

## Incentives approved for new subdivision

BY DAVID LOWE  
DISPATCH RECORD

The Lampasas City Council voted Monday to approve financial incentives for a developer who plans to create a 67-house subdivision on the northwest side of town.

The council authorized City Manager Finley deGraffenried to enter into an economic development agreement with Deorald Finney, who is creating the Stone Valley subdivision between Nix Road, North Willis Street and West Avenue C.

The council voted for the city to:

- extend electrical infrastructure to each platted lot. That will cost about \$72,000, Assistant City Manager Gary Cox said.

- contribute a maximum of \$20,000 for the extension of Rice Street into the subdivision.

- reimburse Finney \$33,324 for drainage improvements his contractor will make on Westridge Place, which is north and east of the Stone Valley development.

The Westridge drainage is not directly related to the



DAVID LOWE | DISPATCH RECORD

Work on the Stone Valley single-family housing subdivision continues between Nix Road, West Avenue C and North Willis Street.

Stone Valley work, but because Finney's Stone Valley contractor already is at work in the area, city officials asked for that company to do the drainage work now. Having the work done by an

already-mobilized contractor could cost less, Cox said, than if the city pursued the Westridge drainage improvements as a project separate from the Stone Valley work. In addition to the preced-

ing terms, Finney asked the city to waive building permit fees for the houses in Stone Valley. If Finney develops all 67 houses he has proposed, the fee waivers would result in the city for-

going about \$28,000-\$32,000 of revenue, Cox said.

A motion to approve all the terms -- including the fee waivers -- failed 5-2, with only Mayor Pro Tem TJ Monroe and Councilman

Chuck Williamson in favor. The council later voted 5-2 to approve a development agreement that includes all the items Finney sought except the fee waivers. On that motion, Monroe and Williamson cast the "no" votes.

Councilwoman Cathy Kuehne -- one of those who voted not to grant fee waivers -- asked if Lampasas exempts all builders from such fees. Cox said the city does not.

Kuehne also asked how the city would benefit from such waivers.

"Because I see no problem with ... some of the infrastructure going back and forth and giving some benefits [for that], because the city will benefit in the long term from the infrastructure," the councilwoman said. "The [waiver of] fees, I have a little issue with that."

The fees are meant to compensate the city for its staff's time in performing inspections, Kuehne said.

Cox said Finney's development will benefit the city in more ways than simply adding houses. The Rice

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## Sheriff's investigator retiring after 26-year career

BY ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH  
DISPATCH RECORD

A Lampasas County Sheriff's Office criminal investigator will officially retire April 1 after 26 years in law enforcement, as Inv. John Seery will say goodbye to a department he has served for 15 years.

Sheriff Jess Ramos said Seery will be missed. "He's a very good, well-seasoned, experienced investigator," Ramos said. "He has a knack for thinking like a crook. His hunches are always right, and he backs them up with solid investigation."

Even before they worked together at the Lampasas County Sheriff's Office, Ramos said he was familiar with Seery's quality.

"As a Texas Ranger, I worked several big cases with him," the sheriff said. Those cases included homicides, large theft rings and sexual assault cases, Ramos said. "He was always a very hard worker. He left no stone unturned."

Seery specialized in burglaries during his career, even pursuing suspects across state lines.

"You've got to think like a crook to catch them," Seery said. "I've worked so many cases, you learn to pick up on the clues."

Seery said he enjoys helping people by finding stolen property.

"When you recover someone's property for them, it's really special," he said.

Seery's best memory of his law enforcement career, in addition to the people he has been able to help, was the opportunity to attend FBI Academy in 2000.

"I was the first in Lampasas to do that," Seery said. "I've still got friends from [the academy]. Sometimes they come out here to Spring Ho."

He also enjoyed the opportunity to be certi-



AMANDA NICKLES | COURTESY PHOTO

Lampasas County Sheriff's Office Investigator John Seery, who worked 15 years for the sheriff's office and more than a decade for the Lampasas Police Department, is retiring Monday.

fied in cell phone forensics.

Seery began his law enforcement career with the Lampasas Police Department in 1992. He rose to the role of lieutenant within the Criminal Investigations Division before he took a position as a federal police officer with the U.S. Department of Defense at Fort Hood in 2003.

In 2004, he returned to Lampasas to work for the sheriff's office so he could be closer to his daughter.

"It's a wonderful job," Seery said. "I'll miss it."

While he has enjoyed his career, Seery said

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## City Council selects company to develop plan for Lampasas' future

BY DAVID LOWE  
DISPATCH RECORD

During its meeting Monday, the Lampasas City Council unanimously chose Half Associates Inc. to develop what is called a "comprehensive plan" for the city's future.

The plan will address matters including growth, infrastructure, transportation, parks, housing and economic development, according to a presentation Half representatives made during a workshop session Monday. The staff members said the firm will use several means of soliciting Lampasas residents' input as the company develops the plan.

Representatives also said Half will provide city leaders with strategies to implement the comprehensive plan's recommendations.

City staff members recommended the council choose Half, as it received the highest score of the four companies that submitted qualifications to be considered for the development of a plan.

Because comprehensive planning meets the definition of a "professional service," state law requires the city to choose a provider based on the

firm's qualifications, rather than the cost. The council, however, authorized City Manager Finley deGraffenried to negotiate with Half about the scope of work and the cost.

Once deGraffenried and company representatives discuss contract terms, the contract will be presented to the council for approval.

Including the time needed to negotiate a contract and formally approve the comprehensive plan once it is has been drafted, the plan could take 16-18 months to complete, Half Project Manager Matt Bucchin said.

On another matter, the council answered a resident's request by voting unanimously to have "Lampasas" painted below a "rockin' L" logo on the Nix Road water tower. The city name and logo will be on the east side of the elevated water storage tank -- the side that faces town.

Repairs and repainting are underway on the water tower, and several weeks ago, the council voted to have only the logo -- and not the city name -- painted on the structure. The blue "rockin' L" logo is the same one the Lampasas Independent School District uses.

After learning about

plans to paint only the logo, resident Dianne Varner spoke to the council March 11, saying she was very disappointed that officials did not plan to have "Lampasas" on the tower. The city name had been on the structure until a few weeks ago, when workers sandblasted the tower to prepare for repainting.

Varner urged the council to reconsider, as she said in most towns, the city name is on the water towers.

After Monday's decision, Varner thanked city officials for changing their plans.

"You can say I did my 'happy dance,'" she said of her reaction when the council decided to add "Lampasas" back to the water tower.

Painting the logo on the tower will cost \$1,500, and there will be an additional \$300 expense to paint "Lampasas" on the structure, Assistant City Manager Gary Cox said.

The project's general contractor, Rowlett-based CTEX Construction Services, offered the option of painting the logo and city name on two sides of the water tower, but that would have cost \$3,600 total. The council chose to put

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### WEATHER

Date	High	Low	Rain
March 24	79	62	0
March 25	76	57	0
March 26	73	47	0
March 27	76	46	0

2019 rainfall total: 0.89 in.  
Same date last year: 3.01 in.  
Normal through March 27: 6.58 in.

Data from the National Weather Service through the Lampasas Municipal Airport.

### BRIEFLY

#### LOMETA DIAMONDBACK JUBILEE

The annual Diamondback Jubilee will continue today through Sunday at Lometa Regional Park.

A carnival will be open today and Saturday. There also will be free mutton busting for youngsters today and Saturday at 6 p.m.

The Miss Diamondback Rodeo Queen will be announced tonight. An open jackpot rodeo is scheduled today and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Rodeo admission is \$15 for adults, and \$5

for children 6 and older. There is no charge for children younger than 6, or for active military personnel who show valid identification.

Rattler Team Roping will take place Saturday at 11 a.m. -- and Sunday at the same time.

Other Saturday events include a Buckaroo Rodeo for children, along with a chili cook-off and the rattlesnake display for which the festival is named. The diamondbacks will be measured at 1 p.m., and awards will be

presented. Chili cook-off awards will be presented at 2 p.m. Goat roping is set Saturday from 2-4:30 p.m.

A dance Saturday night will feature the Jason Roberts Band.

#### BURN BAN LIFTED

The burn ban is lifted until Monday at 7 p.m., so controlled outdoor burns are allowed outside incorporated city limits. Officials ask people to notify the sheriff's office of fire plans by calling 512-556-8255.

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