

FROM THE MAYOR – AUGUST 2016

We lost a long-time member of our community last month. It was a tree.

The Post Oak tree on East Tripp Road, well over a hundred years old, just fell over one day. Many of you know the tree that I'm writing about as it's been your friend, too, for a long time. For years, I'd driven by the tree and appreciated it, but I really got to know it better a few years ago after it was mishandled.

A former Town staff member had incorrectly advised the property owner of the residence to which the tree belonged to severely trim back the tree to correct an overhang that was creating a potential issue on Tripp. After the cutting was complete, the tree went into shock. Some concerned neighbors reached out to me and, after some discussions with the property owner, staff and the neighbors, we sought the help of a professional arborist. After a great deal of examination and testing, the arborist confirmed that the tree was dying because of the trimming and offered only slight hope that it could be saved because of its age. There was no hesitation on anyone's part, however, and the arborist was directed to do what he could to save the tree.

After weeks of effort, the arborist indicated that he thought the tree would survive and it, indeed, recovered and prospered for several years. The arborist came by twice a year to monitor the tree and treat it as necessary. Everyone was relieved until last month when nature took over and the tree came down.

Why the heck am I spending time writing about a tree?

It seems that each of us, after we've lived in Sunnyvale for a while, tend to 'adopt' some special part or aspect of our community as our own – even if we don't own it. It might be a large tract of horse pasture that our kids love to visit or a stretch of road with lots of curves and open spaces. You might really appreciate an old house that's been preserved for decades or it might be Kearney's store and its assortment of items. My wife, Cindy, loves it when we drive Sunnyvale roads at night looking for 'critters' that are getting more difficult to spot. For some, it might simply be an old tree that's been around long before you were born or even before there was a Sunnyvale.

The challenge we all face as our Town continues to grow is how to best balance the preservation of our past as we move into the Sunnyvale that we will eventually build out to be. I've written about this challenge often and it's just as important to me today as it was when I first became involved with the community. I'm not alone in having this perspective as I've spoken with many of you – long time or very new residents – who voice the same concerns and offer ideas on how to find that balance. There will be times when we must be ready to make extraordinary efforts to preserve a part of our past as not to lose the history or uniqueness of Sunnyvale which are our roots.

We all want Sunnyvale to remain unique and most special. We've all got to work together to make ensure that we remain committed to that aim whether it's working out the details of a larger residential subdivision, deciding the best design for our roads or how to preserve a very old tree that's an important part of our Town.

MEET THE MAYOR FOR AUGUST (held at Town Hall)

- Thursday, August 4 – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
- Saturday, August 6 – 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
- Thursday, August 18 – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
- Saturday, August 20 – 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

I welcome the opportunity to meet with individual citizens or groups at other times more convenient to you. To schedule time, call me at home at 972-226-3757.