

# HOUSTON LAKER

DECEMBER 2024

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## CITY COUNCIL NEWS

City Council meets on the second Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is Wednesday, December 11th at 6:30pm at City Hall

## VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOC

Thank you to everyone for coming out to vote and welcomes a new board!

There will not be a meeting in November or December

## CITY CODE - BURN PERMIT

The City of Houston Lake requires a Burn Permit for residents to use firepits for recreational use. The permit needs to be renewed in January of each year. Visit [houstonlake.gov](http://houstonlake.gov) to obtain a blank permit.



**THE CITY OF HOUSTON LAKE,  
VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION,  
AND THE  
HOUSTON LAKER  
WISH ALL OF OUR NEIGHBORS THE  
HAPPIEST OF HOLIDAYS  
MERRIEST OF CHRISTMASSES  
AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR**



Picture from the City of Houston Lake

## CANDIDATE FILING FOR CITY COUNCIL BEGINS

General Municipal Election of Candidates for the Seat of Mayor and 2 Alderman will be held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Candidates may obtain a Declaration of Candidacy from the City Clerk. Your Declaration of Candidacy form must be filed between December 10 through December 31, 2024. For the form needed and/or any questions, please email the City Clerk at [cityclerk@houstonlake.gov](mailto:cityclerk@houstonlake.gov)

## MRS. SIGG'S SNICKERDOODLE RECIPE

from Allrecipes.com

### Cookies:

- 1 ½ cups white sugar
- ½ cup butter, softened
- ½ cup shortening
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt

### Cinnamon-Sugar Coating:

- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

### Directions

1. Gather all ingredients.
2. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
3. Make cookies: Beat sugar, butter, shortening, eggs, and vanilla in a large bowl until smooth and creamy.
4. Whisk flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt together in a separate bowl. Gradually mix dry ingredients mixture into the wet ingredients just until combined.
5. Shape dough into walnut-sized balls.
6. Make cinnamon-sugar: Combine sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl or zip-top plastic bag.
7. Place dough balls in cinnamon-sugar and roll or shake until coated. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets.
8. Bake in the preheated oven until set but not too hard, 8 to 10 minutes, switching racks halfway through.
9. Remove from the oven and immediately transfer to wire racks to cool.



Picture from Canva

If you are reflecting on the past year, it may reveal several significant challenges that tested resilience and adaptability. Each of us can only control what happens within ourselves. Each of us is responsible for how we treat others, ourselves and our own reactions. No one is responsible for someone else's response, perception or actions.

One notable challenge may have involved balancing multiple responsibilities while maintaining mental well-being. This experience highlighted the importance of task prioritization and the value of seeking help when needed, ultimately fostering a sense of community and support.

Achievements during this period may have included the successful completion of a project that not only showcased skills but also contributed positively to a team. This accomplishment reinforced confidence in abilities and underscored the value of dedication and hard work.

Successfully navigating the year may have required the establishment of routines that provided structure to daily life. Comfort was found in morning rituals, including exercise and mindfulness practices, while supportive relationships offered encouragement and understanding.

Continued



## AROUND TOWN (PARKVILLE, RIVERSIDE, NKC, KC)

A Riverside Christmas  
December 5th 5:30-6:30pm  
Renner Brenner Park  
Riverside 64150

Christmas on the River  
Friday December 6th at 10am  
Main Street Parkville 64152

PJ Party Crawl - a Family Event  
December 7th 3pm-6pm  
Zona Rosa KCMO 64153

Cookies with Santa  
December 7th 11am-1pm  
RedX - 2101 NW Platte Road,  
Riverside 64150

Wine & Chocolate Pairing Event  
December 14th 12pm  
Parkville Wine House  
305 Main St, Parkville 64152

Santa Rampage 2024 Bike Ride  
December 14th 10:30am  
The Filling Station  
2980 McGee NKC 64108

Sippin' with Santa  
December 17th 6pm-7:30pm  
RedX - 2101 NW Platte Road,  
Riverside 64150

## WINTER HOME CHECKLIST

There can be a lot to do in the winter, including getting your home ready for potentially colder than usual temperatures or hazardous weather conditions.

Here is a list of some things to check or do around your home before it's too late and/or when the worst of winter arrives.

- Tend to tree branches.
- Safeguard your exterior spigots.
- Clear out rain gutters.
- Wrap exposed pipes.
- Seal gaps and other openings.
- Insulate walls and attics.
- Bundle up your water heater.
- Clean Chimney.
- Reverse the direction of your ceiling fan blades.
- Lower the thermostat to lower your bills.
- Turn on the humidifier.
- Take shorter, cooler showers.
- Keep your driveway clear.
- Protect your home from rodent infestations.
- Get your pets microchips—and sweaters.
- Prepare for possible power outages.
- Stock up the pantry.
- Winterize your sprinkler system.
- Leave your cabinets open when temps dip below freezing.
- Lay a layer of mulch to garden beds.
- Stock up on warm clothing.
- Invest in thermal curtains.
- Install storm windows.

# Winter

## Photo Challenge

Take the challenge and share with the Houston Laker. Photos shared will be included in the January and February issues. EVERYONE of ALL AGES is welcome to submit photos.

- **Candy Canes**
- **Decorations**
- **First Snow or Ice**
- **Plate of Cookies**
- **Winter Outfit**
- **Family Picture**
- **Leftovers**
- **What Inspires Me**
- **Cozy**
- **Silver and Gold**
- **Table Setting/Scape**
- **Chilly Morning**
- **Warm Beverage**
- **My Wish**
- **The Color Blue**
- **Nature in Winter**
- **Winter Reading**
- **Sunset/Sunrise**
- **Happiness**
- **Celebration**
- **The Color Red**
- **Candle(s)**
- **The End**
- **Lights**
- **Black & White**
- **A Tradition**
- **Winter Nights**
- **Out My Window**
- **Today's Temperature**
- **A Winter Favorite**
- **Holiday Spirits**

Photos can be submitted to [editor.houstonlaker@gmail.com](mailto:editor.houstonlaker@gmail.com) by the 21st of the month.  
\*\*Photos will be shared at the discretion of the editors.



## A STORY FROM GENE CHARLES

### Our Livestock

When we first moved from Wisconsin to Tennessee, somehow my dad wound up with a Holstein cow from his dad.

It wasn't long before we saw why Grandpa got rid of her. She was such a rogue that we couldn't keep fences good enough to contain her.

One day when I must have been 8 or 9, I couldn't find her. My dad had a guy to look for her. When he found her, she had gone down in a remote part of the farm in a valley where the land had such a steep hill that the land was useless.

The hill sloped down to a very narrow valley, not much wider than a small spring with its branch then someone else's property went up steeply.

The cow was in the area of the spring, had born as calf and broke a hind leg so, he had to put a splint on it and then carry food and water until she was able to walk out on her own.

So my dad made yoke out of a forked tree branch for her but that didn't work for long. So finally he added a leather strap around a front ankle with a short piece of chain so that she had to walk sort of sideways to keep from stepping on the chain.

Meanwhile my dad and Grandpa bought a team of young mules that they tried to tame. The mule that Grandpa took soon cut an ankle on a barbwire fence so it was not fit to work - they named it "rogue".

The one that my dad got was so wild that I had a hard time taking it and the cow to and from our pasture, since we had to cross the Stanley Valley road. He put a leather strap around ankle with a strap to a halter so that the mule had to sort of bow its head as it walked. It was also useless as a work animal.

### Gene Charles Story Cont'd

Lots of times my mom would stand out in the yard laughing as I was bringing our livestock from the pasture - with the yoked cow walking sideways and the mule bobbing its head up and down.

That must have been quite a spectacular display. Was that animal cruelty? You might say he fought fire with fire

### REFLECTIONS CONT'D

Engaging with inspiring literature and uplifting music may have played a significant role in maintaining motivation and joy throughout the year.

Looking back, there is a clear evolution from a state of uncertainty to a greater self-awareness. Embracing vulnerability and authenticity allowed for deeper connections with others. Aspirations for the upcoming year include becoming a more patient and compassionate individual, with a focus on personal growth and self-love.

Self-care practices may have presented a mixed experience. While strides were made in maintaining a balanced diet and ensuring adequate rest, exercise was at times neglected due to a busy schedule. A commitment to integrating regular physical activity and allocating time for relaxation and hobbies is crucial moving forward.

Establishing boundaries may have proved essential, with lessons learned about the importance of saying no to protect time and energy.

However, moments of slipping occurred when external pressures influenced decisions. The goal for the upcoming year is to reinforce these boundaries by being intentional about commitments and ensuring they align with personal values.

Whatever the past year was, look forward to the new year with what is best for you.



Photo courtesy of Lisa Shephard

## CITY COUNCIL FILLS VACANT SEAT

Jess Beshear has stepped into the vacant position on city council. This Alderman's seat is up for election in April of 2026.

THANK YOU JESS for stepping up in the community!



## MUSEUM PASS PROGRAM

In partnership with the Harry S. Truman Library & Museum and Wonderscope Children's Museum, MCPL is offering museum passes for customers to check out and visit these local attractions.

How does it work? MCPL cardholders who are 18 years of age and older can check out a Museum Pass for up to one week.

Each Harry S. Truman Library & Museum pass includes a voucher valid for four (4) adult, senior, or child admissions to the Harry S. Truman Library & Museum. Passes are valid for general admission only.

Each Wonderscope Children's Museum pass is valid for basic admission for up to six (6) people, ages 2 and up, per checkout. Ages 2 and under receive free admission to Wonderscope.

Visit [mymcpl.org](http://mymcpl.org) for more information



## INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

FROM THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WEBSITE

Two species of honeysuckle shrubs – Morrow's (*Lonicera morrowii*) and Amur (*L. maackii*) – cause the most frequently observed invasive problems in Missouri. Here they will be referred to collectively as bush honeysuckles. Two other species, Bell's (*L. x bella*) and Tartarian honeysuckle (*L. tartarica*), are also considered when referring to bush honeysuckles. Bell's and Tartarian honeysuckle have similar impacts to natural communities and similar management implications. Effects on Natural Communities

Bush honeysuckles will invade a wide variety of natural communities with or without previous disturbances. Affected natural communities can include: lake and stream banks, marsh, fens, sedge meadow, wet and dry prairies, savannas, floodplain and upland forests and woodlands.

Because bush honeysuckles form a thick understory, they limit how much sunlight reaches the seedlings of native plants and thus inhibit the growth of new plants. They also compete with native plants for moisture and nutrients in the soil. All bush honeysuckles spread from the roots, allowing them to further dominate an area.

Find out more about Bush Honeysuckle by visiting the Missouri Department of Conservation at [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov)



Photo from the MDC.mo.gov website

## BIRD FEEDING

FROM THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WEBSITE

Watching birds at feeders can increase your bird-ID skills and brighten your day. You can feed birds year-round or just in winter when natural foods are tougher to find. Birds flock to backyard feeders especially when snow or ice covers their natural foods and temperatures fall to extreme lows.

Visit MDC.Mo.Gov to learn what seeds, feeders, and landscaping choices will attract which birds to your Missouri backyard.

### Food Preferences:

Some birds, such as tufted titmice and chickadees, are finicky eaters, whereas mourning doves and white-throated sparrows will eat about any type of seed. Many people start with black-oil sunflower seeds and add other seeds to draw in more species.

- Seeds
- Suet and Mealworms
- Fruit and Nectar

### Feeding Stations:

Bird-feeding stations may be as

simple as seeds placed on the ground or as complicated as a feeder accessible only to birds of certain weights to keep squirrels away.

Different birds have different feeding habits. Some songbirds, such as the dark-eyed junco, white-crowned sparrow, and Harris's sparrow, prefer to feed directly on the ground. Cardinals and blue jays will feed either on the ground or on a platform feeder. Goldfinches and chickadees also will visit small, plastic feeders that are fixed to the outside of a window by a suction cup.

### Where to put your feeders:

Remember to locate your feeding station outside a room where you can relax and enjoy the visitors. Hang feeders in places where birds can see approaching predators and fly to safety.

### Other Tips:

- Keep birdfeeders clean
- Provide water
- Landscape with Native Plants



American goldfinches  
Photo from MDC.MO.Gov

## 2024 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.

2024 Recycling Dates (2nd Wednesday):

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

2024 Holidays:

January 1st New Years Day -  
Pick up changed to Thursday  
January 4th

May 27th Memorial Day - Pick  
up changed to Thursday May  
30th

July 4th Independence Day -  
No Change pick up will be on  
Wednesday July 3rd

September 2nd Labor Day -  
Pick up changed to Thursday  
September 5th

November 28th  
Thanksgiving - No Change  
pick up will be on  
Wednesday November 27th

December 25th Christmas -  
Pick up changed to  
Thursday December 26th

### 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**  
**Haynes Equipment Service 913-782-5013**

### HOA Officers -

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

Vice President - Frank Wilson (816) 520-3931  
imua62@gmail.com

Secretary - Monica Beshears (573) 356-4118  
weety30@gmail.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

### HOUSTON LAKE CITY OFFICIALS

#### City Hall - (816) 741-0644

Mayor -  
mayor@houstonlake.gov

City Clerk - Lisa A. Shepard  
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

City Collector - Kathryn Kreider  
citycollector@houstonlake.gov

City Treasurer - Kay Honeycutt  
khoneycutt@houstonlake.gov

Custodian of Records -  
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

### Board of Aldermen

Teena Walker-Robin nw1-alderman@houstonlake.gov

Jess Beshears nw2-alderman@houstonlake.gov

Ashley Fuglestad (serving as Mayor)  
sw1-alderman@houstonlake.gov

Sarah Loring sw2-alderman@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.

# Platte County Implements Senior Citizens' Property Tax Freeze



## Platte County has enacted the Senior Citizens' Real Property Tax Freeze Credit, offering significant tax relief to seniors under Missouri's Senate Bill 190 (SB190).

This program allows qualified homeowners to "freeze" their property taxes on their primary residence, providing financial stability and protection from rising property taxes.

### Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be at least 62 years old.
- Be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits (drawing benefits is not required).
- Be responsible for their home's property taxes.

### Key Dates

- **2024 Base Year:** Tax calculations will use 2024 as the starting point, with credits applied to 2025 tax bills.
- **Applications:** Accepted from September 1, 2024, through May 15, 2025. Printable forms are available on the [County's website](#) and at the [Clerk's Office](#).

### How to Apply

- Visit the [Platte County Clerk's Office](#) at
- [download a printable form](#) or apply online at <https://www.co.platte.mo.us/tax-credit>
- For questions, email [SeniorTaxCredit@co.platte.mo.us](mailto:SeniorTaxCredit@co.platte.mo.us).



### Program Benefits

- Predictability in property tax bills for seniors.
- Support for seniors to remain in their homes.
- Credits cover future assessed value increases and operational levy hikes but exclude bond-related levy increases per the Hancock Amendment.

This initiative reflects the County's commitment to recognizing and supporting its senior citizens, ensuring they can live with financial security and dignity.

# Houston Lake Spillway Bridge Closed to Pedestrian Traffic



## The Spillway Bridge: Past, Present, and Future

Houston Lake is a community of walkers, and the spillway bridge has long been a vital part of the lake's charm and accessibility. Residents often stroll the paths and enjoy the serene beauty of our lake, with the bridge serving as a key connection. Unfortunately, years of wear and tear have taken a significant toll on the wooden deck and railing of the Houston Lake spillway bridge.

The City Council has determined that the bridge is no longer safe for any traffic—including pedestrian use. As much as we value the sense of community the bridge fosters, the safety of our residents must come first. The attached photos illustrate the extent of the deterioration and make it clear why this decision was necessary.

## History of the Closure

- **Initial Restrictions (circa 2014):**  
Gates were installed to close the bridge and its one-lane approach during inclement weather, repairs, or temporary closures.
- **Closure to Vehicular Traffic (post-January 2017):**  
Following an assessment by the city's engineering firm, legal counsel, and insurance providers, it was determined that the bridge could no longer safely support vehicular traffic without significant rehabilitation. The one-lane road leading to the bridge was also closed at this time.
- **Ongoing Debate:**  
The closure sparked strong opinions among residents, with some advocating for reopening the bridge and others supporting its continued closure.
- **Deterioration and Current Closure (2024):**  
Over the years, the wooden deck and railings continued to degrade. By 2024, the structure had deteriorated to the point where it posed a clear risk to pedestrians. Out of an abundance of caution, the City Council officially closed the bridge to all traffic, including foot traffic.

## Looking Ahead: Securing the Bridge's Future

This is no longer a matter of preference; it's a matter of ensuring safety and finding a practical path forward. The City Council is actively working to address the issue and is exploring options for securing or replacing the bridge.

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### Current Actions

- Gathering necessary data to assess repair and replacement options.
- Exploring the feasibility of replacing the existing wooden bridge with a **prefabricated steel bridge** designed to support passenger vehicles (including school buses) or a **steel pedestrian bridge** that prioritizes foot traffic and community connectivity.

The Council is committed to finding a solution that balances safety, functionality, and cost-efficiency. Updates will be provided as we progress toward a plan that serves the best interests of our community.

### Stay Tuned

We know the bridge is a beloved part of Houston Lake's character. While these changes are necessary, they are also an opportunity to enhance the bridge's role in our community's future. Stay connected through the City's website and social media channels for updates on this important project.



<https://houstonlake.gov/platte-county-offers-no-cost-transportation-to-seniors/>

## Platte County offers No Cost Transportation to Seniors



No-cost transportation through the [Platte County Senior Fund](#) is now available. Platte County residents aged 60+ can now access free transportation for medical, dental, pharmacy, grocery, hospital visits, and essential business needs. Rides must stay within Missouri and a 50-mile radius.

#### Eligibility:

- Must reside in Platte County.
- Not available to those in communities with existing transportation services.

#### Scheduling:

Call **816-270-2800** by 2 p.m. the day before your ride.

This program, funded by the [Platte County Senior Fund](#) and [Missouri State Legislative Budget](#), reflects the Governor's commitment to supporting seniors statewide.



# Community Event: Yuletide at City Hall



Step into the holiday spirit with a festive community gathering that promises to warm your heart! The [Ministry of Merriment \(MoM\)](#), on behalf of the [City of Houston Lake](#) and the [Venetian Gardens Homes Association \(VGHA\)](#), invites all Houston Lake residents to a **Holiday Celebration** that's brimming with cheer.

**Date:** Sunday, December 15th **Time:** 6:00 PM **Location:** City Hall

This special evening is all about rekindling the joy of simpler times and celebrating the season together. Come share in the holiday magic with friends and neighbors in the true spirit of community.

## Holiday Potluck

Bring the flavors of the season! Here's your chance to show off the secret family recipes and contribute to a table filled with homemade goodness.

- Explore the growing [Community Driven Menu](#) and add your own planned contribution.
- No pressure—"take-ies back-ies" are perfectly okay!



## Photos with Santa

Santa is headed back to Houston Lake and ready to make this holiday season extra magical!

- Gather the kids for a **special photo opportunity with Santa Claus** himself.
- Santa's cozy setup will be perfect for capturing heartwarming holiday moments.
- Whether it's your child's first photo with Santa or an annual tradition, this is your chance to create lasting memories.
- Adults, feel free to join the fun too—Santa's a fan of family photos and holiday cheer!



While Santa loves the spotlight, he loves Houston Lake's holiday potluck even more. Make sure to stay and enjoy the festive atmosphere as Santa mingles with everyone!

*Continued on next page*

## White Elephant Gift Exchange

Get ready for some side-splitting holiday fun with the optional [White Elephant Gift Exchange?](#), a highlight of the evening. Gag gifts are encouraged, though recipients appreciate thoughtful gifts as well. Here's your chance to get rid of pass on that awful unique leg lamp or singing bass!



- **How it works:** Players bring a wrapped gift valued at **\$10 or less** to join the exchange. Participants draw numbers who picks first, second, and so on. The first person selects a gift from the pile and unwraps it for everyone to see. The second person can either choose a new, unopened gift or "steal" the gift already chosen by the first person.
- **The twist:** The city is contributing a slightly "bigger-ticket" desirable gift to the mix, guaranteed to stir up excitement and competition.
- Whether you're playing or just observing, the laughs and surprises are sure to keep everyone entertained.
- Participants will enjoy choosing, trading, or stealing gifts, while spectators can delight in the hilarity that ensues.

Don't miss this lively tradition—it's the perfect way to add some humor and holiday spirit to the evening. More on this tradition at: [What is a White Elephant Gift Exchange?](#)

## Door Prizes

Pick up a ticket when you arrive for a chance to win a prize that's guaranteed to be *re-gift-able!*

## Why Attend?

Come for the food, stay for the fun, and leave with memories to treasure this holiday season.

## Questions?

We're here to help!

- Use the [Contact the City Council Form](#).
- Call City Hall at **816.741.0644**
- Drop by [City Hall](#) during a [Listening Session](#) (Saturdays, 10:00–11:00 AM) or whenever you see the sign.



## Santa's Annual Fire Truck Ride Returns to Houston Lake

The Riverside Fire Department (RFD) will continue their cherished tradition with the annual Santa Fire Truck Ride through Houston Lake! This magical event is tentatively scheduled for the evenings of December 11th, or December 12th, from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Keep an eye on the [Riverside Fire Department's Facebook](#) page for updated information and real-time details as the date approaches. Don't miss this holiday highlight!



Riverside Missouri Fire Department  
about 2 weeks ago

We are pleased to announce the tentative schedule for Santa's visit to Riverside, Northmoor, and Houston Lake on December 11th & 12th, from 5:00 to 9:00 pm. Our Santa Tracking App will be available for use again. Route information will be shared in due course.

10 likes 3 comments

# What's up with the huge pothole on Venetian at 56th?



If you've been wondering about the large pothole at the intersection of Venetian Drive and 56th Street, here's the scoop:

## The Backstory

At the end of 2022, Mears Construction, working as a contractor for Spire, completed restorations following infrastructure improvements in Houston Lake 🌳. This area was resurfaced as part of the restorations.

The pothole at the 56th Street end of Venetian developed over time, beginning as peeling asphalt from the 2022 restoration.

## What's Happening Now

In July 2024, City representatives reached out to Spire to address the problematic restorations. Since then, efforts have been underway to ensure proper remediation. Progress has already been made:

In September 2024, Spire began tackling restoration issues, starting with Adrian Avenue. This project, coordinated with a county paving initiative, resulted in a smooth, seamless road surface—a model for what we hope to see on Venetian.

## Next Steps for Venetian @ 56th

City officials will meet with representatives from Spire and Mears Construction on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, to finalize a plan for addressing the remaining areas. The pothole at Venetian and 56th is the highest priority, with a goal to complete that repair before the end of the paving season 2024.

## Stay Updated

We understand how frustrating road issues can be, and we appreciate your patience as we work through the process. For the latest

- Visit our [Road Work Hub](#).
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) for real-time announcements.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we work to keep Houston Lake's roads safe and well-maintained!





# Why Houston Lake Needs You on the Ballot



## Your Chance to Lead

As we approach the candidate filing period for the April 2025 election, the City of Houston Lake is calling on residents to take a step forward and make a difference. This year, **three critical seats** are up for election: two Aldermen at Large and the position of Mayor. These roles are at the heart of our community's governance and provide a unique opportunity to shape the future of our city.

## Why Run for Office?

In Houston Lake, local government is about neighbors helping neighbors. It's not about politics—it's about working together to ensure our city thrives. Whether you're passionate about improving infrastructure, fostering civic engagement, or ensuring financial stability, serving as an elected official allows you to bring your ideas to life.

Here's what you'll gain by running:

- **Direct Impact:** Your decisions will shape policies and projects that benefit your friends, family, and neighbors.
- **Personal Growth:** Learn about budgeting, community planning, and leadership while building skills that will serve you for a lifetime.
- **A Voice for the Community:** Represent the needs and aspirations of our residents, ensuring that everyone has a say in our city's future.

## What Does It Take?

You don't need to be an expert to serve. What matters is a willingness to learn, an empathetic approach to problem-solving, and a dedication to working collaboratively. Resources like Houston Lake City Code and guidance from fellow officials are there to help you navigate your new role.

## Key Dates and How to File

Candidate filing begins on **Tuesday, December 10, 2024**, and closes at **5:00 PM on Tuesday, December 31, 2024**. If you're interested, here's what to do:

1. Email the City Clerk at [cityclerk@houstonlake.gov](mailto:cityclerk@houstonlake.gov) to request filing forms.
2. Submit your forms to the City Clerk within the filing period.

Your leadership could make a lasting impact on Houston Lake. Let's shape the future together—starting with you on the ballot.

*Who runs Houston Lake?*

**You do.**



# Venetian Gardens Homes Association Annual Membership Meeting Minutes 10/19/24

Called to order at 2:04  
Pam Freese - Present  
Wendy Thompson - Present  
Frank Wilson - Absent  
Susan Hodges - Present  
Mary Head – Present

Pam gave the year in review to highlight how members' dues were utilized. The largest expense, \$150,000 was the dredging project of the silt pond, horseshoe and north side of the peninsula. \$25,000 was spent on the bio health pod system. The beach had weeds pulled twice during the season and new sand was ordered and spread. The HOA dock on Edgewood Circle was removed and a refurbished one replaced it and ladders were added to both HOA docks. The HOA provided a dumpster and filled it with debris from around the lake. The HOA provided the portapotty at the beach for the summer season. We utilized a local youth to clean off the swim and beach docks for the summer season as well as make sure the trash bins and dog waste containers were emptied.

Sue went over the financials and audits for the year. Thank you to Gail Simmons, Teena Walker Robin and Shelly Broll for performing the audit this year.

Questions from the membership: Mr. Briones accused Pam of “wasting money and not accomplishing anything”. He also questioned the rationale of moving the new HOA dock to the peninsula. Pam explained it was to give residents easier access and ample parking.

Ms. Kramer asked if measurements had been taken to establish the effectiveness of the bio health pods. Pam explained that she had not got measurements. Pam explained that due to the dredging not being complete until June, caused by our contractor breaking his ankle and his recovery, then her parent suffering health issues that required hospitalization, she did not accomplish the depth measurements.

Voting took place:  
The counts were as follows:

Pam Freese - 32  
Mary Head - 38  
Monica Breshears – 37

President: Pam Freese  
Vice President: Frank Wilson  
Dues: \$450.00

Budget passed 38= Yes and 10= No

The board welcomed Monica and thanked Wendy for her service.  
Meeting adjourned.



## City Council Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, the 16th day of October, 2024

**Location:** Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 NW Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151

**Note:** The regular meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, was originally scheduled for Wednesday, October 9, 2024. Due to staff illness, the meeting was postponed to Wednesday, October 16. A Notice of Postponement was posted more than 24 hours ahead of the original October 9 meeting. However, the month referenced in the notice was September instead of October. That notice was corrected as soon as the error was recognized ahead of the originally scheduled October 9 meeting.

The regular meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, originally scheduled for Wednesday, October 9, was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Fuglestad on Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 6:32 PM.

On roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Pro Tem / Alderman Ashley Fuglestad (Acting Mayor), Alderman Sarah Loring, and Alderman Teena Walker-Robin.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR 10/16/2024**

Loring moved to approve the agenda for 10/16/2024, including the addition of a dock permit for VGHA under "Permits". Walker-Robin 2nd. A voice vote resulted in unanimous approval.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Walker-Robin moved to approve the 09/11/2024 City Council Meeting minutes, including the addition of "Municipal Code of the City of Houston Lake, MO Section 115.090. City Clerk - Election -Duties." referenced in the first sentence of the Treasurer's Report. Fuglestad 2nd. A voice vote resulted in unanimous approval, including the additional language.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

**Fire Department Report** -Assistant Chief Keith Payne reported three calls in the last couple of months, one medical assist, one carbon monoxide, and one medical emergency. When questioned about the carbon monoxide call, Chief Payne verified they do respond when called about carbon monoxide detectors going off, they come out to test for carbon monoxide and will call the gas company, if needed.

**Sheriff's Report** -The Sheriff's report was included in the packet of documents prepared for the meeting. However, it was speculated that Captain Woodrow Painter may not have been aware that the original October 9 meeting had been postponed to the 16th. He was not present at this meeting.

### **VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION (VGHA) REPORT**

Mary Head reported the annual VGHA meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 19, at 2:00 PM at City Hall. The meeting will include voting on board members, the annual budget, and the annual assessment. Absentee ballots can be arranged ahead of the meeting, if needed.

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

There was no public discussion .

## **PERMITS**

Building -VGHA dock to be installed at 5419 NW Adrian, included waiving the fees. Loring moved to accept the permit. Walker-Robin 2nd. A voice vote resulted in unanimous approval.

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Fuglestad mentioned she liked the new format of the financial reports. Shepard mentioned noticing a discrepancy in totals between two of the income reports. She believes this can be attributed to the change over to new reporting. She will work with staff before the next meeting to ensure all reports match. Council noticed Houston Lake receives tax revenue for services received by Houston Lake residents (such as Direct TV). Loring mentioned how important it is for residents to list their city as Houston Lake for all of their services, so the revenue is received by Houston Lake (instead of Kansas City). It was noted this should be pointed out to the community. Walker-Robin moved to approve the Financial Reports dated 09/30/24 as submitted. Loring 2nd. A voice vote resulted in unanimous approval.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**City Council Review of 2023-2024 Accounts** : Discussion regarding this is the type of report, per Missouri statute, the Council should publish twice a year. This report will be sent to the Houston Laker editors for publishing per mutual agreement of the council members.

**Prepare for upcoming election in April 2025, steps needed:** Shepard she had contacted the Board of Elections and they indicated a packet of information is on its way regarding what steps are needed. We will likely receive this information soon so it can be reviewed at the November city council meeting. Loring indicated she would contact the Board of Elections to ask what they needed in order to update our ward system in their records.

**Sheriff's Report (revisited)** -Lt. Mark Cathcart arrived at the meeting. It was his first time attending a meeting. There were six calls for service last month, no major crimes, all minor incidents. Only one report was taken.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Brush Pickup -October 21 and 22:** Fuglestad reported we are using the same company as last year for the pickup. Residents may, individually, request additional services from them at their expense. There was discussion about tying up some branches for ease of removal. The company is Arbor Master.

## **REPORT FROM CITY CLERK**

Shepard thanked all that had covered for her during her vacation and recent illness. She offered information regarding when early voting would begin for the upcoming election in November.

## **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Loring** reported a possible nuisance complaint at a residence in town and it was pointed out that when a resident reports suspicious activity to council members, the resident should be directed to contact the police directly. She announced the Platte County Senior Fund is now offering free transportation for seniors for any reason. Loring will share this info with

Walker-Robin to post on the website. Loring has walked the bridge with a company offering bids for driving and walking bridge. She is seeking more bids. There was discussion regarding putting up signs on the bridge for safety reasons. **Walker-Robin** is still working on getting the pothole fixed on Venetian. She's noticed a lot of motorcycles at Mayor's Park recently and wanted all to be aware. She is still working on a grant for the playground. She found a grant possibility for a hydration station. **Fuglestad** has reached out to MML to see if we can set up our permits to be filled in and signed online to offer this option to residents. There may be services that need to be purchased for this. The forms need to be revised and other options are being researched. **NEXT MEETINGS AND ADJOURNMENT** The Working Meeting will be Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 6:30 PM. The next City Council meeting will be Wednesday, November 13, 2024 at 6:30 PM at City Hall. Loring moved to adjourn the meeting. Walker-Robin 2nd. A voice vote resulted in unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM. Minutes submitted by: City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

*Approved 11/13/2024*

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## City Council Working Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, the 23rd day of October, 2024

**Location:** Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 NW Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151

The Working Meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Fuglestad at 6:34 PM.

On roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Pro Tem / Alderman Ashley Fuglestad (Acting Mayor), Alderman Sarah Loring, and Alderman Teena Walker-Robin.

As the meeting began, the council received a two page report from resident Sharron DeLaFuente outlining her concerns about Speed Bumps/Speed Humps on Adrian by the dangerous curve.

### **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF PROJECT TRACKER**

Walker-Robin explained the objectives of the meeting. The Project Tracker attempts to list all projects under consideration, indicating a priority for each project if possible, and noting the status and next steps for each project. The Working Meeting is a way to touch base on multiple projects and track progress. And, if there are easy things to address -to address them. If research is needed, it is possible to ask others to complete the research and then present it back to the council for further consideration. The council then had a lengthy discussion about the projects on the Project Tracker.

Tasks moving forward as a result of this meeting: Council meetings can be adjourned by the Mayor, rather than a vote of the council members to adjourn going forward. Council members are continuing to obtain more bids regarding either a walking or drivable bridge. It was decided to order signs closing the bridge, and chains, etc. for installing the signs on the bridge. Jess Beshears volunteered to install the signs. Shepard volunteered to obtain free bids from waterproofing companies to determine and address the water issues in the Records Room. Shepard and Kay Honeycutt plan a meeting in the near future to review the reporting needed regarding the Covid Funds received by the city. Fuglestad will purchase, on behalf of the city, treats for the Halloween event. Loring will reach out to Annmarie Murphy regarding the status of the Houston Lake sign on which her husband had been working last year.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Fuglestad adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Minutes submitted by: City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

*Approved 11/13/2024*

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Best wishes to you,  
Marlene