



A Visit with Malarie Gotcher, OKC Utilities & Terry Ash, OKC Dept. of Parks & Recreation

We've had two meetings since the last newsletter (remember meetings are 6 times a year while the newsletter is 4 times a year), so we'd like to present summaries of both presentations.

Malarie Gotcher is actually with the OSU Extension Service which is partnering with the OKC Utilities and the water conservation program. She spoke at the June 12 meeting.

The City gets water from 6 lakes, although Canton is so low, the City is just using 5 right now. At the time of the meeting, the City was at a combined 62% water capacity. Canton had dropped to 15%.

Even though it has been a wet summer, we are still in drought conditions, as there are more factors in play than just rainfall. So we must always conserve water—that is why the odd/even system is permanently in effect. Hand watering can be done any day of the week, however.

Bermuda grass is drought tolerant so it doesn't need a lot of rain. The best way to tell if your Bermuda needs watering is to walk on it. If the grass doesn't spring back, it is time to water. Also, when watering, water deep. Shallow watering keeps the roots just on the surface and is bad for the grass, keeping it dependent on frequent watering. So don't baby your Bermuda. At www.sip.mesonet.org you can find a simple and interactive irrigation plan that helps you figure out how many minutes you should water your lawn, based on rainfall, the type of grass, and kind of sprinkler system.

Fescue (shade grass) is difficult to grow and maintain in central Oklahoma as we are right on the border of being suitable. It tends to require a lot of reseeding and moisture. She recommended looking at alternatives, such as mulch, perennials, benches or landscape features.

Since many of us have sandy yards in this area that water quickly drains through, she suggested adding compost over time will help. Plants that say well-drained soil on their labels are the kinds we should be planting here. Other parts of the city have heavy clay, which requires different kinds of plants and amendments.

Malarie also encouraged soil testing through the OSU Extension Service. It just costs \$10.00 and should be done every 3 years. Another idea was rain barrels. They are an especially good alternative for areas that a hose can't easily reach. Mulch is a good way to save water and provide a buffer against temperature changes.

OSU has a drought-tolerant guide that also includes heat/cold/sun requirements.

Some handy links are:

<http://water.okstate.edu/projects/water-conservation/landscaping-practices>

<http://oklahomagardening.okstate.edu/resources>

<http://www.squeeezeverydrop.com>

Terry Ash is a Park Planner/Landscape Architect with the Parks & Recreation Department who is also the Acting Assistant Director. He spoke at our August 14 meeting.

Oklahoma City is the 7th largest U.S. city in geographical size. This does not include the suburbs like Bethany, Edmond, Moore, etc.

OKC Parks & Recreation has about 7,000 acres to maintain. These include parks, spraygrounds & aquatic centers, medians, right of ways, public areas, trails, and water reservoir areas such as the Oklahoma River. The Department also maintains 10 community centers. A special division handles the Civic Center. The Myriad used to be under Parks & Recreation, but has been spun off into its own entity. About 90-100 people work for the department full time, plus there are seasonal hires as well.

The division works hand in hand with a number of other departments and trusts, including the Riverfront Redevelopment, Golf Course, Game & Fish, Planning and Utilities.

Oklahoma City's first master plan was drawn up in 1907. It included 4 cornerstone parks—Lincoln, Trosper, Will Rogers, and Woodson. Grand Boulevard would form an outer ring, connecting the 4 parks. Over the years, the City has passed a number of geobond issues. There was a gap between 1974 and 1995 when no bonds were passed/no capital improvements made.

Geobond improvements since 1995 include: adding sidewalks and benches in parks, building aquatic centers and spraygrounds, filling potholes in parking lots at parks, creating ADA access to community centers, improving the Softball Hall of Fame, Core to Shore Park, new BiCentennial Park, new Soccer Complex, Route 66 Park, and two Senior Centers.

The last geobond issue approved was for \$1.4 million and those bonds will be issued in 2 to 3 years from now. Among other things, it will provide another phase to the Route 66 Park.

The new director, Doug Kupper, is eager to reach out to the community and create partnerships that help make parks the focal points of community life. Due to limitations in funding, the department looks to make additions where the most number of people can be served. It also wants to encourage economic development/destination places. For example, the southside Soccer Fields drew a larger soccer tournament that had an estimated 10 million dollar impact to the local economy.

The mission of the Oklahoma City Parks & Recreation Department is to provide parks, recreational and cultural services to Oklahoma City residents and visitors so they can enjoy an enhanced quality of life. To that end, a new master plan was drawn up in 2012. It and a variety of useful links can be found at

<http://www.okc.gov/parks/index.html>.



And now, a few words from our President!

Hi neighbors!

On October 9 our speaker will be Mike Love who is with our Oklahoma City Office of Emergency Management. We will also have our election of officers on that night. Please attend.

Our yearly dues can be paid during our October meeting as well. The cost is just \$10.00 per household!

Thanks to all of our members who installed our new signs on our existing sign posts throughout our neighborhood entrances.

And thanks to all for buying ads in our newsletters— we appreciate you.

Remember to keep your eyes open for anything that might seem strange. Our police have explained that the summer months are the busiest and we are their eyes and ears in our neighborhood.

I hope your summer has been great and you've enjoyed our rain and cooler temps.

If you need a street storm drain cleaned out, do not call the Action Line. Instead call 297-3451.

Be safe and hope to see you Sept 9 for Neighbor's Night Out!

Karen Williams, President

Rebates for Ranges

If you're in the market for a new range, you could receive up to \$200.00 in rebates through the Oklahoma Natural Gas Energy-Efficiency Program. Rebates are available for purchase and installation of free-standing all gas ranges. Cooktops and combination natural gas/electric ranges do not qualify. For more information, visit www.oklahomanaturalgas.com/rebates.



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 December. Deadlines are the 15th of the preceding month.
 Contact either the President or the newsletter coordinators for more information.