear for some time that Mayor Dalton, Lynn Wright and Anne Nixon have envisioned a busy Longview Center with lots of rentals for parties and meetings. It is clear with the limited parking those visions will never occur.

Dalton and the city never did a “use study: to see if there was any demand for a conference center before spending \$1.5 on the glass double-wide addition. Why would they do a traffic study now?

At earlier meetings Parks Director Anne Nixon stated she had curtailed overflow parking conditions by refusing to rent the Longview House conference center to Missouri Baptist Medical Center for health seminars and screenings during high-use times for the park. Also the equine therapy on Saturday mornings was cancelled as was the commercial exercise company’s workouts after 9am.

This summer despite the traffic counters being broken, Nixon admitted there were almost no incidents of overflow parking. She credited it with her event reductions and the hot weather.

**MAKE IT LIKE IT USED TO BE:** Fred Meyland-Smith, a member of the special committee that voted for expanding parking said if there is another try at doing a traffic flow count, all the events whose times Nixon altered should be back on the schedule, so the count will show the parking conditions and traffic flow that existed in 2010. Two other aldermen agreed with Fred.

**This is crazy:** Anne Nixon actually did something to make the situation better, including keeping Missouri Baptist Hospital meetings away and is being told to make things more congested.

**WRONG COMMITTEE:** Now that there is sizable opposition Nixon and Wright are telling everyone that this is more than parking it is about safety. Of course they want to make the exit with the best view of traffic an entrance only and make the exit to the west where the line of sight and reaction times are less.

The point is this was all about parking. **There was a parking committee formed....A PARKING COMMITTEE...**not a safety committee! If they are talking safety they should also run this whole thing past the Police Commission and Public Works Commission.

### **THE PEOPLE SPEAK:**

Former alderman, former mayor and current aldermanic candidate **Skip Mange** spoke first. He accused the people who created the petition against parking of making untrue statements and misrepresentations. He complained that claims on the petition of the city wanting to cut down “old growth trees” and operate a commercial banquet center are

false. He said one 16-inch in diameter Sweet gum tree “with the sweet gum balls” and two 4-inch maple trees are “being removed” ( as if this is a done deal).

Later **Hank Vogt** spoke. Vogt, a retire lawyer and former Globe-Democrat reporter said “I’m the author of the poorly worded and misleading petition!” He went on to defend his descriptions. He then added no one was addressed the proposed \$265,000 storm water project to fix erosions problems at the park.

Vogt also accused Mange and the City of poor management and promising residents in 2000 that the park would be passive to get their votes for a bond issue and then building a center they want to rent out for parities.

**Bill Fienup** of Wheatfield Farms subdivision said he didn’t believe the data collected supported expanding the parking lot. He said graphs in the Parking Committee report were mere guesses. He added no further action on the parking expansion should be done until the study is done.

**Josh Kramer**, who lives in ward-2 and is a regular park user, said he was against expanding parking.

**Louise Jensen** also from Wheatfield complained that the residents were promised Longview would be a “passive park.”

“But I see ads in the newsletter for more activities,” she said, waving the latest city newsletter open to the page of an ad for people to hold wedding receptions and parties at the Longview House.

“The woman (Anne Nixon) sits in her office at the park and thinks up new activities. It is upsetting that we were promised a passive park and the city keeps promoting more activities,” said Jensen.

**Richard Davidson**, a former member of the parks and Trials Commission spoke up and said he was against adding more parking spaces at Longview. He then used the Steve Fons approach and suggested the city buy the empty residential lot across the street and us that for overflow parking. Like I said when Fons said the same thing in 2010...I’m sure the homeowners who abut that lot on Clayton Road and in the Williamsburg subdivision would love to have a parking lot where a house is suppose to be...they can deal with the water runoff, noise and lighting issues. Davidson also is one of the people who think we have excess funds and is unaware of the location of Queeny Park. He suggested that the City should buy and build another park.

**Mariette Palmer**, the official city gadfly, then used the information I have been repeating since last April. The city send out postcards to every home in town concerning a public forum on the issue. 19 people spoke. Two were in favor and 17 from all over town were against expanding parking at Longview.

**Doug Gast** from Wheatfield used his three minutes to tell the board that they are apparently not “our aldermen” They have failed to ask themselves “what do the residents want?”

“You act like the residents are the village idiots. You need to step back and think. We didn’t know you were going to have a party center there. Ask what the village idiots want,” said Gast.

**THE PARKS COMMISSION FAILS TO SHOW:** In our last newsletter I reported how Lynn Wright was urging members of the Parks Commission to show up in force to say how important expanded parking is. Commission member Stephanie Peterson actually asked for someone to email her where the Board of Aldermen meeting is.

Only member **Roger Fagerberg** showed up. Roger is a land use lawyer. He said he favored the expanded parking. He then added that parking should be restricted to Town and Country residents only!

It was amazing that Fagerberg, a member of the Parks Commission, is clueless, that anyone who shops in T&C and pays sales tax funds the parks. Plus the city has gotten and now wants to get more grants from St. Louis County to build a tennis court and expand the parking. He doesn’t get it that because of this anyone can use the park. They might not be able to lease the glass double-wide party center, but they certainly have every right to park a car and walk through the park.

**GREEN TEAM VOTES FOR MORE PARKING:** Chris Andrews, a member of the mayor’s Green Team said he was for trees being cut down and more parking spaces added. The Green Team was a creation of Mayor Dalton as a place to appoint liberal Democrats and get them to vote for him. An odd marriage since Dalton is a Republican lobbyist in whose clients include tobacco companies.

**THE VOTE:** The resolution to apply for the grant money passed on a 5-3 vote. Tim Welby, Steve Fons and Al Gerber voted against it.

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN STILL UNAWARE OF THE CONSITUTION:** Back in 2009 when I was on the Board of Aldermen and this newsletter was named “Alderman

Newsletter” Fred Meyland-Smith tried to pass an Alderman’s Code of Conduct that would outlaw aldermen writing disrespectful things about fellow aldermen. The Code of Conduct was never voted on as City Attorney Steve Garrett told everyone such an ordinance was completely unconstitutional. I was shocked this brain trust was unaware of the first amendment of the Bill of Rights. They all signed the informal code (expect me of course) which Fred completely violated in December when he told Aldermen Al Gerber to “kiss his ass” and dressed down residents filing Sunshine records requests.

**Now** the Board of Aldermen, ironically minus, Meyland-Smith, **have grave concerns about a new sign in front of the Trinity Lutheran Church** at Clayton Road and Hwy 141.

Numerous Federal Court rulings have said churches are not required to meet local ordinances about non-commercial signs on church property.

The church has installed a new sign that instead of having hand posted black letters lit by floodlights, has a sign that is the same size, but has LED lighting and messages that can be posted by a computer keyboard inside the church.

Alderman Phil Behnen was aghast! “We have so many churches it would change the character of the city,” said Behnen.

Nancy Avioli and Lynn Wright both indicated they would be interested in City Attorney Steve Garrett’s opinion. So would I !

“It is nothing I want to talk about now,” said Garrett.

Dalton then said the Board was going into closed session at the end of the regular meeting and maybe Garrett could discuss it then.

**SO MUCH FOR OPEN MEETINGS**...Garrett knows damn well the church can have the sign and doesn’t even have to apply for a sign variance. It is awful that a city employee in this case refused to do his job in public and tell the aldermen what the score was.

The **city is apparently in the “Wells Fargo Wagon Mode”** here and refuses to accept that new technology such as LED lighting is acceptable.

**Where is the green team when you need them?** LED lighting is cooler and more energy and cost efficient...but the Board of Aldermen act like it is something summoned up by a wizard.

**Where is the fairness?** The Board of Aldermen allow any retail establishment renting space at Town and Country Crossing to violate the sign ordinance (which I don't have a any problem with) but then tries to screw over a local church that has every right to have their sign.

**The Irony:** Meyland-Smith, who can be quick to try and take away someone's Constitutional rights, is a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church. Now some of his fellow aldermanic board members are trying take away its freedom of speech and religion.

**FROM THE SCRIPT:** Two residents on South Outer Forty had a first reading for solar panels. This matter will pass without any opposition at the next meeting. Alderman Jon Benigas spoke to the residents, telling them what a great thing they were doing switching to solar. Next Al Gerber hit his button to speak. Instead of talking, Gerber began reading from a prepared script how important he felt solar power was. He was like the Energizer Bunny...he kept reading and reading. I commented to someone next to me, "I can't believe he has to read a statement on what his opinion is on a non-issue!"

**FACEBOOK CONTROVERSY:** The FOB Shop in the Lamp and Lantern shopping center has become the center of attack after a Town and Country resident and mother of a four-year-old child with cerebral palsy was shopping at the store when asked to leave by the owner. The child uses a walker.

From what I understand the owner of the FOB is not crazy about any children being in the store. It is tough when you are selling stuff to people with large disposable incomes and many of them are young mothers.

The Facebook posting and additional coverage has created a firestorm of unpleasant comments toward the store and the owner.

Here is a link to a detailed article:

<http://townandcountry-manchester.patch.com/articles/facebook-post-prompts-boycott-of-town-and-country-business-fob-lamp-and-lantern-village>

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY TIMES REVIEW...A look inside the city's latest newsletter:** Here is the good news: Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist Jon Dalton's photo does not appear in double digits. Instead his mug is only shown seven times.

**STATE OF THE CITY OR WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT YOU:** Mayor Dalton used up six whole pages spinning his tale of the State of the City. Dalton claimed the city was projected a \$21,000 increase in the general Fund in 2012. **HE FAILED TO TELL THE PUBLIC** that the overall budget, counting all funds, is estimated to be \$364,510 in the red. Yes an overall deficit for 2012 that was not mentioned in the mayor's State of the City.

Dalton also proudly reported that in 2011 the city was only forced to tap 5-percent of the overall reserve. So much for operating with a balanced budget!

**Fire and Police:** Dalton correctly points out that the new contract for fire & EMS services and fire dispatching has helped lowered costs. Of course he doesn't mention the other seven years while he was mayor that the city was grossly overcharged for these same services.

He also failed to mention that while burglaries were up in 2011, cops were down as we laid three cops off and eliminated their positions from the 2011 budget. These were not the officers at the station, but the ones in the cars answering the calls.

**Retail Report:** Dalton decided to give an unrealistic report on retail space. He concentrated on Town and Country Crossing and Lamp and Lantern and mentioned new stores at the centers. Of course he makes no mention of the stores that have left the centers in the last six months or the one that is reducing its square footage. Nary a word was written about the almost empty Manchester Meadows shopping center, where I am told some remaining stores have had their rents cut in half to keep them from moving.

Dalton also writes how National and Local realtors choose Town and Country. This is from the man who voted and broke the tie against a sign variance of a few inches for Ray Vinson's new corporate office space along I-270 and Des Peres Road.

**BRANCH CHIPPING:** Dalton writes how he is happy that the branch chipping program is back for 2012. He fails to mention that the city's Finance Commission does not recommend it be continued in 2013, because there is not enough projected revenue to fund it in 2013.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY SENSE OF COMMUNITY \$\$\$:** Dalton keeps trying to convince people how he has brought the community together in T&C.

**Here is the truth:** This place is never going to be like Webster Groves, Kirkwood, Clayton or Ladue. Those communities all have one central public high school that is the bond to the community. Town and Country is in parts of three different school districts and is served by four different public high schools. Plus there are four private high schools in the city and five others within two miles of the city limits.

Dalton mentioned the Art, Wine and Music event that was held last January and is being held again this Friday. This event charges residents to attend a party at a city facility and this year they are charging residents to attend an after-party at John Mineo's.

That is some sense of community when you want people to fork over \$20 to enter a city building.

It gets worse! Dalton and the City have allowed Chesterfield caterer, Villa Farotto, to hold a profit making activity at the Longview Farmhouse. It is called Breakfast with Santa. A parent has to buy breakfast to get a photo of their kid with Santa. It would be nice to if the city arranged for a Santa to be at Longview for parents to snap their own photos, but this Dalton Community event is purely profit driven.

The Community Relations Commission runs one other business...the Holiday Boutique. This is where they sell space to vendors to sell stuff. Again, is this why we built this addition to Longview?

**TAKING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS NOT DUE:** Dalton took credit by the board passing the request from Maryville University to build a stadium around their existing baseball field. I have no idea what the city had to do with this. Maryville filed the plans and the city approved them. It was not like Dalton and the Aldermen went to Maryville requesting they build a stadium due to the residents' keen interest in Saints baseball.

Dalton also used Westminster School as an example. He included a photo of the FOOTBALL FIELD. The location of this field has been and is a sore point with neighboring residents for years.

**STEALING AN EMPLOYEE:** Several times when our building inspector Bob Bodley was on medical leave, the city contracted to use Rock Hill's building inspector. Now that Bob has retired, Town and Country hired the Rock Hill building inspector away to replace Bodley. On Monday night they passed a resolution that allowed the city to contract the building inspector, Neil Cantwell, to other cities, presumably including Rock Hill.

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION:** At the last city Conservation Commission meeting, they continued to speak of wanting to spend \$14,000 to replace the “Wildlife Corridor” signs, so commissioner Carl Strasser “knows when he is home.”

They also spoke of taking a walking tour of the large tract of land that is for sale for \$4.5 million off of Conway Road to consider asking the city to buy it for a wildlife area. What recession ? What projected downturn in revenue for upcoming years?

Apparently these people, like a number of people on the Parks Commission keep forgetting there is a park the size of Forest Park surrounded by Town and Country. It is called Queeny Park.

**ART COMMISSION:** At the Arts Commission meeting money was a topic. The Art folks have held two successful Plein Air Painting contests in connection with the fall Festival. The first one was done with no city money being used. The second one saw \$1,000 of city money according to Alderwoman Lynn Wright at the meeting.

Wright told the group last week there was no money in the budget for the event this year, “But we can go to them (Board of Aldermen) and ask,” said Wright.

Then member Bill Schawacker complained that he spent \$700 on the event out of his pocket, which included taking the judges out to a “nice” dinner.

It was announced that the 2012 Plein Air event is going to be moved back one or two weeks, as the Fall Festival is being moved back. If they move it back two weeks they will risk not having any fall colors for the artists to paint.

**Sculpture Discussion:** The group also discussed sending out letters to five or six St. Louis sculptors asking for ideas before they commission a sculpture be created for the area next to the firehouse at Clayton and Mason Roads. The sculpture is suppose to celebrate the city’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Unfortunately, the city’s 60th-anniversary was in 2011. Lindsey Hodge the city staffer assigned to the Arts Commission suggested they shoot for the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Lindsey can be the queen of the understatement.

Once again, we are in a serve recession with an almost dead shopping center (Manchester Meadows) and projected declines in revenue. Money sources and the lack of it were not discussed.

**CUNNINGHAM AND DIEHL RAKING IN THE MONEY:** The court of appeals created new Missouri senatorial districts in December that was going to cause Town and Country and Chesterfield area state senator Jane Cunningham to move if she wanted to run for the senate again. Senator John Lamping of Ladue was going to have his district take over Town and Country and Chesterfield. But the Missouri Supreme Court struck down the redistricting by the appeal courts and sent the job back.

All this certainly did not stop Jane Cunningham from collecting campaign contributions. But she now has a lot more money than she did at the end of September. In the first three quarters of 2011 Cunningham raised \$58, 935. In the last quarter of 2011 she brought in \$152,665. A lot of that was from Political Action Committees fronted by lobbyists and in some cases individual donations from lobbyists themselves.

But it was the money from the Rex Sinquefield that grabs your attention. Four contributions for \$5,000 each followed by a \$20,000 contribution on New Year's Eve.

State Rep. John Diehl increased the size of his campaign war chest to \$621,178 after he raised \$75,245. Most of it came in during December, including \$25,000 from Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield.

Does anyone remember when state reps used to raise money by having coffees in people's living rooms? While Cunningham was bringing in money from PACS, Diehl was getting it from big businesses across the country \$1,000 or more at a time.

One other interesting campaign contributions to Cunningham were 18 contributions from optometrists. Missouri is one of the few states in the country that require parents to obtain eye examines for children three times between Kindergarten and fifth grade. The law is about to hit a sunset date. Do you really want the State of Missouri to force you to take your kid to the doctor? The school nurse used to give us kids eye tests and would send a note home if we showed signs of needing to see the eye doctor. That sounds like it could still be pretty good way of doing it, except it would mean no campaign contributions from eye doctors. .

**TOWN AND COUNTRY HOSED BY FIRE DISPATCHING IN 2011...WILL BE JUST SLIGHTLY OVERCHARGED IN 2012:** The figures are in and the residents of Town and Country took it on the chin in 2011 for being overcharged by the Central County E911 fire dispatch center.

Revenue for the dispatch center is based on assessed valuation of real estate property in each of the original areas that created the fire dispatch center. They are: Creve Coeur

FPD, Maryland Heights FPD, Metro West FPD, Monarch FPD, West county EMS &FPD and the City of Town and Country.

In 2011 the average cost to dispatch a call was \$106.47. Chesterfield residents were paying \$163.40 a call while Town and Country residents paid \$169.40 per call or were overcharged \$63 every time a fire truck or ambulance was dispatched in town. In 2010 we were overcharged \$46 a call. In two years the overcharging by the fire dispatch center went up 37-percent.

This year the city gave up ownership in the dispatch center and now the fire dispatch contract is based on what Mayor /Cigarette Lobbyist Jon Dalton negotiated. Our fees will drop from \$341,850 to \$224,000.

**STILL SCREWED:** However if you use the call volume of 2011 and the CCE911 budget for 2012 you will find the average call is \$104 per call. Town and Country will be charged \$111 a call. Quite an improvement over being hosed \$63 per dispatch, but still \$7 a call more than the average.

Frontenac and Des Peres joined CCE911 for fire dispatching late in 2011. Remarkably the cost of an average call to be dispatched for Des Peres was just \$31.91. Frontenac's average cost was only \$27.76.

Here are the totals for 2011:

<b>Town and Country</b>	<b>\$169.40</b>
Monarch FPD	163.84
WCEMS&FPD	117.04
Creve Coeur FPD	114.06
Metro West FPD	113.93
<b>AVERAGE COST</b>	<b>106.47</b>
Maryland Heights FPD	100.34
Meramec Amb Dist	51.38
St. Clair FPD	51.22
Des Peres PSD	31.91
Frontenac FD	27.76

**CHICKENS COMING HOME TO ROOST IN T&C:** Here in the heart of Snoburbia Mayor Dalton's Green Team Commission filled with old hippies will be sponsoring a speaker on Thursday February 16, at 7pm at the Longview farmhouse about raising chickens in your backyard. Once again here is a commission that Dalton created to fill

with liberal Democrats, who he hopes will vote for him in future elections. This commission is going to create problems. People will start with the chickens and then the rosters and then neighbors will be upset. I don't believe chickens are even currently permitted.

Hey the city owns a Farmhouse! Why doesn't it have chickens behind the farmhouse? They could use the eggs for breakfast with Santa and hide them for an Easter Egg Hunt. I am sure the homeowners of Wheatfield would enjoy the clucking and if you throw in a roster they would get a free wake up service.

**AT LAST...BBQ THAT IS BAD-B-Q CLOSSES:** I have been wondering for over a year now, "How much longer can these people stay in business." That was answered two weeks ago when Dickey's B-B-Q on Manchester at Mason finally went out of business.

When they first opened I was frightened. A drive though B-B-Q joint just a few blocks from my house! This can't be good! I might have to upgrade my cholesterol meds. But fortunately after one visit I found the food wasn't very good and I never went back.

About a year ago I was being served by the manager at the Taco Bell on Manchester Road and I asked her, how in her professional opinion, could Dickie's remain open with no customers. She stated that she was just as amazed over it as I was and mentioned she had hired some kids who worked at Dickies who wanted more hours.

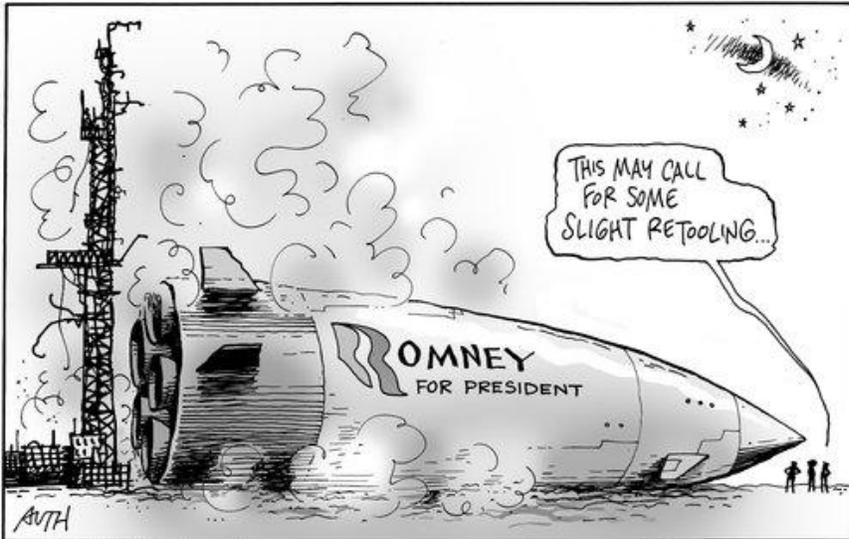
**GET OUT OF THE HOUSE:** On this Saturday February 18, Dean Christopher with Carolbeth True on piano and Dave Troncoso on bass return to the Frontenac Grill (the old Coco's) on S. Lindbergh from 9pm to midnight. The place is now run by the Taylana family. There is no cover...stop by for a drink or a great thin crust pizza and some wonderful music...jazz vocals from the Great American Songbook, by one of the city's



best vocalists.

CARTOONS:





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