



Waterwood Neighborhood News

The Appraisal District and You

Have you protested your property appraisal lately? It is your right to protest the appraisals on an annual basis.

Our property taxes are based on a monetary value. Property taxes are local taxes. The local officials set a value on your property. They set your tax rates and they collect your taxes. Texas state law governs how this process works.

The goals of the San Jacinto County Appraisal District (District) "are to appraise all taxable property in an equal and uniform manner." The AD's typical office hours are from 8:00 AM till 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

The Appraisal Review Board

The property owner has a right as a taxpayer to protest to the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) if and when the owner disagrees with any of the District's actions concerning their property. A property owner must evaluate the costs of preparing a protest versus the potential tax savings.

The ARB is a group of citizens authorized to resolve disputes between taxpayers and the District. The District's board of directors appoints the ARB members. The ARB members must have been residents of the District for at least two (2) years.

The District should review your protest and try to resolve your concerns prior to meeting with the ARB. During a protest the ARB listens to both the taxpayer and the Chief Appraiser (CA). The ARB determines if the District has acted properly.

Spring Fling A Success



Over 150 Waterwoodians and their guests enjoyed the fellowship and BarBQ at the Waterwood Improvement Association annual "Spring Fling". The 2008 "Fling" was held at the Club near the swimming pool.

Many congratulations go out to Pat Willborn and her Committee for a job "well done" on the 2008 "Fling". The Board, plus Dixie Thornton, enjoyed meeting and feeding all of the Waterwoodians. The weatherman gave us great weather.

The "Fling" Golf Tournament attracted 40 golfers. The winning foursome was comprised of Harold Biggers, Ron Bridgeford, Boop Snapp, and Martin Taylor.

see more photos on pages 8 & 9

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Welcome to WNN

What a difference a month makes. Humidity and temperature are going higher every day, but aren't our trees beautiful. Waterwood is great place.

Happy Mother's Day to all you moms out there. We hope that you have a great day.

We have not heard a lot about the future of the Club and Golf Course. Rumors are that two different groups of people are looking at the facilities. We look forward to hearing some good news in the future.

Thank you Pat Willborn and her committee for a real nice "Spring Fling". A lot of hard work goes into making an event like this a success. Good Job Miss Pat.

Please mark your calendars for the annual **4th of July** celebration. Yes, Mr. R it will be held on Friday, July 4, 2008. Pat and her committee are planning all kinds of entertainment and of course the fireworks.

The June edition of the **WNN** will have a lot more of the details about the 4th. So invite your family and friends up to Waterwood for an "old time" 4th of July party.

We thank those of you who support and use the people who advertise in the **WNN**. These advertisers help defray some of the costs of sending you the WNN.

Please keep those emails coming, we really enjoy hearing from you. If you have any ideas on new articles or events that you want to share with your neighbors, please email us at the following address wnn@waterwoodwia.com.

Have a great May. We will talk with you in June. Remember its great to be a "Waterwoodian".



Computer Corner

By John Charlton



We now have a clean, safe, spam free, computer. Now let's get on to some fun things. This month we are going to look at some imaging programs.

All of us have pictures on our computer. For some of us it is the only reason, other than the Internet, and Email, we use tolerate the thing. I have found two very useful programs.

The first is Faststone's Image Browser. <http://www.faststone.org/> If you want to do some basic work with photos this is a great program. It will not do all the image editing you may want to do, but it will do the basics. Faststone offers other programs. I don't recommend all of them, because, some cost money, and the Image Browser does the same functions as the others.

When you bring Image Browser up, it will allow you to browse your computer's folders for pictures.

Double Clicking on a picture will bring it up on the screen. Move the mouse to each of the computer margins and windows will pop up allowing you to edit the photo, or giving you specific information.

Also you will notice that when the mouse is over the picture it looks like a magnifying glass. Click on a portion of the picture and it will enlarge

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The ARB must base its decisions on evidence. They hear evidence from both the taxpayer and the CA. The CA has the burden of proof in protest hearings. The ARB meetings are open to the public.

The CA must publicize annually the right to and methods for protesting before the ARB. The ARB can provide for hearing times on evenings and/or on the weekends.

If you believe the value on your property is too high, you should ask the District to explain your appraisal. You must develop as much information about your property as possible before you meet with the District's appraiser. Information that could help aid you in your presentation can come from blueprints, deed records, photos, surveys and other data relative to your property.

You want to include in your presentation any defects not noted in the District's survey. You can use photos, statements from builders and/or independent appraisers to prove your case.

You can collect information on recent sales of property similar to yours. Ask the District for the sales information that it used in your appraisal. You may also want to use the services of an independent appraisal by a real estate appraiser to aid you in your case.

Another protest item is your property being unequally compared with other properties in the district. You must determine whether the value of your property is closer to market value than other, similar properties in your area.

A property owner has the right to protest if the CA or the ARB fails to give him/her a required notice that the law compels them to send. Be sure that the District has your correct name and mailing address.

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WATERWOOD SECURITY

661-2800

SJCAD Phone (936) 653-1450

Fax (936) 653-5271

Web Site: www.sjcad.org

Locate your property: www.trueautomation.com

FILING YOUR PROTEST

The property owner must file a protest in writing. The District has protest forms available. A notice of protest must identify the owner, the property that is the subject of the protest, and you must indicate that you are dissatisfied with the decision made by the AD.

You must file your notice of protest by May 31 or no later than 30 days after the District mailed a notice of your appraised value to you. Please note that it is 30 days after the actual notice mailing date, not when you receive it.

Remember, if you do not file a notice of protest before the ARB approves the appraisal records, you will lose your right to protest. You will also lose your right to appeal the taxable value of your property.

After you file your protest, the ARB will notify you at least 15 days prior to your hearing, the time and place your hearing will be held. The District asks that you try to discuss with their offices the protest issue prior to the hearing. Many times this discussion leads to a solution without appearing before the ARB.

The property owner must appear at a hearing. This can be done in person, by affidavit or through an agent.

Present a simple and well-organized protest based on clear evidence. You must stress key facts and figures. Write them down in logical order and give copies to each ARB member. You must give a copy of your presentation to the District prior to the hearing. Please us as many photos and back up documents as possible.

The ARB acts as an independent judge in the appeals hearing. They will listen to both sides of appeal prior to making their decision. The CA has the burden of proving your property's value by the preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing. If the CA fails to meet this burden of proof, the ARB must decide in your favor.

When the ARB rules on your protest, it will send you a written notice by certified mail. If you are dissatisfied with the ARB's findings, you have the right to appeal its decision to the state district court in the county in which your property is located. Within 45 days of receiving the written notice, you must file a petition for review with the district court.

At the district court, the property owner may ask to have his/her dispute resolved through arbitration, by a jury or by a judge. There are different fees involved when filing at the district court. The property owner should contact the district clerk's office to determine his/her actual expenses prior to filing.

WNN has interviewed "Waterwoodians" who have gone through the arbitration and jury resolution process. The following is a brief synopsis of these interviews.

The Arbitration Resolution: One of the "Waterwoodians" we interviewed decided to protest through the "binding arbitration" route. You must apply for binding arbitration within 45 days after notice from the ARB. You must complete the request for binding arbitration form prepared by the Comptroller. You must submit the form and a **\$500.00** deposit to the District.

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The District will forward your request and deposit to the Comptroller. The Comptroller will appoint an arbitrator that both you and the District agree upon. The arbitrator will arrange for an arbitration proceeding.

The arbitrator will consider the evidence presented by the parties. The arbitrator then issues his/her decision concerning the property in question. If the arbitrator's decision is closer to your value, the District will pay the arbitrator's fee and the Comptroller will refund your deposit less ten percent.

If the arbitrator's decision is closer to the District value or equal to half of the difference between your value and the District's value, then the arbitrator's fee is paid from your deposit.

The arbitrator found in favor of the "Waterwoodian". "The value was changed to meet the protest value and I got \$450.00 of my deposit returned."

~~The Trial by Jury Resolution. Out because~~

he said "I had a good case and I felt a jury would be sympatric to may cause."

Our "Waterwoodian's" tale is as follows: "I decided to go "Pro Se" or handle the case by myself without a lawyer. I went down to the District Clerk's office in Coldspring and discussed what I was trying to do. They were very friendly and told me about the filing fees. I told them that I wanted a jury trial and my fees were **\$368.00** and some change."

"I asked them if they had any similar cases in their files. They review their files and brought me similar cases. I read the files and I asked them to make copies of certain documents. I believe I paid \$1.00 per page for the research and copy."

"Well, I took these documents home and reviewed them. I decided to build my protest on

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my lot price increases that were based upon the **NRPI** land purchases and sales in late 2006. I used the copied documents as a format for my protest. I typed the initial petition for review, using the prior case as a template for my document.”

“When you sue the SJCAD, get ready for a lot of paperwork. They hired a Houston law firm with a fancy Houston address to answer my suit. I still don’t understand why the SJCAD doesn’t use the County Attorney or a local lawyer to handle their cases. What do I know?”

“Anyway, the first set of documents came certified to the house. I think they asked 92 questions. I answered them, as best I could, and I used their filing as a template and asked them some 40 questions about the SJCAD, its operations and its relationship with NRPI.”

“We went back and forth for a couple of months. I don’t know how many hours were billed to the SJCAD, but I have boxes full of correspondence relative to this suit. One day I get a phone call from one of the attorneys that I had been corresponding with. He advised me that his client was ready to settle the matter.”

“Well, I got my lot values rolled back to the amount I had asked for. I got my filing fees returned in full. I believe everyone should protest their property values and if you do not get the results you think you should, carry your protest forward.”

The **WNN** thanks those “Waterwoodians” who took part in the writing of this article. We do not recommend taking any of the aforementioned actions. We believe that each property owner must evaluate their property values and take the necessary steps to correct any and all problems.



April WIA Board Meeting

President Jack Zimmermann called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. There were 16 guests in attendance.

Texas State Representative Jim McReynolds was a special guest. Mr. McReynolds advised those at the meeting on the road and highway situation throughout Texas and our area. He also discussed how his office can be of assistance to “Waterwoodians”.

The Architectural Control Board Chairman reported eleven first violation notices were mailed out. Five second notices were also mailed out. The ACB approved five small improvement project applications.

President Zimmermann advised that he had appointed Barbara Bunyard to fill an opening on the ACB.

Maintenance Committee Chairman, John Charlton, advised the Board that the committee is preparing a new maintenance contract bid proposal. The current contract expires in August of this year. Bids will be taken from interested parties.

Under the “Unfinished Business” segment of the meeting, Director Nabers reported that she is continuing to look into moving the Waterwood signs at FM 980 and Highway 190. President Zimmermann appointed a committee to design specifications for bidding this potential move. The committee will consist of President Zimmermann, Pat Nabers and Baldomar Garcia.

Waterwood members Janice Messina and Trista Byrd addressed the Board concerning the water hyacinth problem in and around our community. After discussion by the Board and guests, President Zimmermann agreed to write a letter to the TRA requesting their assistance with this problem.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 AM.

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Computers continued from page 2

One of the strong points of Image Browser is the ability to Rename and Resize photos. Go to the Tools menu and you will see these options. This program really has too many options to explain them all here. So download it and play around. Hey it's free, so why not!

The second program is EasyCapture. <http://www.xydownload.com/easycapture/> This is a simple little program that does only one thing. It captures what is on your screen and allows you to print it or save it as a file. It will capture the entire screen, or you can select an option to capture only a portion of the screen. This program comes in handy when you want to include a portion of a website or program screen in an email or say



OLD FASHIONED 4TH OF JULY PLANNED

The Community Social Events Committee chaired by Pat Willborn is planning an outstanding 'ole fashioned" Independence day celebration at Waterwood on Friday, July 4, 2008.

Current plans are to hold the event at the marina. There will be many events to watch and be a part of during the day and evening.

Tentative plans are to have a boat decoration and parade, a golf cart decoration contest and a 4th of July costum judging contest. Hourly door prizes will be given away.

Many contests and games are being planned. There will be live music. The highlight of the evening will be the fireworks display around 9:00 PM.

See the June WNN for more details.



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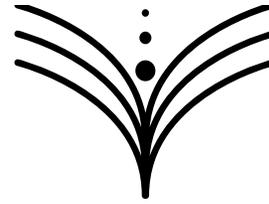
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		Date	4/12/08	
Tournament Summary				
Barns Stanley	71	Summa Carter	70	
Steve Rykledge		E.J. Swartzler		
Norman Strapp		David Shetter		
Ruth Winton		Pat Nabers		
Marlin Taylor	68	Mike Payne	71	
Harold Biggers		Stacy Landry		
Ben Bridgford		Diik Vanden		
Deep Snapp		Shirley Allen		
Gene Owens	72	Gene Schullings		
Gary Hauer		Tim Kunit Kawasaki		
Joe Moore		Chie Thurston		
Ivanita Honer		Carolyn Shetter		
Don Thornton	74	Earl McVay	69	
Joe Hile		Bill Hile		
Mr. Keller		Arnis Wilke		
Carol McVay		Margaret Evers		
Willie Wiggins	69	Gene Hauer		
Nathan Schump		Sam Nabers		
Berry Waples		David Chase		
Tommie Kusakowski		Andy Hanson		
25♣	Closest to Pin #2		71	
26♣	Closest to Pin #7		14	



Cookin' with Joe Bob

(Chef Bill was out of pocket at press time
so here is Joe Bob's favorite)

Lake Burgers

Ingredients

1 Pound of Ground Round	1 Bottle of Catsup
4 Freshly Baked Buns	1 Bottle of Musturd
1 Medium Sized Onion	1 Bottle of Pickels (your choice)

Directions

Take the wrappings off of the Hamberger meat, plastic ruins the taste
With your hands, after washing them, make four patties and set them on a plate
Start the grill and let the coals heat up, don't use gasoline
Take your buns, hamberger buns, and slice with sharp knife, lay on plate
Take the plate of patties to the grill and gently place patties on the grill
Let the patties simmer until cooked to your desire
While the meat's cookin, use that sharp knife to slice the oninons
Take the buns to the grill and softly put on the patties for a few seconds
Take the patties and buns off of the grill, slop on catsup & mustard
Eat with corn on the cob, fries or chips
Serve with beer, soda, water, whiskey or wine
If you don't like this recipe, Call Nell's Burgers for the best on the lake

ENJOY

Neighborhood Pets



Samantha and Sadie Shideler

Since we did not have any "Pet" articles at press time, your loyal editor was honored to use his two dogs as the pets of the month. Sadie came with our house when we moved here in July of 2001.

She was the neighborhood puppy who loved and licked everyone. What a little ball of delite. She has grown a little bit, and now is the "queen" of the house.

She lays on the couch and guards the house. Sometimes mom puts her our in the yard and she guards Bay Hill. She still has never met a stranger and her kisses are sweet.

Sadie says, "everything was great at ths Shideler household until the Fall of 2006. That is when mom brought home the '*dog from Hell*', Samantha".

Sam, as she is called, was a young pup that was abused during the first year of her life. When we got her, four families had tried to manage her and all had failed to love her.



Sam, isn't she an angel

We felt that the "Dog Whisperer" could never get her mind right. But with lots of love and a bunch of gray hair for Sadie, Sam is coming around and soon will be a loving member of the Waterwood pet community.

The two Shideler girls can be seen walking their mother all around the area. They, like their parents love their Waterwood home.

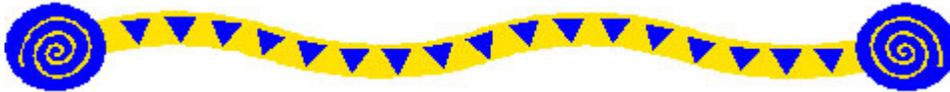


Please keep your pets on a leash at all times while walking through the community. We have many pets in Waterwood and we need to keep them under control. Your help in this matter is appreciated by your neighbors.

If you have any problems with loose animals, please call the WIA office 891-7710 or security at 661-2800.

Do you know of any special Waterwood pets that you would like to feature? Let us know at wnn@waterwoodwia.com.

THE WATERWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS
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