

**STATE OF THE CITY
ELK RIDGE
23 OCTOBER 2007**

To recap the past 22 months is only part of the story as to what Elk Ridge is experiencing. The plans for the future are as exciting as the events of the past.

An understanding of the events and changes that have gone on about you should bring some balance to your perception of what is going on here in Elk Ridge.

SEWER

We will begin with the sewer and the progress that was started several years ago and has finally arrived at the point where some worries have been alleviated. Those were the worries of; could Elk Ridge pay for the upgrades to our 18% ownership of the Salem plant? Will we have enough capacity for our future build-out needs? Do we want to own any part of any plant at all? These were only a few of the countless questions that we mulled over in the process of deciding how the citizens of Elk Ridge would gain a sustainable and secure future in satisfying our sewer needs. The connection to Payson's sewer plant was the answer to all of those questions and has brought us into a significantly secure position. Other than occasional rate increases and regular maintenance issues that will happen as the system ages and costs rise, we have a permanent home for the sewer. Even

with talks and plans for a South County Regional Sewer Plant, we will remain just as we are. Payson will become, if the county option materializes, a pre-treatment plant for the larger county plant.

WATER

Water has been compared to gold when it comes to the value it can have. An old farmer that I talked to once said, "If I want to remain rich, all I need to do is keep the water that is attached to my property. What good is property if I can't keep things on it alive?" The blood in a community that will sustain life here is water. You can't build without it.

Our water needs here are constantly changing. These changes are effected by how much people use, the price, how much it costs to fill the tanks, growth concerns, available rights, and acts of God that change our available supply.

All growth here in Elk Ridge reaches final only when water can be attached to the properties. No structures that use water can be built without the proper allocation of water. No water means, no growth. Period!

We have a water specialist that has done for us a very thorough study to determine what the cities water shares can sustain. Things such as, are they being put to beneficial use, how do we protect them if they are not being used, how to implement a 'cash in lew

of policy', and how we as a city can obtain additional water rights in order to have an adequate reserve for infill growth and any other water concerns.

The very first day I walked into the office here, I was given a letter from the State Drinking Water Department. That letter was mandating that because we exceeded 500 water connections in Elk Ridge, it was now necessary to have a water conservation plan written and copies of it must be submitted to that department within 30 days. I did ask for a 30 day extension and finished the plan. It was well received by the state and a letter of approval was sent to congratulate us for a fine plan. In short, we are all right with water and the bank has nearly 1.7 million dollars in that was brought in from the cash-in-lieu-of policy and the front money from developers on the North end of town. None of this money is from our user rates. This money will be used for a new tank, upgrades to the Cloward well, a booster station and PRV stations for more efficient movement of our water.

Water will always be a concern and topic that generates discussion. Rates are always reviewed and never taken for granted. The rates are where they are because of some very sincere dialogue with the council and the CPA Financial advisor that helps keep us on the proper economic track. He has suggested that the parameters for the income in our water should be in the 10% range. His considerations and

advice for adjusting the rates are as follows. If we fall into the 1-4% bracket, we should increase the rates, if we fall into the 8-10% bracket, we should lower the rates, and if we fall into the 5-7% bracket then we should keep the rates where they are. We are at 6% now and have no plans to make any adjustments one way or the other.

Water conservation will be a topic that you will hear about often as time goes on and in the future some of our codes and laws will be written to encourage conservation.

We have added and updated the electrical monitoring of our wells, pumps and tanks and we know at the touch of the screen how much water we have, what the demand has been and how the pumps are functioning. If any of the elements in the system have a problem, an alarm is set into motion and the dialer starts calling the right people to fix and secure the system.

ROADS

The road concerns are very similar to the water concerns in that only regular attention will keep them in working order.

Roads and their maintenance require constant consideration. Our roads take some daily punishment as a result of large trucks, heavy equipment, the sun

and UV rays and the seasonal severity of freeze-thaw accompanied by the salt and sand that melts the ice yet adds to the deterioration of the surface. The invasion by construction equipment for repairs and up-dated infrastructure needs are factors that must be dealt with and will never go away.

The city has been proactive in updating the records for the Class B & C road funds that we receive from the state. It is from this fund that we get most of the money needed for the repairs and maintenance of our roads. These are some of the taxes that you pay each time you purchase fuel. The amounts of funding we receive are directly related to the miles of road we have here, which has now been measured at over 15 miles. For the first time in almost ten years, these figures have been updated. We will be very aggressive in turning corrected numbers to the state annually.

You will note that for the past two years we have made a conscious decision to not apply any chip-n-seal on any roads. It is the intention of the city not to use this method of road resurfacing on any non-through roads or cul-de-sacs. This year we had a company do something called crack seal. This maintenance technique allows hot tar to be injected into the cracks in the road in order to prevent the water from seeping in and freezing. Water expands when it freezes and further cracks the asphalt causing an accelerated failure of the road. This is not a

permanent fix but it does allow the life of the road to be extended.

We also use a method called slurry seal which is a petroleum based product sprayed on the roads to seal and coat the surface and small cracks. This retards the cracks from becoming larger and protects the roads from harmful UV rays. As stated before, the sun and the extreme cold of winter are harsh and brutal on the roads and maximizing our money in road maintenance is a never ending challenge. We are always looking into new technology that will allow cheaper and better ways of protecting our roads and have embarked on a test of systems to lengthen the life of your road system. The cost of excavation, resurfacing, labor and materials only moves in one direction, up.

Most, if not all, of the roadwork is accomplished when the weather permits. Normally, no road work is done during the winter months, as it is neither practical nor effective. A shovel full of road base in the holes that magically appear during winter and spring are the best that can be done until the asphalt plants can supply the proper product for a permanent fix. The road work and concerns this past year have been somewhat of a challenge to maneuver through and around. Your patience is necessary in understanding road work here in Elk Ridge. There is a large investment of time, research, maintenance and costs by city personal and elected officials related to the

service and care of these roads that we all use on a daily basis. A review of your roads by contractors and other professionals has resulted in a good to excellent rating on them. It is the pledge of the city to continue working hard and giving the right focus on road matters.

PARKS

I hope that you all have seen the changes in the park these past two years. The rock walls have been installed, the plants have been added and some refined changes have been put in on the watering system. We have tried to use the park as a model for the citizens to look at when it comes to drought tolerant plants and conservation of water. Many of the plants will be self sustaining after two years. This is when their root systems will be developed enough for them to pretty much take care of themselves.

We are short of actual public park facilities as far as total acreage goes. We need to purchase additional ground that will satisfy our need for space for the citizens to use for recreation and picnicking. We have been talking to Payson about the purchase of golf hole number 7 that will help bring us into balance for the park space that we need. This will take some additional discussions and planning in order for this to happen. As a city council we are working hard to fill these gaps and not do it in such a way that it jeopardizes the security of our finances.

SAFETY FIRE AND POLICE

Our Fire department is manned and staffed with exceptional personal. Not only are training opportunities utilized to keep the firefighters certified but the equipment is maintained and kept in prime working order. The Fire and EMS leaders are continually keeping up on grant applications that have been used in the purchase of equipment and supplies that keep them efficient front line responders. These grants have supplemented the budget in such a way that some relief is felt.

As the demographics of Elk Ridge change, we will be concerned with keeping the safety systems in balance with growth. This means that additional volunteers will be requested to participate and more equipment will be needed. Not only will our EMS group be first on scene, but sometime in the future they will also be challenged with taking over transporting patients with our own ambulance. Our volunteers in the Fire, EMS and CERT teams are dedicated and willing to respond at the first sound of alarm to step forward at the risk of their own safety and do the job that is needed. Their dedication to the duties and responsibilities that they have chosen to fill are making this place a safer place for you and your families.

One of the goals of Councilman Johnson when he took office was to see that the equipment needs of the

fire department were kept in maximized condition. This has been facilitated by working with our past fire Chief, Craig Olsen. We were able to acquire a 4 X 4 truck with a tank and pump from the Utah County Fire Department and a 4 X 4 rescue truck with a tank, pump and winch from the Provo City Fire Department. Both of these trucks came at no cost to our city. One of the trucks we replaced was given to the small town of Goshen and was put into service there.

We presently run a range of problems in this little city all the way from drug abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse and non-violent crimes such as traffic violations of all kinds, fraud, and running business' without a license. We will always pay attention to these conditions and do all that we can to stay on top of these issues. As a community we have been able to help law enforcement by looking out for our neighbors and paying attention to what goes on in our neighborhoods. Yet even with this care, police protection will need to be increased as the population grows. The diversity of people requires us to stay on top of the types of situations that come with the added population. In the future, a more permanent and full time police presence will be required.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Certain things are constant, change being one of them. Just as sure as time passes by, we will need to be prepared to accept the challenges that come to our

front door. Property owners will be seeking opportunities to exercise the rights attached to their property. Of the nearly 560 approved and proposed building lots, half of them are owned and have been developed by Elk Ridge citizens. In 1976 when I first discovered Elk Ridge (Salem Hills), there were only 18 homes here. Thirty-one years later the number of homes has increased to about 550 with my home and your home being part of that growth. Growth will continue as long as conditions support it. Supplies must be accessible, money must be affordable, and it is mandatory that infrastructure has to be in place for any dwelling to be built and serviced. The truth is, infill lots will be built on, subdivisions will be developed, several hundred more lots will be added to the inventory, and some day, Elk Ridge will be built out to a total of about 1,500 units. Trying to predict when this will happen is equivalent to knowing the exact time of the second coming or never being incorrect in making a decision. When the factors are weighed, and the evidence realized, the only choice that a city has is to, as the Boy Scouts put it, "Be Prepared".

Preparation for the future requires planning. The production of Impact Fee Studies also is the process of extending the growth concerns out at least 30 years. This allows us to look ahead and make some knowledgeable determination as to what is really needed and when it is needed.

A General Plan that is updated every five years is a wonderful tool in the planning process. Not only is the 'public interest' expressed and defined, but the goals and policies that need to be formulated are updated and written to help guide the public bodies in critical decision making. Rewriting the General Plan also has an effect on the codes that govern what and how things are built here.

The future requires planning for a build out of 1,500 homes and the people that come with that growth. The future requires the right codes and standards, it requires paying attention to what property owners desire to do with their properties and what the big picture looks like. It requires a community that is willing to be fair and impartial to those seeking what this location and city can offer. It requires another well for water and a final storage tank up higher on the mountain. It requires a new City Center and works building, a safety building that grows with the needs of the community, more parks and equipment, more roads, more money, more patience.