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Town of Leesburg
Town Manager



The Town of Leesburg
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

TO: John Wells, Town Manager
FROM: Rich Williams, Parks and Recreation
DATE: September 13, 2012
RE: Robinson Park Improvements

Staff has evaluated the current playing conditions and amenities at the Robinson Park baseball diamond and identified potential improvements to enhance the player's and spectator's experience. Detailed below are cost estimates for potential enhancement projects in no particular order of necessity.

- Field Lighting \$195,000. System would include high efficiency bulbs and light spill shielding on all fixtures. Estimated annual operational expense: \$6,000
- Scoreboard \$8,000
- Outfield re-grading and re-seeding \$6,000
- Dugout renovation \$30,000 Installation of a premanufactured shade structure mounted to a masonry wall.
- Repaving of access trail \$7,000
- Formal restroom \$60,000 A precast concrete unit with fixtures connecting to existing utilities.

Should the department be directed to move forward on any or all of the identified improvements, staff would explore various alternative funding methods including grants and league donations. These types of field enhancements, especially the lighting, will result in additional field usage both in the number of games and their times. Outreach should be made to the residents adjacent to the park as the first step.

Rich Williams
Director, Parks & Recreation



Date of Council Work Session: October 22, 2012

**TOWN OF LEESBURG
TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

Subject: Cross Connection and Backflow Program Overview including Water Service Disconnection/Shut off.

Staff Contact: Amy Wyks, Director of Utilities

Background: This memo serves as information and overview of the Town's Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Control Program and water service disconnection processes and procedures. The Town has established a step by step process prior to water service disconnection and applies this process to all customers in a consistent and timely manner.

Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Control Program: The purpose of the Program, adopted by Ordinance 2009-O-012, is to abate or control actual or potential cross connections and protect the public health. Congress established the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in 1984 to protect human health from contaminants in drinking water and to prevent contamination of existing groundwater supplies. This act and its amendments (1986 and 1996) required many actions to protect drinking water and its sources, i.e., installation and maintenance of an approved backflow prevention assembly at the water service connection whenever a potential hazard is determined to exist in the customer's system. Without proper protection devices, cross connections can occur. The Town's program provides for establishment and enforcement of cross connection control and backflow prevention in accordance with the Commonwealth of Virginia, State Board of Health, *Waterworks Regulations 1995*, or as amended.

What is backflow – flow of water or other liquids, mixtures, or substance into a waterworks from any source other than its intended source occurs when the water in pipes goes backward (opposite direction from its normal flow).

What is a cross connection? A connection between your drinking water and another source of water that combines the two when a backflow condition occurs. When this occurs, drinking water can become contaminated.

Some examples of potential hazards: fire sprinkler systems, irrigation systems, gas stations, restaurants, hospitals.

Backflow into a public water system can pollute or contaminate the water in that system. The Town has a responsibility to provide water that is usable and safe to drink under all foreseeable circumstances. Furthermore, consumers generally have absolute faith that water delivered to them through a public water system is always safe to drink. For these reasons, the Town must take reasonable precautions to protect its public water system against backflow.

BACKFLOW INCIDENT - On October 1, 1991, two homeowners in the City of Southgate, Michigan, found parasitic worms, or nematodes, in their water. One homeowner found the worms swimming around in his bathtub when he started filling the tub for his child. He also found rust and other debris in his water. The Wayne County Health Department determined that water had backflowed through a residential irrigation system into the public water system. An atmospheric vacuum breaker on the residential irrigation system had malfunctioned because the device's air inlet valve had stuck to the device's air inlet port. There was a water main break, which caused a vacuum in the public water system. The vacuum in the public water system sucked some water--and some nematodes--from the irrigation system into the public water system.

Crews from the City's Department of Public Services opened fire hydrants and flushed all the water mains located three blocks north and south of where the backflow incident occurred. Analysis of subsequent water samples collected by the Department of Public Services showed no detectable coliform bacteria.

The County cited the owner of the irrigation system for improper installation of the system. The contractor that this resident employed to install the irrigation system did not have a City permit and used a "cheap" atmospheric vacuum breaker.

Disconnection of Water Service for Non Compliance of Program: Per Town Code Section 34-39, the Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Control Program is adopted and procedures for the program have been established. Testing of each device is required on an annual basis and a letter is mailed to all applicable properties. Customers are given 30 days to comply and provide test results. If the test is not complete, a second notification letter is sent. In the event, the customer does not inform the Town the status of their test or provide a date of testing, a door hanger is left informing of shut off to occur the next business day. If no response, a second door hanger is left informing the customer the water service has been disconnected. The manual clearly outlines the responsibility of the customer and testing company. Staff is willing to work with the customer if the test can not be completed prior to the due date of the letter or door hanger. However, the customer is required to update the Town regarding their device. Testing companies do not directly update the Town of their clients and testing schedule.

Cross Connection and Backflow Devices Inspection, Maintenance and Testing Course (Cross Connection Control School)

For over 10 years, the Town's Utilities Department has co-sponsored the semi-annual Cross Connection Devices, Inspection, Maintenance and Testing course with the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Section of American Water Works Association, Loudoun Water, & Advanced Water and Wastewater Operator's Short School.

The 16-contact hour training course is offered in support of the *Safe Drinking Water Act* and the *Virginia Waterworks Regulations*. It is designed to give participants a thorough classroom and hands-on review of the methods to test and inspect reduced pressure zone and other backflow prevention devices. Training includes both classroom and hands-on work with actual devices.

Some jurisdictions accept attendees passing this course with appropriate experience as approved backflow prevention device workers.

This training has been approved by the Virginia Board of Contractors to give participants a thorough classroom and hands-on review of the methods and standards to test and inspect reduced pressure zone and other backflow prevention devices.

We will be hosting the cross connection control school at the Utility Maintenance Building conference room on October 25 and 26 and wish to extend an invitation to Mayor and Council to attend if available. The two sessions listed below will provide for a basic understanding of cross connection and backflow.

Thursday October 25, 2012 at 9am. Definitions, Theory of Backflow, Back Siphonage, Backpressure, Degree of Hazard. Presented by Hugh Eggborn from the Virginia Department of Health.

Friday October 26, 2012 at 9:30am. International Plumbing Code and Facility Cross Connections by Jim Moore from Fairfax County.

Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Control Program Evaluation – Staff is currently researching other local government and water authorities programs and will provide specifics at the Council Work session on November 26th. We are currently discussing a third party evaluation of our existing program with a company who specializes in Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Program Management and Training. Staff is also discussing opportunities for education outreach including an open forum type meeting for backflow testers and Leesburg water customers who have an applicable device.

Utility Billing: The Town has approximately 15,000 water and sewer utility customers who are billed on a quarterly basis. Per Section 34-69 of Town Code, “water bills are due and payable within 30 days from the date of billing. Any billing that remains unpaid after 30 days is subject to a ten percent late payment penalty and six percent interest which amounts will be added to the total amount due and payable. A notice shall be mailed, together with a second billing, which will include the late payment penalty and interest at the end of the 30 days from the date of billing, and water service will be discontinued if not paid in full within 10 days from the date of such notice. When service is so discontinued, a fee for the resumption of service in the amount established by the Town Council shall be charged.”

Disconnection of Water Service for Non Payment: The Town’s process follows the Town Code with the original utility bill due within 30 days. Any accounts that remain unpaid after 30 days are mailed a final reminder notice. Accounts that remain unpaid after the final reminder due date are disconnected due to non payment. A door hanger informing the customer that the water service has been shut off is placed at the address of the property where the shut off has occurred. The door hanger also includes the current balance due and payment information for restoration. After receipt of payment, the water service is reconnected as soon as practicable.

The final reminder notice states the total amount due and the date by which the account must be paid to avoid shut off. This date is the Friday before the shut off date. Shut offs typically occur on Tuesday as staff prepares door hangers for all accounts that remain unpaid as of noon on the following Monday. Staff diligently reviews all accounts and confirms the unpaid balance and ensures a payment plan has not been established. All accounts are reviewed one more time the morning before shut offs occur to confirm the account balance.

The Town will not disconnect service on a Friday or the day prior to a legal Town observed holiday.

The Town strives to be business friendly and the current policy is a one time courtesy notification if a commercial establishment has an unpaid balance in lieu of water disconnection. However, multiple notifications will not be provided as businesses need to provide prompt payment to avoid disconnection of water service. Due to staff constraints, a residential customer is not granted a one time courtesy notification. However, they are provided the opportunity to establish a payment plan to avoid disconnection of service.

Payment Plan: If a customer is unable to pay the full amount of the utility bill by the original or final reminder due date, a payment plan may be requested. Establishment of a payment plan does not allow the customer to avoid the 10% late payment penalty. A customer must contact Town by phone, e-mail or in person to initiate a payment arrangement. Acceptable payment arrangements will be determined by the Town at the time the customer contacts Town to make the payment arrangement agreement. Each customer is responsible for ensuring that he or she follows the payment dates to avoid service disconnection. Invoices are not printed for individual accounts on payment plans; customers are responsible for tracking and making payments per the established plan.

A customer may not request a payment plan if water has been disconnected. In this case, the full balance must be received prior to restoration of service.

Enhancements: The Department of Finance is in the process of making several enhancements with first priority being real estate and personal property tax bills/accounts. After this transition is successful, staff will then prioritize other enhancements for efficiency and effectiveness. The Department of Utilities will work directly with the Departments of Finance and IT regarding evaluation of other enhancements including topics such as payment options, emailing bills to customers, and on line citizen access of account history, payments, amount due. At this time, an exact timeline has not been established. The Department of Utilities is currently working with Aclara, our water meter reading software company, for on line citizen access to view water usage. The release date for the application is expected late March 2013.

Conclusion: The Town's Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Control Program is essential and a requirement by the Virginia Department of Health. The Virginia Waterworks Regulations §12VAC 5-590-580 states "...as a condition for the issuance and continued use of the operation permit ...each owner of a waterworks establish and enforce a program of cross connection control and backflow prevention for each waterworks. The cross connection control and backflow prevention program shall be approved by the division prior to issuance of the operation permit."

Water service shut offs is a labor intensive process for staff. However, the Town must provide a reasonable process before shutting off water for non payment of accounts and non compliance of the cross connection and backflow prevention control program. This is accomplished with a firm set of policies and consistent application of the policies. The vast majority of Town utility customers pay their bills on time and comply with the backflow testing requirements. The Town's experience is that customers will quickly take action to make proper payments when they are notified of the delinquency or non compliance. Shutting off water is stressful for office and field staff as well as for the customer. We strive to be professional and respectful while still fulfilling the Town Code.

No Council action is needed at this time.