

May/June Mayor Report for La Cygne Kansas

Hello – this is my second mayor report for La Cygne I plan to continue these by video or in written format monthly.

First I want to address the Covid 19 crisis and shut downs. We have moved into the final stages of reopening. Our total number of cases of Covid 19 reached 11 and at this time all have recovered and there are no active cases.

- The Kansas governor has lifted all restrictions and left the guidance to the counties and the cities to decide what worked best for each area.
- Linn County has issued “guidelines” but has not made those guidelines into orders which means they are voluntary but they would like us to work within those guidelines when at all possible. What are the guidelines?
 - Phase 2 of the Governors Ad Astra plan:
 - Mass gathering to no more than 15 persons, when social distancing is NOT possible.
 - Wear masks when distancing is not possible.
- Most of our local businesses are open and operating. They are working to support social distancing.
- City Hall stayed open during the crisis but with limited access to the offices of city hall. Instead for most business we relied on phone, email, mail and the drop box.

Storm Damage from the first week of May – we are still recovering and you can hear the tap of roofs being replaced all over town. If you still have damage and would like a list of local and registered businesses please call City Hall.

The Pool – The park board is in charge of the decisions regarding the pool but you can have input into those decisions. They meet next June 11 at 5 pm, in the park pavilion and you are welcome to attend and share your thoughts on park matters. Including the pool.

Grass and nuisance letters have been sent out – Enforcing our codes is important that is how we improve the look of our city as a whole. Un-enforced codes makes us look shabby and suggests that we do not care about our homes and our city. Let’s work together to improve how we look! We want people to move into our city and businesses to feel like we are worth investing in!

- If however you are unable to catch up and do some of the work needed on your property and you will call in to city hall at 913 757 2144 and leave your number with a message to the Mayor – I have volunteers who may be able to help a bit.

Our water project is complete and our sewer project is in the beginning phases. You will receive a letter explaining some of the costs involved and why your sewer costs will be going up. It is always a hard decision to raise costs for our citizens we realize that many struggle and are on fixed incomes. But we also know that we have a responsibility to maintain and in this case replace systems that no longer work as they should. By committing to the water project and now to the sewer project we are ensuring that our city is able provide the services that our people depend upon. We are also committed to putting money back going forward to keep those new systems maintained and move into periodic line

replacement on a schedule so that huge projects like this may not be needed in the future. Planning and preparation is key in following through on this ideal.

Finally I would like to chat with you on the recent protests and the conversations regarding race and the police interactions.

If you viewed the video of the tragic death of George Floyd you probably felt horror and disgust that this was even possible in our country. To see officers standing by and not stepping in was also heartbreaking and confusing. We wanted to do something, to say something and to stop this from ever happening again.

I believe this is what the protests were about but I am not an expert in any manner on race relations.

But not long after the protests started we began to see looting and burning and violence and that changed the conversation a bit. I watched Facebook posts change to focus on fear and anger. I think it may have allowed us to move away from that uncomfortable self-reflection and halted a deeper look into why change is needed so badly. Collectively we could now relax and point fingers at people who were breaking the law.

I would like to move past that into a more personal place for us the citizens of La Cygne.

Here in La Cygne 17 years ago a bi-racial young man died. His name was Alfonzo Brooks. He had family, dreams and friends. All that stopped when he was reported missing after a local party and then after many searches found dead a month later. This case has more questions than answers and his loved ones are still searching for answers today. If he had lived Alfonzo would be 40 years old.

- Law enforcement has struggled to find the answers and would still like to hear about any facts that anyone has regarding this case.
- The racial aspect of a young black man dying in a questionable way in a community that is predominantly white leaves our community with the shame of this unexplained death on our collective conscious and people who have no connection to it can still feel embarrassed that it happened here and even a bit defensive.

Because of this I feel that many of us have a unique understanding of the complexities that race can add into any case for law enforcement if or if not there is not an underlying crime associated with that case.

We may not ever have the answers we would like.

But what can we do moving forward?

1. Listen if someone who looks differently than you do is explaining their point of view. Sometimes listening is enough.
2. Consider that “nickname” you have given someone different than you. It could be highly offensive and hurtful– just because they do not complain doesn’t mean they like it and are not hurt.
3. Remember the times you struggled to “fit in” even when most of the people around you looked similar to you.
4. Celebrate differences!

Remember we are all growing and learning together. We are doing better! I feel like our community does embrace diversity and it isn't hard to find examples of that.

A friend of mine used to quote John Wesley.

“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”

And I would add

When you know better do better.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Deb Wilson, Mayor

La Cygne, Kansas