SEASON'S GREETINGS

This year, as the Holiday Season begins, where we shop is important. Very important. Every dollar matters!

Please make every effort to support the local businesses in our community. These owners are your friends and neighbors. They sit next to you at church or at the stadium. They sponsor sports teams and contribute to local causes. They keep the community going.

They need your business. Your dollars spent in local businesses have three times the impact on your community as dollars spent at national chains.

A multitude of local businesses, each selecting products based not on a national sales plan but on their own interests and the needs of their local customers, guarantees a much broader range of product choices.

This season and for 2021, when your family is thinking about where to spend money, think of the local families you are sustaining. Your dollars stay here in the community, which enables businesses to pay the rent, pay their employees (many of them your family members) and stay in business.

Sometimes shopping on the internet or buying from big national chain stores results in a less expensive price, but for a few cents more you will be contributing to a *wall of strength* against tough times.

Locally-owned businesses need you and are counting on you to spend with them. When you think of buying a new car or new house - and this is a great time to be a buyer - let our area be the leader to show others how a community can come together and make a real difference.

If everyone reading this makes a commitment to shop local and patronize, as much as possible, the local businesses, then we will take control of our economy.

The way to keep our community economically strong is through spending - keeping our local businesses strong so they can keep paying salaries and keep the economy flowing. America, Texas, and our community is only as strong as we want it to be.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

It all begins and ends with you. Please Stay Loyal to Local.

Enter Our Holiday Coloring Contest!

It's time for area youngsters to get out their crayons, colored markers and pencils, and turn on their imaginations in order to win prizes in the Village News Holiday Coloring Contest!

Winners in each category are presented prizes and contest entrants have their masterpieces on display. Children can enter the contest by coloring the entry form in today's Village News on page 8.

Locally-Owned and Invested in Our Communities for Over a Quarter Century

November 24, 2020 Vol. 36, No. 26

Village NEWS

Stay LOYAL to LOCAL

Serving West University, Southampton, Southgate, Southside Place, River Oaks, The Upper Kirby District, The Medical Center, Braeswood Place, Boulevard Oaks, Linkwood, Woodside, Old Braeswood, Morningside Place and Sunset Terrace

Subscribe to Our E-Edition at www.village-southwest-news.com

Is Removal Imminent? Bellaire Council Nixes Bellaire Blvd. Parking Lot

Bellaire's city council has unanimously denied a request by Evelyn's Park Conservancy for text amendments to the city's zoning code which would include a definition for "Accessory Parking" and include "Accessory Parking" as a specific use within the R-5 residential zoning district.

The denial made consideration of a third request, to construct and operate an accessory parking lot at 4300 Bellaire Blvd., moot.

However the question of what happens next is a bit more cloudy. The parking lot already exists at the eastern entrance to the city on Bellaire Blvd. It was determined in March that a permit to build the lot had been erroneously issued. The permit was revoked and a letter giving the builder 14 days to remove the lot was sent, but the lot still stands.

The lot was constructed by Southside Commons, a new entertainment and business development located in the City of Southside Place, under an agreement with Bellaire's Evelyn's Park Conservancy. The real estate is owned by CenterPoint and used for its overhead transmission lines. Evelyn's Park leases the location from CenterPoint for off-site parking; Southside Commons has a sub-lease to use the lot daily for commercial parking.

Various irregularities plagued the original permit application, and in June Evelyn's Park Conservancy made a revised application for the changes. Their request went first to Planning and Zoning, and finally to City Council.

The day after the council decision, which came on Nov. 16, no one seemed sure of follow-up procedure. But by Friday, Nov. 20, general answers were forthcoming.

Interim City Manager Brant Gary said Friday that in response to queries from Southwest News/Village News, "Development Services (in consultation with the City Attorney), developed the following list of next steps and an anticipated timeline" for what will be considered an active code enforcement case.

" • November 23, 2020- Certified letter to be sent requesting an application of demolition within 14 busi-

See Removal page 12

'Tis the Season! Events & Opportunities for the Holidays

Take Advantage of These Opportunities to Shop, Volunteer & Have Fun

Outdoor Handcrafted Holiday Market at the J

The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston (the J) will offer shoppers an opportunity to "shop till they drop" at an Outdoor Handcrafted Holiday Market in the parking lot of the J on Sunday, November 29, from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at 5601 S. Braeswood.

Vendors will offer unique handcrafted wares including fine art, mixed media, afghans, baby blankets, jewelry, Judaic art, holiday baskets, paper goods and pottery. Local artists and crafters have plenty of items ready for shoppers to add to their collection or to give as the perfect gift for loved ones and friends. Shoppers will find something for everyone on their lists.

The market is free, open to the public, for all ages and will be held outdoors. All Health and Safety Protocols will be observed for the outdoor event. All vendors, staff and customers are required to wear a mask. For information, visit www.erjcchouston.org or email msilberstein@erjcchouston.org.

Jubilee Christmas Album

Jubilee is an eight-person Christian singing group that got its start at Bellaire United Methodist Church over 20 years ago.

Last year the group recorded its first album, titled "Christmas Cheer." It contains traditional seasonal favorites, both sacred and secular, from a jazzy "Silent Night" to a pop-style "Jingle Bells" arrangement.

The majority of the proceeds of the sale of the album go directly to CCSC. The cost of producing the album was underwritten entirely by Jubilee.

The MP3 album is available on Amazon and iTunes. Search for it on iTunes using "Jubilee Christmas Cheer" in the search bar.

To have the CD mailed to you or to someone as a gift, send an email to jubilee.music.org@gmail.com. Payment options are Venmo, check or credit card using Square.

Cost for the CD is $16.24. There is no additional charge for postage.

You may also visit the third floor reception desk of the Christian Community Service Center Administration Office at 3434 Branard to purchase a CD.

More Holiday Happenings on page 6

Holiday Spirit in West U. Includes Virtual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and Laser Light Show

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, West University's annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be virtual this year to ensure a safe and healthy experience for all.

In addition to the Tree Lighting Ceremony, a second event will be added to help capture the holiday season's spirit. After all, a pandemic can't get in the way of Christmas joy!

Part 1- Tree Lighting Ceremony (to also include Santa Truckin' thru West U.):

The Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on Monday, December 7, at approximately 6:30 p.m. While being streamed live through Facebook, the Mayor and City Council members will greet and address the residents and wish them well during the holiday season. The Mayor will also announce the West U.coloring contest winners, and then the tree will come to life, with lights shining sparkly and bright. To enter the coloring contest, go to www.westutx.gov/coloringcontest to download the contest form and submit to jbrowning@westutx.gov by 9 p.m. on December 3.

The tree lighting ceremony will conclude with the arrival of Santa on a West U. Fire Truck (thank you, West U. Fire Department), and will then proceed on a brief tour throughout the streets of West U. – waving to kiddos (socially distant style). This route will be pre-planned and promoted so that residents can make arrangements to ensure their littles get to see Santa!

Be sure to join live on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/CityofWestUniversityPlaceTX to watch the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and officially start the 2020 holiday season!

Part 2-Holiday Laser Light Show: On Friday, December 18, at the West U. Recreation Center (4210 Bellaire), a spectacular display of holiday cheer will be seen with a Holiday Laser Light Show. A 15-minute show set to Holiday music will get everyone in a festive mood for the holidays.

The Laser Light Show will be conducted four times that evening with a 15- minute transition time for vehicles to leave the parking lot and a new set of cars coming in for the next show.

Reservations are required, and this is open to West University Place residents only. Limited spots will be available for each showtime. Reservations must be made online @ www.westutx.gov/lights. Reservations will become available 48 hours in advance of the show. Show-times are 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 7 p.m., and 7:30 p.m. All participants must remain in their cars for the laser show. Note: The Recreation Center will close at 4 p.m. on December 18 to set up for the Laser Show!

Mark your calendar 48 hours in advance of the time-slot you prefer, spots are expected to fill quickly. Log-in into your account in advance to ensure correct log-in information.

Water Problem Solved Quickly

By Ben Ballanfant

Last Wednesday evening people throughout West University started reporting that their water pressure was low. It occurred around the time many people were getting home from work and making dinner.

City crews identified the issue that affected water pressure throughout the City and restored pressure at approximately 7:30 p.m. Public Works Director Gerardo Barrera said the issue was a software communication error that occurred.

"The issue last night was due to a communication error that took the booster pumps offline momentarily. It just so happened to be during the evening peak when demand is high. The pressure stabilized once staff placed the pumps back online. No further issues were reported," he shared.

Issue didn't last long, most likely less than an hour.

"Our estimates indicate less than an hour but cannot confirm until we sift through the data. All tanks were full so it wasn't until the peak demand that the pressure became an issue."

Removal from page 1

ness days.

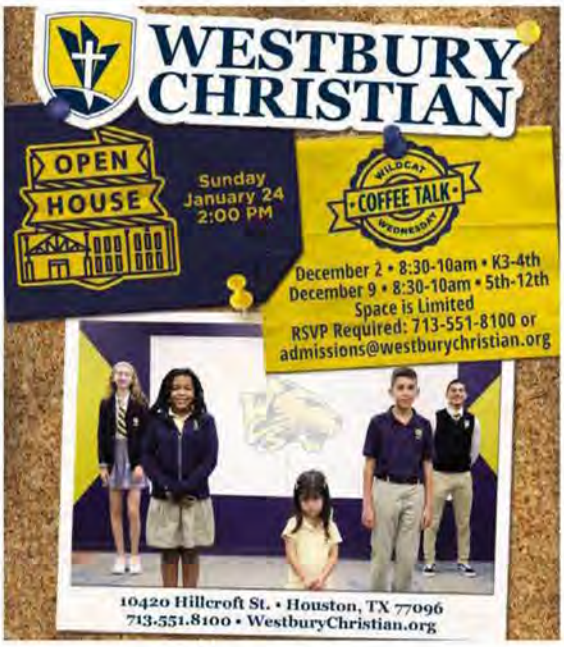
• December 14, 2020- 14 business-day deadline for submittal of demolition permit.*

• December 21, 2020 – (Assuming completeness of permit application) Estimated date for completion of application review and issuance of permit*

• In the event application information needs to be corrected, a one-time resubmittal will be allowed with a 3 business-day turnaround requirement.*

• TBD - Once the demolition permit is issued, based on the information collected during the permitting process, a deadline will be set for the complete removal and restoration of the site.*

If at any point during the process a deadline is not met, then a citation will be issued, and the municipal court process will determine the final outcome. The final outcome is ultimately based on the municipal's Judge's ruling or any subsequent legal proceedings."

(Asterisks represent potentially enforceable deadlines.)

Gary said the certified letter would be sent to CenterPoint, Evelyn's Park Conservancy, and Southside Commons. At this point, there is no exact date for removal of the lot.