

the city

Area Growth ...

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keep up with it," he said. He explained that a city is typically two years behind on revenues collected from its tax base. If an industry establishes itself in a community in the spring, it is not until the following fall before the company is issued its tax statement, he said, and the company has another year before payment is due.

"We can't keep up," Nelson said, and he credited this income lag with high city employee turnover rate, a lack of office space, and understaffing.

Out of 500 possible staff positions, there are 71 vacancies, and the annual turnover rate in Bryan looms at 54 percent, he said. The city can't keep up with the pay scales of private industry, and so the city becomes a training school for jobs in the private sector, he added.

"It becomes a cycle," Nelson said.

An employee usually comes

to the city unskilled, but in a year or two he has gained the skills to get a higher paying job elsewhere, he said.

Nelson also pointed to an inherent attitude problem in the public as one factor affecting city revenues.

"To most people, the government is thought of as 'they'—someone far away who has the power and money to do everything.

"They seem to think 'they' print money in the basement of city hall or something."

Nelson said this sentiment shows up in low voter turnout during bond elections. The citizens must realize that one of the city's main methods of acquiring revenue is through bond elections, he said, and when bond issues are defeated, the city is left to struggle along with what it has.

"Unless citizens are willing to contribute, nothing can be done," he said.

Meanwhile in College Station, a move is under way to dispel this

apparent apathy. Recently, city council appointed a 12-member Citizen's Planning Advisory Committee to study the current master plan for the city, and to make recommendations for a new one. The current plan was significantly revised two years ago, but planners say it's time for a new one.

But the committee itself faces a problem. It has met three times, and disinterest is already apparent. Only seven members of the committee showed up for the last meeting. Member Earl Bennett summed up the sentiments of the group.

"I bet you can't find five people really concerned, to come up here to the committee until something

affects them directly," he said.

However, the committee is taking steps to reorganize interest in the city's problems. Through a survey and neighborhood meetings, it plans to map out where the people think the city should be going, and how it should get there.

But members agree the road ahead will be bumpy.

Former city councilman Ann Hazen, representing the Planning and Zoning Commission at the October 19 committee meeting pointed out the major obstacle blocking progress.

"We're going to have to educate the people before they can even answer the questionnaire," she said.

Better drainage asked from city

By RICHARD OLIVER

Battalion Staff
When it rains, it pours. The College Station City Council was more than usually aware of that fact Thursday night.

The council was presented with a petition signed by 146 College Station residents at their city council meeting citing a lack of proper drainage channels in the area.

The petition accused the city of a lack of maintenance on the local drainage systems, and named specifically the Southwood Valley, Norman Circle and Longmire Bridge areas as being hardest hit by flooding.

Gale Wagner, a Sandy Circle resident, addressed the council on the problem, saying, "Only partial channelization of the existing streams exists, particularly in the Southwood Valley district."

"It's not confined to creeks behind Sandy Circle and Norman Circle," Wagner said. "It's not simply one creek or one bridge. There are problems everywhere. There are real problems."

The city doesn't know whose responsibility it is. The developers don't claim responsibility. Who has responsibility for it?"

Mayor Pro-tem Gary Halter moved the council turn the matter over to the city staff for a study and

recommendation on the problem, saying, "The city must decide what is the city's responsibility and what is the responsibility of the others."

Following the discussion, Wagner told reporters outside the council meeting that although he wasn't satisfied with the city's action on the matter, at least they had been notified of the problem.

"The basic problem is drainage. The council is considering only the exact problem at the moment, not the potential problems."

Wagner said developers of the area, simply want to divert the drainage streams in the Sandy Creek area, which would move the water into the Bee Creek area, where a problem already exists.

The council also decided to add College Station's name to a list of Texas cities who are protesting a gate rate increase request by Lone Star Gas Company.

The protest, sponsored by the Texas Municipal League, currently has 108 cities bonded together.

The protest calls for a reduction of the rate increase called for by Lone Star Gas from the \$41.6 million annual rate requested to approximately \$7 million.

A gate rate is the amount of money the company charges to get gas to a city's limits. Local rates are determined after a city adds local charges such as distribution costs and taxes.

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