

# HOUSTON LAKER

OCTOBER 2023

SINCE MARCH 1957 - EDITION #66

## CITY COUNCIL

Fall Brush Pick-Up will be October 16th and 17th. See flyer included in this edition.

Next Council Meeting will be Monday, October 8, 2023

## VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOC

The Annual VGHA Meeting will be held Saturday October 21st at 1pm. Please see inserts for more information of what will be voted on.

## RESIDENTS SPEAK

Thank you to all the Residents that contributed to the Laker this Month! This is a paper for all and it needs to be written by all.

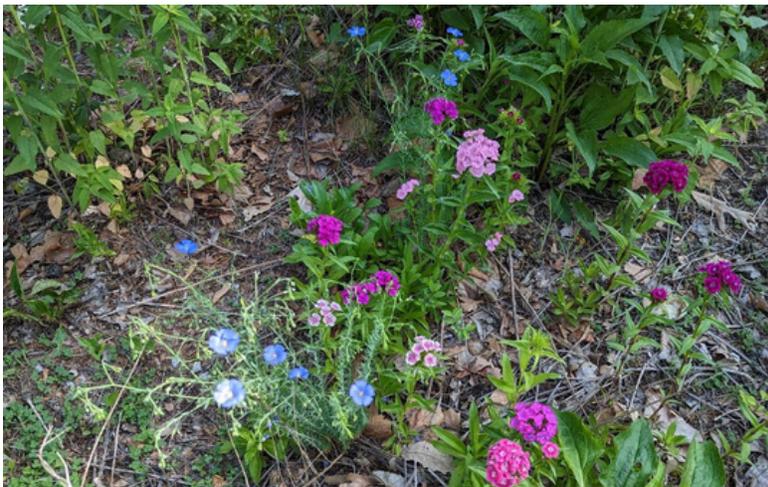


PHOTO: KATHRYN KREIDER

## CITY HALL WILDFLOWER BED

With the help of several volunteers, the wildflower bed has been prepared for the winter. Grasses were pulled, to not only remove the seed pods, but to remove the roots, as grass propagates both ways. Walnut, oak and mimosa tree seedlings were pulled, although the squirrel neighbors will undoubtedly plant more this fall. Invasive wildflowers like tickseed and goldenrod were removed in hopes they do not return next year. Although both are lovely, they would take over the whole space within a couple of years. Cosmos, Indian Blanket and wild Daisy seeds were planted. As in the wild, those flowers would have dropped their seeds. The cold winter is part of their regenerative cycle. Next spring and summer will again anticipate the new blooms, transplanted wildflower donations and weed out invasive plants. By 2025, it should be fully established with the wildflowers controlling the weeds, attracting birds and butterflies and providing lovely blooms all summer.

## GARDEN PLANTER UP FOR ADOPTION!

The blue/green concrete flower planter box beside the side steps near the flag in front of city hall is ready for adoption. It has been cleared out and next spring it is ready for new plants - annuals, perennials, bulbs, whatever the adoptive gardener wishes. The soil will probably need some amendment, but it is nice loose soil. Whoever adopts will need to remember to regularly water whatever they plant. Feel free to contact Kathryn Kreider for advice or to claim the planter.

dkecoronado@sbcglobal.net

Thanks to Marsha Duncan, Mike Hallauer, Shelly Broll, Sydney Strobbe, Maddox Strobbe, Annemarie Murphy and Ellie, Lisa Shepard, Teena Walker-Robin, Carolyn Carey, Kay HOneycutt, Victoria Grace, Linda Kramer, Sarah Schofield - who helped, provided advice and gave encouragement!

Kathryn Kreider

## STORIES FROM...

## GENE CHARLES

I'm just a 93 year old nobody and certainly not a writer. I've just been asked to write some of my stories for our Lake paper.

When I was growing up on the farm, at one time I got 6 duck eggs and placed them under a sitting hen to incubate. When they hatched, it was both san and funny to see mama hen run up and down the bank of the creek that ran by our house while her "chicks" frolixked in the water.

They were all females so when they grew up they somehow hooked up with a wild mallard. They would be gone for weeks at a time and it seemed that people downstream were always telling me that they saw my ducks.

From time to time they would come home and I would pen them up, feed them and mom and I would pluck their downy feathers. Then they would leave to meet the mallard that tried to sty just out of our sight.

Several weeks later they would come home to the same routine. Mom used the feathers to make feather beds to sleep under on the coldest nights because we had no heat over night.

Later on I got 6 guinea eggs and incubated them under a sitting hen. They all hatched all females.

When they grew up, one guinea hen took a fancy to a chicken rooster. She lead him around by his comb and if she wanted to eat or whatever, she parked his head at what I'd call "half mast" and if he moved she would re-park his head. I felt so sorry for that rooster, because his comb would sometimes bleed where she latched onto him.

Those guineas roosted in the top of an apple tree and they would sound off at night if anything disturbed them. They were good "watch dogs". I don't know whatever happened to any of my pets.

Our annual VGHA meeting is coming up October 21, 2023. I wanted to take a moment to share some of the board's accomplishments of the last year.

We worked to establish a committee based system where each board member worked in a specialty area. The board chose Lake Management, ByLaws, Communications, Grants and Finance as their areas of focus. This made delegation of tasks easier as it was directed to the member active in the committee. Board members interact and provide guidance to planning committees. Committees report to the board by providing meeting minutes.

An Oversight Committee was created for the purpose of updating, streamlining and clarifying the bylaws, restriction agreement and rules and regulations. They have been working hard all year starting with the bylaws.

A website and facebook page were created linking to the Houston Lake and Laker websites to help residents navigate and communicate with their HOA and City.

Banking needs were evaluated and the HOA ultimately moved banks and invested available resources in a premier money market account. The account earns approximately \$500 per month for the HOA.

We're investigating and researching additional payment options for our members' use.

Liens were filed for significantly late dues on homes of the members.

Documentation of board processes and procedures were created to ensure smooth transitions for future boards.

Restoration and protection of the dam - This became a top priority after research indicated the tall grass and shrubbery is a haven for burrowing animals. Animals such as muskrats and gophers that tunnel through ground weaken the dam and could cause the dam to collapse. Cutting down the growth and reseeding every year is the recommended plan for the future. The lake side of the dam needs to be cleared of all growth for dam stability. A grant was applied and awarded \$2,208 for the work completed.

Evaluated future need and timing for grass carp to be added. Addition of the carp will be needed in 2026.

Removal of trees and scrub brush around the peninsula - this project was completed for beautification and to allow our members to enjoy their view. This will continue to be scheduled for spring and late summer.

Beach and swim area - the project to clean up, rake and make the beach usable for the summer season as well as weekly washes of the dock for members' enjoyment. The swim dock rails were replaced for safety concerns.

The boat dock ramp was replaced for member use.

Goose egg addling and scare off - during nesting season goose nest eggs are dipped in oil to prevent new offspring. In migration season, the HOA completes a series of 'bangers and screechers' deployment using strategic placement to scare off the interloping geese.

Research for water depth measuring and increasing depth of lake - unfortunately the technology acquired from the previous board wasn't able to work in the desired way. The previous board was unable to produce or locate the data they collected. A resident purchased their own technology and started mapping depth from around the lake to have a baseline of where we are so we can determine how much silt washes in each year. The goal is to remove more silt every year than comes in. The board is currently working on solutions and will hold a member meeting once a plan has been devised.

Whistle clean out - the two whistles coming into the lake and silt pond were cleared out as they were completely clogged and water was forced around them. This project will continue with maintenance as needed.

Spillway - it was discovered the flute coming off I-29 is malfunctioning and causing a hole at the bottom of the spillway. We are working with MODOT and perhaps will need legal action in the future to repair the damage to the spillway.

Trash Can for Mayor's Park - the trash can was damaged several years ago due to a fire. A new one has been ordered and will be installed once it arrives.

Hosted an Ice Cream Social ahead of Lake Cleanup Day. We had more volunteers than in recent years and a cleaner lake as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the President of your HOA for the past year and hope you recognize the success we've had as a board and community.

All my best,  
Pam Freese  
VGHA President

## **NEW BOAT RAMP DOCK!!!**

Submitted by Katherine Stockbauer

Goeden Dock Services completed the installation of our new HOA dock by the boat ramp today and removed the old dock! Our new dock has encapsulated foam, it is larger than our old dock 10 x 12, with a longer ramp 4 x 15, along with 4 cleats! Our new ramp has handrails and Canoe racks! It's really nice! Below are pics.



# Annual Tree, Brush, and Limb Pickup



Tree trunks up to 30 inches in diameter and six feet long.

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Starting on Monday, October 16, 2023, a claw truck will be picking up roadside tree trunks, limbs, and brush. Please have any of the above out to the front of your property by 3:00 PM

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Sunday, Oct. 15, to be tagged.

Tagging is proof that your limbs and brush were put out on time. Limbs put

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out after Sunday, October 15, might not be picked up.

## What they won't take

- Leaves
- Lumber
- Anything over six feet long
- Diameter over 30 inches.
- Anything that hasn't grown naturally on your property (except leaves).
- Your family or friend's tree limbs that were transported in from another town.

## What they will take

- Yard waste, walnuts, and other tree droppings, odd-shaped logs in paper or plastic bags
- brush, tree limbs, and tree trunks stacked within 10 feet of the road. Ensure they are away from overhead power lines and other obstructions that may interfere with the mechanical claw that will pick them up.

### Leaves Pick-up

Leaves pick-up will be done in the weeks following the brush pick-up. Please arrange payment to the City of Houston Lake of \$4.00 per bag. Call Chuck Stone at 816 305-3196 to arrange pick-up. Missouri Organic charges \$2.00 per bag and the extra \$2.00 covers mileage expenses charged to the City of Houston Lake.

If you have any questions please call Chuck Stone at 816 305-3196

# FALL

Dear Houston Lakers:

It's that wonderful time between summer and winter. Time to button up the yard work, clear out the gardens and tighten up the house. It's a busy time for all of us. Houston Lake Code Enforcement just has a few friendly reminders as we put summer away.

Please remember to take your **trash cans back to the house** after pick-up; this is especially important in the winter so your neighbors and other vehicles have room to get around them on slick streets.

## Section 230.030 Collections of Solid Waste

C. Solid waste containers as required by this Chapter for the storage of residential solid waste shall be placed at the curbside for collection but shall not be so placed until after 6:00 PM on the day next proceeding the regularly scheduled collection day. Containers shall be removed from the curbside no later than 8:00 PM on the day of collection.

As you clean up your yards for fall, and for the remainder of mowing season, please make sure you are mowing your lot to the street; it is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain any and all easements and right of ways.

## Section 215.110 Weeds, high grass or other Vegetation

A. Failure to Keep Weeds, High Grass and Other Vegetation Cut and Removed, A Nuisance,  
All persons owning or occupying any lot or tract for land in the City shall keep the weeds, high grass or other vegetation growing on such property cut and removed. Whenever such weeds, high grass or other vegetation shall attain the height of eighteen (18) inches, it shall be deemed a public nuisance.

Please make sure you have **house numbers on your house**. This makes it easier for emergency services to find you if you need them. The response from fire and police when asked how they find the proper address when they get a call out for an emergency, "They just have to search for the correct address" Please don't take a chance on them having to search for you when you need them as fast as possible. City Ordinance requires that the house numbers be no less the four inches in height, more if they can not be seen from the street.

## Section 235.070 Exterior Structure

B. Premises Identification. Buildings shall have address numbers assigned by the City placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Address numbers shall be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of four (4) inches high with a minimum stroke width of one-half (0.5) inch.

## No King on Houston Lake

By Wendy Thompson

At a recent meeting, I overheard someone say that "HOA is King." I was surprised and a little concerned at that remark. Since I was sure it was taken out of context, I decided to look up our Articles of Incorporation. I did not see a single mention of a king. So, I then looked up the definition of king. Although the word king can mean 'the best of', it most often means the 'most powerful person'. Notice it is singular. The Homes Association is not a single person. It represents a community. It was not set up to support a monarch. Houston Lake is not a kingdom.

The Articles of Incorporation say that our Homes Association was formed as a benevolent association under the laws of Missouri. It should operate as an association of neighbors and should be handled in a democratic manner. Under the auspices of the City of Houston Lake, the Homes Association is viewed as an additional resident, albeit a neighbor that has the collective voice. The Homes Association has property that must be maintained as City ordinances dictate just like each of the residents here. Those ordinances also protect us as a community - with police and fire protection, for example. Still, no king was mentioned.

Now, I am a firm believer in the power of the people as a collective. We exercise that power when we vote. We try to elect good leaders, people we trust to consider the larger community, people who strive for balance ... but not a king. Kings are not usually elected which may be why they treat it too lightly. It comes too easily. They feel entitled. They do not have to be concerned with the responsibility of balance. And that is what bothered me about the statement I overheard. Kings rule their people. A Homes Association governs their community. I prefer the latter. While I don't have much faith in one person who wants all the power, I do trust in the ability of a small group of dedicated people working together for the common good.

# **Venetian Gardens Homes Association**

## **2023 Annual Membership Meeting**

**Saturday October 21st, 2023**

**1:00pm – City Hall**

**5417 N. Adrian Ave., Houston Lake, Mo. 64151**

- Voting on approval of 2023/2024 Budget**
- Voting on Lake Assessment dues**
- Voting on 2 new Board Members**
- Voting for President and Vice President**

The Homes Association fiscal year starts October 1, 2023 and ends September 30, 2024

As we head into our annual October Meeting for Venetian Gardens Homes Association, I want to introduce you to our three candidates who will be running.

Susan Hodges is a long time resident, her family moved here in 1973. She has worked as an accountant and served on the board since 2017 as Treasurer. For years Susan pulled double duty as Secretary and Treasurer. Susan brings a passion for level headed thinking to any proposal and often plays “devil’s advocate” to ensure the board has considered decisions from different angles. Sue keeps a diligent eye on our budget and keeps spending on track. She is always open, personable and willing to listen and talk with her neighbors.

Frank Wilson has lived in Houston Lake since March 2014. He is retired from the U.S. Department of Justice after serving for 35 years as a criminal trial lawyer. He and his wife Debbie volunteer at their church food pantry, where they also help care for the grounds. As for why he has volunteered to further serve his community, Frank says, “I have enjoyed living here and would like to help make Houston Lake a safe and enjoyable community for all who live here. I think I have analytical skills, common sense, and would see that all opinions are heard and appreciated before decisions are made.”

Katherine Stockbauer moved to Houston Lake in 2021. When a vacancy opened, Katherine stepped up to fill a 1 year term as Secretary for the HOA. Katherine has a passion for Houston Lake and has worked hard to keep up HOA areas of recreation for the members' use. In an effort to control the goose population, she spearheaded and executed the goose addling project as well as the goose scare away project. She networked to connect our HOA with competent and affordable labor to repair and replace docks, clear away brush and remove limbs, logs and debris from the lake and culverts. When she takes on a project, Katherine will follow it through to completion. She is a fierce advocate for any threat to the lake.

We hope to see you at the Annual Meeting on October 21, 1:00 at City Hall. Zoom will be available for those interested.

Thank you,  
Pam Freese  
President VGHA

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Venetian Gardens Homes Association				CASH BASIS		
2023-2024						
Budget Preliminary				2023	2023	2024
					(8-31-23)	
				Budget	Actual	Budget
Estimated Dues Payment				47,700	53,884	50,625
Office general and admin				2,000	3,170	4,410
Mowing				6,000	971	2,700
Lake, grounds and beach Maintenance				15,000	7,973	22,110
Legal				5,000	725	5,000
Insurance				3,000	2,921	3,500
Unforeseen event				1,500	1,500	4,000
Utilities				1,750	1,439	2,220
Reserve funds				13,450		0
Total expenses and reserve				47,700	18,699	43,940
Other revenue/expense					2,822	
Balance				0	38,007	6,685

Thanks to all of you for attending our Community Garden Meeting and brunch Saturday, August 26 at City Hall. Great discussions and sharing of information as well as food.

Ethan Dean brought his wonderful salsa he made from our garden veggies and Carolyn Carey brought a delicious vegetarian quiche. She gave me her recipe which I will post later.

We discussed how well the garden did this year. The weather was certainly in our favor. All were in favor of having the first Houston Lake City Market next year during our first harvest time....around July. Ethan said that he was going to help us with putting much needed new dirt in all of the beds.

Sam Morgan gave a demo and Q&A on the art of canning. His wife Emily, added a lot to the discussion, as she was raised on a farm and did a lot of canning.

Victoria Wilson gave a demo on growing your own medicinal mushrooms. She showed us how we could make tea out of dried mushrooms. She promised to take some pictures of her growing process.

It was great having a group of our gardeners together sharing information and learning about our neighbors. We will be having another meeting in the fall to plan for next year's garden.

Thank you all so much for all you do!



A special "Thank You" goes to Teena Walker-Robin for all her work for the Garden and sharing the listening session with us.

# Who's Responsible for Maintaining Ditches and Culverts in HL?

SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 / TEENA WALKER-ROBIN

The responsibility for the maintenance of ditches and culverts on private property in 4th class cities in Missouri can vary depending on local ordinances and regulations. 4th class cities in Missouri have a degree of autonomy in enacting their own local ordinances, so the rules regarding the maintenance of ditches and culverts can differ from one 4th class city to another.

The author of this post is not an attorney. However, from this layman's perspective, Section 215.010 of the Houston Lake City Code, addresses nuisances affecting health, safety, welfare, and prosperity within the city. While it does mention interference with "gutter, sewer or natural drainage," it doesn't explicitly define who is required to maintain ditches and culverts on private property.



Photo by Sole Montaner on [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

However, the statute contains a broader provision (Section B) that makes it unlawful for any owner, lessee, occupant, or their agents to cause, permit, or maintain a nuisance on any lot or land within the City of Houston Lake or within one-half (½) mile of its corporate limits. This provision is general and doesn't specify ditches and culverts but encompasses a wide range of nuisances.

In essence, the statute establishes a general responsibility for property owners, lessees, occupants, and their agents to avoid causing or permitting nuisances on their properties.

In short, ditches and culverts are the responsibility of their owner or owner agent.

## Drainage ditches and culverts in yards

If you have a drainage ditch that runs through your private property, you, the property owner are responsible for maintaining it. This means cleaning out excess leaves and debris so the water can run through. Another way to keep them clean is to make sure that grass clippings from the lawn mower are not ending up in the drainage ditch. Don't allow pollutants, fertilizers, or pet waste into the drainage system. And lastly, keep your culverts clear of stone or dirt.

## Culverts and ditches on public property

Culverts crossing public roads and ditches and or culverts on public property are the property of the people, and the city government is the people's custodian. Roadway drainage ditch and culvert maintenance is the responsibility of the city. The management of roadway stormwater helps keep the roadways safe. It also helps reduce standing water that can cause cars to hydroplane. Proper maintenance also slows the deterioration of roadways which poor drainage can lead to.

To get a more precise understanding, it is advisable to consult the full text of the city code and/or your favorite legal resource directly for clarification.

# The Liberty Tree: A Centuries-Old White Oak

SEPTEMBER 23, 2023 / TEENA WALKER-ROBIN / EDIT

Nestled within the picturesque neighborhood of Wagon Trail, located in the tiny hamlet of Houston Lake, Missouri, there unfolds a truly exceptional and heartwarming tale that centers on the presence of a magnificent oak tree.

The house behind the oak was constructed around 1969, and had been a part of the community for many years, when in 1976 the Missouri Department of Conservation and the State Revolution Bicentennial Commission visited. During this visit, the age of the awe-inspiring white oak tree was unveiled. The tree was dated to be over 200 years old, adding an extraordinary layer to the history of the home.

The Missouri Department of Conservation's visit in 1976 was part of a broader effort to commemorate the bicentennial of the United States. The Bicentennial Commission aimed to honor and remember the nation's history, and the *Liberty Tree*, with its remarkable age, became a living symbol of that history. The community felt privileged to be a part of this historic moment and to contribute to preserving the memory of the nation's past.



Fast forward to 2014 when Frank and Debbie Wilson decided to make a life-changing move, purchasing the house that would become their sanctuary. The house was great but it was the majestic white oak tree in the front yard that truly sealed the deal for the Wilsons. They had fallen in love with the *Liberty Tree*, and its presence played a pivotal role in their decision to make the house on Wagon Trail their forever home.

The white oak tree, with its sturdy branches and weathered bark, has become an integral part of the Wilson family's life. It offers shade, serves as a haven for various forms of wildlife, and holds a profound connection to the past. This time-honored tree has stood tall as a silent observer of the changes in the world around it, embodying both natural beauty and historic significance.

The tree's age serves as a powerful testament to the resilience and longevity of the natural world. It has borne witness to countless significant events throughout history. From the American Revolution to the Civil War, from the moon landing to numerous other milestones, this tree has remained a steadfast presence. Its sprawling branches have provided refuge for generations of birds and squirrels, while also serving as the backdrop for countless family memories and gatherings.



This story underscores the idea that the past can be much closer than we think – it can be right in our front yards, embodied in a tree that has silently observed centuries passing by. The *Liberty Tree* is not just a tree; it's a living witness to history and a symbol of the enduring beauty of the natural world. It reminds us to cherish our connections to the environment and the profound stories they hold.

In an ever-evolving world, the *Liberty Tree* on Wagon Trail stands as a reminder of the enduring power of nature and the significance of safeguarding our connections to the past. As long as it continues to flourish, this tree will remain an enduring source of inspiration and a living testament to the incredible history that exists right outside our doors.

In the spirit of preserving the legacy of our beloved community, Frank Wilson has taken a step further. He's running for the [Venetian Gardens Homes Association \(VGHA\)](#) Board of Directors in the upcoming election to be held at the Annual Member Meeting on October 21, 2023, at [city hall](#). Frank's dedication to our community and his love of the natural world are driving forces behind his decision to offer to serve as a part of the board.

Residents who can't make it to the Annual Meeting in person can still cast their vote by way of absentee ballot or proxy, just reach out to the VGHA secretary, [Katherine Stockbauer](#) for details.

Together, we can continue to nurture the bonds that tie us to our past, present, and future, just as this remarkable tree has done for generations.

Houston Lake has a part-time opening for a City Clerk.

**Responsibilities**

Maintaining official records and documents, such as ordinances, resolutions, minutes, agendas, contracts, deeds, licenses, permits, etc.

- Preparing and distributing public notices and agendas for council meetings and other public hearings
- Attending and recording the proceedings of council meetings and other public hearings
- Administering oaths of office and issuing certificates of appointment to elected and appointed officials
- Coordinating municipal elections and ensuring compliance with election laws and regulations
- Serving as the custodian of the city seal and affixing it to official documents
- Responding to requests for information from the public, the media, and other agencies
- Supervising and training staff and managing the budget of the city clerk's office

Compensation: \$200 per month

Residents and non-residents are urged to apply. Preferred candidates will:

- be organized in paper and digital filing.
- have familiarity with operating office equipment.

live close to Houston Lake.

Be able to start immediately.

Contact Chuck Stone at 816 305-3196.

Mayor@houstonlake.gov

## 2023 TRASH & RECYCLING DATES

City trash and recycling services are handled by Republic Services. For assistance with your receptacles, issues with pick-up or questions about large items contact customer service at 816-254-1470 or RepublicServices.com.

Trash is picked up every Wednesday. Receptacles need to be at the curb/edge of street by 6am. Leave room for the arm of the truck to pick up and return the receptacles without causing damage to vehicles, fences, etc.

### 2023 Recycling Dates (2nd Wednesday):

January 11  
February 8  
March 8  
April 12  
May 10  
June 14  
July 12  
August 9  
September 13  
October 11  
November 8  
December 13

### 2023 Holidays:

January 1st New Years Day - No Change pick up will be on Wednesday January 4th

May 29th MemorialDay - Pick up changed to Thursday June 1st

July 4th Independence Day - Pick up changed to Thursday July 6th

September 4th Labor Day - Pick up changed to Thursday September 7th

November 23rd Thanksgiving - No Change pick up will be on Wednesday November 22nd

December 25th Christmas - Pick up changed to Thursday December 28th

## EMERGENCY -

In case of a Police, Fire or Medical Emergency - Dial 911

**Platte County Sheriff Non-Emergency & Animal Control**  
**816-858-3521**

**Riverside Fire Department Non-Emergency**  
**816-372-9024**

**Grinder Pump Alarm or Backup**  
**Text 816-305-3196 with Name & Address**

## HOA Officers -

President Pam Freese 816-726-4455  
venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com

Vice President Wendy Thompson 816-225-1018

Secretary Katherine Stockbauer 816-520-3931  
kakstockbauer@yahoo.com

Treasurer/Lake Tags Susan Hodges 816-786-2377  
hodges.susan@outlook.com

Board Member at Large Mary Head 816-741-5639  
maryjewel40@gmail.com

## City Officials -

Mayor Chuck Stone 816-305-3196  
Mayor@houstonlake.gov

City Clerk Open Position  
cityclerk@houstonake.gov

### South Ward Alderwomen

Ashley Fuglestad  
sw1-alderman@houstonlake.gov

Sarah Farsace 816-863-2412  
sw2-alderman@houstonlake.gov

### North Ward Alderwomen

Teena Walker-Robin 816-769-6082  
nw1-alderman@houstonlake.gov

Annemarie Murphy 913-222-4705  
nw2-alderman@houstonlake.gov

Codes Enforcement Open Position  
codesenforcement@houstonlake.gov

As most of the HOA Officers and City Officials have full-time jobs as well, phone calls may not be answered or returned as quickly as a text or email.

City Hall is open during meetings, Listening Sessions, events and by appointment.

# THE WORKS by MARLENE

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Grey Coverage

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Brow Shaping

Best wishes to you,  
Marlene