

Jersey Village Moving Ahead on a Sturdy Foundation

Photo by Amerigulf Media



Mayor Russell Hamley (left) and City Manager Mike Castro have mapped out a strong future for Jersey Village.

Russell Hamley moved to Jersey Village 20 years because it was suburban and had its own government and police and fire departments. Although it was at the edge of development in the area, U.S. 290 provided easy, quick access into and around town.

“If you’re out in the county, you don’t have the same security and the same protection,” he said. “Government (in a city) becomes a lot more local. You can affect issues that are important to you.”

And he has. After six years as a Council member, Hamley is in his sixth and final year as mayor. Like his role in the city, the area has grown as well. What was once the edge of development is now the middle of the booming Cy-Fair area.

And U.S. 290 has become a backed-up, inconvenient frustration. TxDOT, though, is scheduled to award the contract for expansion of that road in September, with construction to begin in February and be completed by 2016, said Karen Othon, TxDOT spokesman.

Cementing the infrastructure

During Hamley’s time in government, the 3.58-square-mile city has upgraded the water and sewer systems and rebuilt roads that were 40 years or more old.

“The infrastructure is good to go for the next 40 or 50 years,” Hamley said. “And we’ve put the city on good financial footing.”

But unfunded mandates from state and federal governments threaten to undermine that financial footing, Hamley cautions. Jersey Village has more than \$1 million in such mandates this year, said city manager Mike Castro. The city’s general fund budget next year will be \$9 million and total revenue will be about \$22.3 million for all funds.

“That’s a significant number of budget dollars that we have no say on where they are going,” Castro said. “That could mean that something residents or citizens want will get pushed to the side.”

City attractions

Growth in Jersey Village has slowed, and the city has always had a problem attracting commercial and retail companies, Hamley said. Castro said that’s because the city has never made a concerted effort to attract business, but City Council has plans to become more aggressive in that area.

Jones Road south of 290 hasn’t seen the growth they were hoping for, but Hamley predicts that area will see growth when the economy picks up. The city offers the best fire and police protection around, a reasonable tax rate, proximity to U.S. 290 and the Beltway, and a crime rate that is a fraction of surrounding areas, he said. “And it’s the only town really around that has zoning,” Hamley said.

Promoting partner

The city has a partnership with the Cy-Fair Houston Chamber of Commerce to promote the Cy-Fair area. “A rising tide helps all boats,” Hamley said.

“When Cy-Fair gets promoted, there are certain people, like myself, who will be attracted to the unique things the town of Jersey Village has. I was very specific I wanted to live inside Jersey Village city limits because of those amenities it offers.”

