



Talking about that grocery store

Manvel Mayor's Column

By Debra Davison

We've known Manvel as a city on the rise, but I'd like to consider it a city of the future. Certainly, this year is one for the future. Within the past nine months your City Council has been looking at ways to build a community that can sustain itself for generations to come.

We took on tasks that other local officials would be too scared to because they feared losing their political seats. We agreed, however, that creating a community was more important than playing politics. We believe that over the course of the next few years Manvel can build the momentum we need to chart a course of good governance, good leadership and create a safe, vibrant community we can be proud of. This is my vision as your mayor and I pledge to stay true to it.

Now, I'd like to address some points being raised in an ongoing and spirited social media discussion about the city's ability to build and attract a grocery store. Municipal governments do not build grocery stores. Private business does.

What the city has received (and council has approved) is a minor plat for Town Center that shows the developers intend to have a large grocery store on the property. This means that without any city involvement, the Town Center has had, continues to have or intends to have a deal with a grocery store.

The developers have never publicly discussed the status of their meetings with any grocery store, so we have nothing to announce to the residents. When



Town Center developers have a deal, the grocery store will follow all the requirements as other businesses. The representatives will meet with the city staff to discuss building permits and other requirements, such as a construction timeline. At some point when we feel certain the construction is imminent, we will make a formal announcement to welcome the long-awaited and much desired Manvel addition.

In a separate action, the city purchased 150 acres for a City Center. This project is like many municipal complexes found around Texas. These complexes cluster major city services and administration in one location. Council did have a public discussion about the general trend that when municipal complexes are built they can spur private economic development, such as a grocery store or other retail business. Some councilmembers believe that rather than waiting for Town Center developers to reveal if it has a deal, the council could use City Center as a catalyst to encourage a chain grocery store to build.

However, do not confuse this discussion or interpret it to mean the city will be building a grocery store that belongs to the private sector.

City leaders and staff are acutely aware of the need that the residents want a grocery store and hear the cry loud and clear. We are just as anxious as everyone else to one day herald the wonderful addition of a beautiful and well-stocked grocery store to our city limits. Remember, we drive for milk and cheese just like you do.

It is my sincere hope that one day I can stand in front an undeveloped lot with all of you at my side, stab a golden shovel into the dirt and we can all cheer together, "Welcome My ... Manvel Grocery Store!"