

9.13.13 Weekly Update from Mayor Todd Meier

September 13, 2013 by [Todd Meier, Mayor](#) 0 Comments ([add yours](#))

Dear Neighbor,

A very busy week here in Addison! You have likely noticed the big tent and all the preparations underway for our annual Addison Oktoberfest that we have been celebrating since 1987. I hope you plan to be with us when we “tap the Keg” on Thursday evening, September 19 to begin the 4 day fun event at Addison Circle Park. Did you know that you can pre-purchase ticket packages and/or a wonderful, upscale dining experience at Chamberlain’s Brau Haus at Oktoberfest (a pop-up restaurant by none other than our fabulous Richard Chamberlain)? Please click here to purchase [ticket packages](#) or the [Chamberlain’s Brau Haus](#)—better buy them now, we’re running out!

Council News

We began what was likely the most important week of the council year with a Monday evening, September 9, work session that began at 6pm with a discussion of “respectfulness” and the important role it plays in our workings as a council and staff. That conversation rolled into a discussion about this newsletter and the role it plays for our Town. I shared that my principal objective each week was to make all that we do as a Council transparent to whoever cares to know about what their local government is doing. My secondary objectives are to report on local businesses and give them a forum to let us know something about their relationship with us here in Addison as well as highlight some of the above and beyond work each of my colleagues perform on behalf of our Town each week. And of course, we have some fun along the way.

There were concerns expressed that the newsletter had been too political last week, and as such, two Council members requested that a future agenda item discuss their desire to [terminate](#) the publication of the mayor’s newsletter. If you have some thoughts about that possible newsletter termination please let me know.

The Council also reviewed our Council procedure and worked to build consensus around a possible 55 cent, 56 cent and the City Manager’s proposed tax rate of 57.18. Excellent, candid discussion and collaboration followed with a very good exchange of thoughts and ideas; however we were not able to reach a consensus. We reviewed and discussed in short order the Utility Fund, Storm Water Fund, Hotel Fund, Airport Fund and Economic Development fund. We also raised the subject of revisiting or compromising on the previous week’s 4-3 approval of a 6% salary pool for our employees; however we were unable to make any progress. We also reviewed a revised list of Modified Levels of Service recommendations from our City Manager. We reviewed our completed Strategic Plan and connected it with important aspects of the City Manager’s revised proposed budget. We concluded our meeting with the resolve to meet again on Tuesday in a work session before our official vote to continue to collaborate and see if we could reach a consensus on our budget or tax rate.

Tuesday evening we began our evening in a work session with one final effort to collaborate and reach a consensus on our budget and tax rate. We again discussed the 55 cent rate and its relative merits as well as the relative merits of the proposed 57.18 rate with no

clear consensus. Once again we took one last opportunity to revisit the 6% employee raise issue and we were unable to reach a compromise.

Our Regular Council Session began with a packed house; every seat in the Council chambers was full with a spill over crowd out in our living room where folks were able to watch it streamed live on our big screen. As we began our meeting there was a definite sense of drama, passion and intensity in the room as it was very clear a number of passionate Addison folks came to share their thoughts with us. Rather than try to summarize anything any of what the 17 or so folks had to say, [I suggest you check out the entire video for yourself](#). My editorial comment however is that each and every speaker clearly loves Addison and candidly shared their words of wisdom and guidance with us. While there were certainly some tense and awkward moments, I believe it is very healthy for us to hear everyone's viewpoint and then as Council members merge that input with our own analysis and good judgment. I encourage you to check out the video. Thanks very much to each of you that took the time to come tell us how you felt; there truly were many words of wisdom and inspiration.

After we closed the public Hearings it was finally time for the Council to vote on the budget and tax rate. Council Members Neil Resnik, Chris DeFrancisco, Margie Gunther and Bruce Arfsten voted to approve the City Manager's proposed budget and Council Members Janelle Moore, Blake Clemens and Mayor Todd Meier voted to not approve the proposed budget. The newly approved budget passed with a 4-3 vote and includes permanent recurring expenditures of a 6% "pool" of money for raises for our employees based on merit reviews with department managers, adding 6.2 new employees including three new fire fighter positions and one police officer position for the new Vitruvian storefront, a new street maintenance program, wearing apparel and uniforms, body cameras and equipment for SWAT, and an increase in our Municipal Judge's hours among others. The list of one time expenditures includes an emergency generator for our service center, weapons for the SWAT team, outdoor warning siren for Vitruvian Park, replacement of our K-9 dog, comprehensive land use studies, Town Hall repairs, tree pruning, Addison Circle Park maintenance and repairs, and replacement of concrete ramps and bathroom and shower remodeling for our fire stations among others. To review the entire approved budget, [please check out this link](#).

Since the budget had been approved, the tax rate approval really became a formality since the budget approval anticipates the availability of the funds. The Council approved the City Manager's proposed tax rate of 57.18 with Council Members Neil Resnik, Chris DeFrancisco, Margie Gunther and Bruce Arfsten voting to approve and Council Members Janelle Moore, Blake Clemens and Mayor Todd Meier voting to not approve. The 57.18 tax rate passed 4-3 and will raise more total property taxes than last year's budget by \$1,773,474 or 9.8%, and of that amount \$549,458 is tax revenue to be raised from new property added to the tax roll this year.

The Council approved an amendment to the Code of Ordinances decreasing the sewer rates and increasing water rates. As you may remember prior Councils made a commitment to lower sewer rates as the debt service in the utility fund was reduced, the first part of this item fulfills that promise. The water rates are largely a function of our cost and as you may know we buy our water from the City of Dallas Water department, when they increase their price to us we need to pass it along to you. This item was approved by Council as did the final item which left the storm water fee unchanged.

We concluded our spring and summer work on the Tax Rate and Budget at about 9:10 pm. As a quick reminder we have our Fall Town Hall meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 15 at 7:00pm at our Addison Conference Centre. Be sure to make plans to join us for what should be an interesting evening.

[Business Development](#)

On Tuesday, City Manager Ron Whitehead and I met with Plano Mayor Harry LaRosiliere, Plano City Manager Bruce D. Glasscock, Richardson Mayor Laura Maczka, and Richardson City manager Dan Johnson to discuss DART and the Cotton Belt Line. As you hopefully have noticed the Dallas Morning News has recently done stories that included quotes from Ron and I expressing our 30 year patience with DART and their promise to bring us rail here in Addison. This meeting with our colleagues from Richardson and Plano helped us build an important coalition focused on exploring every opportunity to make that promise a reality. It was great to hear the cooperative commitment to regional thinking and the focus to do what is right and best for our entire region. Plano and Richardson are now very important allies in our effort to bring to reality the DART promise to Addison for rail along the Cotton Belt Line. This is a very important development along that journey. We will continue to keep you informed as we make progress.

On Thursday morning I had the pleasure of meeting new Hilton Garden Inn owner representative Adam Suleman. Adam is the vice president acquisitions and asset management for the Equinox Hospitality group that was founded by his father. They are a family business that specializes in the real estate and hospitality business currently based in San Francisco. Adam and his group acquired the Hilton Garden Inn at 4090 Belt Line Road (slightly set back on the south side of Belt Line and across from Lefty's Seafood restaurant) in July and they have great plans for a remodel and significant upgrades and exciting improvements. Adam and his team have very extensive experience in the hospitality business and a clear vision for their Addison property. Adam was effusive in his praise of our staff and in particular with Development Services Director Carmen Moran and her pleasant and friendly helpfulness in helping Adam and his team learn about Addison. Adam already discovered what he calls "the best Whole Foods in the country" and is learning each day about our wide variety of food choices. We will make sure the new team feels the full warm embrace of our Addison Visitor Services team and will soon know that Addison was a very wise choice for their investment dollars.

Around Town

On Monday, about 20 of us gathered for a very pleasant informal mayor's lunch at Lazaranda Modern Mexican Kitchen and Tequila at 5000 Belt Line Road in the south west corner of Belt Line and the Tollway to show support for one of local businesses. Owners Mario and Antonio and their management team treated us so well! They let us group together in the very nice semi-private area they have on the west end of their restaurant; great for parties or events by the way. No speeches, not even any Q&A; just pleasant social time for nice Addison folks to get to know other nice Addison folks.

On Wednesday morning, the 12th anniversary of 9/11, City Manager Ron Whitehead and staff, Council Members Neil Resnik, Chris DeFrancisco, Bruce Arfsten, Blake Clemens and I gathered at Central Fire to join our Paramedic/Firefighter team for our annual 9/11 memorial hosted by our Addison Fire Department. It was a stirring ceremony and reminder of the sacrifices made by so many others and the sacrifices our team of First Responders are prepared to make for us each day to keep us safe. The ceremony included brief remarks, the tolling of the 5-5-5 bell, a moment of silence, lowering of the flags and playing of "Amazing Grace" by our AFD Piper, presentation of the wreath, and a reading of the Firefighter's Prayer. City Manager Ron Whitehead joined our firefighters for a reading of the names of all the emergency responder's names who perished making the ultimate sacrifice for us on 9/11, 12 years ago. We concluded the memorial by playing a recording of President Bush's address to the nation.



We adjourned to another much less somber ceremony—the “Push In” ceremony of our new Fire Engine—the ceremony is an old Fire Station tradition. When new equipment is put into service; there is an actual “push in” ceremony where the new pieces of apparatus are pushed into the station by the firefighters and anyone else interested. With all of our backs to the metal so to speak, we pushed in our newest apparatus, Engine 101 and our new Command Vehicle, which are now “officially in service!” It was a great way to end a very emotional morning.



Speaking of Fire Trucks—check out the picture here! No, this is not a picture of the Fire Truck we just replaced; however, it is our oldest! In fact, it’s a 1930 Seagrave that our fire department has held onto and is now restoring with the help of our new Addison Legacy Foundation. I have include a picture here, however to fully appreciate

the potential you need to see it! We will have it on display at Oktoberfest next weekend and you can check it out. It does not take much imagination to see how much fun this will be as a project and what a great symbol for our Fire Department, Town and the Legacy Foundation! Please stop by and admire the truck while you are at Oktoberfest and show your support by making your tax deductible contribution to this project. If all goes well we think we can have it all completed by spring of 2014, but we need your help to get started! We will not use any taxpayer dollars for the project, just your private donations. If you would like to work our booth at Oktoberfest, two volunteer hours gets you free admission to Oktoberfest. To sign up, go to ALFF.IVOLUNTEER.COM



On Thursday evening, Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore Bruce Arfsten, Mayor Pro Tempore Blake Clemens and I represented Addison as participants in the annual Dress for Success program designed to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. This is an amazing program. Program Manager Sandra Johnson shared with us that it empowers women with computer training skills, mock job interviews, resume preparation assistance and most importantly "Go Girliness." This is an outstanding program supported by contributions and not tax dollars; the results? Over 500 women served last year with a goal of 750 this year and all you need to do is check there wall of before and after photos of these women. Sure they look better because they are all so professionally dressed, however the sparkle in their eyes and obvious "empowerment" will bring tears to your eyes.

On Friday morning I joined Council colleagues Margie Gunther and Neil Resnik, along with City Manager Ron Whitehead, Fire Chief John O'Neal, Police Chief Ron Davis, Economic Development Director Orlando Campos, Economic Development manager Ben Magill and General Service Director Mark Acevedo for a tour and orientation at Metrocrest Social Services. CEO Tracy Eubanks and staff superstars Camilla Zimbal, Nicole Newkham and Mike Harris gave us a tour and shared with us their vision and passion for their mission to provide emergency assistance and comprehensive programs to move families toward self sufficiency. They do not simply offer a handout, rather guidance to a path of self sufficiency. Their work does make a very positive impact on our entire community with their service to over 11,000 very appreciative folks in 2012—450 of whom are our neighbors here in Addison. They certainly justify the services contract our Town has with them and every penny we provide out of our budget; however it is not enough. I hope you will look inside your heart and find a way to think about one of our neighbors and make a donation. You can double the impact of your donation by using this link this next Thursday September 19 between 7am and midnight. Page

Link: <https://www.donorbridgetx.org/npo/751548334> I hope you will help out.

[Coming Events](#)

Be sure to join us tomorrow for the "Pollination in the Garden" seminar offered by our Addison Arbor Foundation tomorrow morning from 9:30-11:30 at our Addison Athletic Club. In addition to the seminar you will enjoy meeting more of your fun neighbors and you will get a first peek at our new public Art project that the Arbor Foundation is just about to complete and unveil.

Mayor's Coffee at Astoria Café at 6pm in the Circle. Then, pop on over to Addison Oktoberfest for our official Keg Tapping Ceremony at 8pm to kick-off our 2013 Oktoberfest which runs from Thursday through Sunday in Addison Circle Park.

Have a great week and I look forward to seeing you at our annual "Keg Tapping" ceremony this Thursday at 8pm.

Thank you for the honor of being your mayor.

Todd