

Briones, Rosenthal offer legislative update at town hall

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

A crowd of over 60 residents gathered at the Richard and Meg Weekly Community Center on August 22nd to hear an update on the 2023 legislative session from Texas House District 135 Representative Jon Rosenthal and Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Lesley Briones.

Briones spoke first, addressing what she termed a "paradigm shift" in the Precinct 4 commissioner's office. Previously, she said, funds were spent in unincorporated areas of the county rather than in parts of the county that fall within the City of Houston. "My

philosophy is that if you pay taxes, you deserve service," she said. Briones focused on the development of partnership programs between her office and other governmental entities. "Fundamentally, I believe that we are stronger together," she said. The Westpark Tollway expansion project is an example of such a partnership initiative, she said.

Public safety was a top concern, and Briones spoke about the creation of six new additional courts and about the "tele-deputy" program which frees up officers to respond to the most critical incidents. Briones also described the creation of a retention incentive program for detention officers, which



is designed to slow attrition in those positions.

Rosenthal outlined his efforts to draft and pass bills in the 88th legislative session. He was successful in getting HB 1457 passed, which requires military cultural competency training for state grant recipients that provide mental health services to veterans or veterans' families.

He also presented a recap of other bills that passed that he categorized as "good bills" and "bad bills." "Good bills" included two sponsored by Senator Joan Huffman - SB10 which provides



PHOTOS BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

Jon Rosenthal (left), who represents Texas House District 135, met with constituents in a town hall forum on August 22 for an update on the 2023 legislative session including the impact of several bills becoming effective on September 1st. He was joined by Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Lesley Briones, left.

\$5 billion for a 13th check and a cost-of-living adjustment for retired teachers, and SB379 which exempts family care, maternity, menstrual and postpartum products from taxation. "Bad bills" included SB 15, which bans the participation of transgender athletes from college-level athletic teams and competitions. Rosenthal said that there were only 17 transgender athletes in the entire state of Texas.

Rosenthal noted that there would likely be another special session of the legislature, this time in October, in order to address issues of school finance and other education-related issues. He said that the excess funds in the state budget might be used to increase the basic "per student" allotment for school districts, in order to increase funding.

Rosenthal reminded attendees that the general

election will be November 7th and that the ballot will contain the property tax package which must be approved by voters.

Questions for the elected officials which were posed by the audience including queries on school vouchers, clarification on the proposed property tax and its impact on senior citizens and coordination of flood control efforts, among others.

KATY CHRISTIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

W. Mark Lanier
FRIDAY SEPT 17 2023
Founder, The Lanier Law Firm
Networking Event! Everyone Welcome!
7 AM at Church on the Rock, 433 Barker Cypress Road, 77094
Register at <https://katychristianchamber.com>

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$0.430000 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of City of Katy.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.430000 per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$0.407102 per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$0.437545 per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2023 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for City of Katy from the same properties in both the 2022 tax year and the 2023 tax year.

The voter-approval rate is the highest tax rate that City of Katy may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that City of Katy is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2023 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON September 25, 2023 AT 6:30 pm AT Katy City Hall.

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, City of Katy is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the City Council of City of Katy at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE TAX RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

$$\text{property tax amount} = (\text{tax rate}) \times (\text{taxable value of your property}) / 100$$

FOR the proposal: Chris Harris, Mayor Pro Tem/Councilmember At-Large
Janet Corte, Councilmember Ward A
Dan Smith, Councilmember Ward A
Gina Hicks, Councilmember Ward B
Rory Robertson, Councilmember Ward B

AGAINST the proposal: None

PRESENT and not voting: William H. "Dusty" Thiele, Mayor

ABSENT: None

Visit [Texas.gov/Property Taxes](https://www.texas.gov/Property-Taxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by City of Katy last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by City of Katy this year.

	2022	2023	Change
Total Tax Rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.440000	\$0.430000	decrease of -0.010000, or -2.27%
Average homestead taxable value	\$290,161	\$326,738	increase of 36,577, or 12.61%
Tax on average homestead	\$1,276.71	\$1,404.97	increase of 128.26, or 10.05%
Total tax levy on all properties	\$20,696,563	\$22,020,690	increase of 1,324,127, or 6.40%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for City of Katy at 281-341-3710 or FBCTaxInfo@fortbendcountytx.gov, or visit www.fbctx.gov for more information.

Inaugural Festival of One celebrates debut at Epicenter

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The inaugural Fort Bend County Festival of One took place on Saturday, August 26, at the newly opened Epicenter in Rosenberg, with a turnout of over 2,500 attendees.

The Festival, hosted and organized by Fort Bend County Judge KP George and Fort Bend County District Attorney Brian Middleton's Expose Excellence Youth Program, offered a day of fun-filled activities, live entertainment, and community engagement.

"Over 40 vendors signed up to participate in this event. We really tried to look at the services that we could provide that would benefit the community," stated Fort Bend County Judge KP George. "This festival is about unity and community."

The Epicenter, a 230,000-square-foot, state-

of-the-art multiplex, provided the perfect backdrop for this event, which was free and open to the public. Attendees were treated to a wide range of attractions, including health screenings, games, face painting, and live performances that captivated individuals of all ages.

Over 250 health screenings and services were provided by Fort Bend County Clinical Health Services and Social Services. The screenings included chronic disease, blood pressure, A1c checks, nutrition counseling sessions, vaccinations, and dental screenings.

The Festival of One allowed guests to indulge in a variety of entertainment options, including performances by artists such as Jay Xavier, American Asian Leadership Council Fashion Show, Bollywood Dancing Stars Dance Company, Tiger J. Kim's Taekwondo, Tropical

Rhythms, Ny'Air, The One Dance Studio Houston, and Future Stars of Houston.

A highlight of the event was the talent contest hosted by the Expose Excellence Youth Program, showcasing talented finalists between the ages of 10 and 17. The winners, Serena Nguyen in the 10-13 category and Kayli Martin in the 14-17, category took home the grand prize of \$500 each.

One of the Festival's initiatives was its commitment to the community's well-being. As part of the back-to-school preparations, students were offered complimentary haircuts and hair braiding services in preparation for the school year.

Event sponsors included Stonehenge Holdings, Ibn Sina Foundation, FSG Group, Estrada Hinojosa Investment Bankers, Johnson Development, and Houston Dynamo.



WHCRWA

Experience matters when undertaking supervision of billion-dollar regional civil engineering projects. The WHCRWA's Board of Directors includes experienced experts in various business and civil pursuits who are tasked with securing and sustaining a long-term water supply of potable drinking water.



Northeast Water Purification Plant Expansion Project



Surface Water Supply Project



Completed Luce Bayou Interbasin Transfer Project



WHCRWA Internal Distribution Lines

Visit whcrwa.com/projects to learn about the infrastructure projects the WHCRWA is currently engaged in to meet the Harris-Galveston Subsidence Districts conversion mandates.




whcrwa.com



Katy Times

SUSAN ROVEGNO | Publisher
GEORGE SLAUGHTER | News Editor
TYLER TYRE | Sports Editor
DEBBIE PREJEAN | Office Manager/Bookkeeper
MARISSA FERREIRA | Page Designer

OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday
ADDRESS: P.O. Box 678, Katy, Texas, 77492-0678
PHONE: 281-391-3141

TO REPORT NEWS:
Call 281-391-3141 or email news@katytimes.com

TO REPORT SPORTS SCORES:
email sports@katytimes.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
The Katy Times (ISSN 067-180) is published on Thursday. Subscriptions are available for \$35 per year in Harris, Waller and Fort Bend counties and \$45 elsewhere. Subscribe at www.katytimes.com or by mailing payment and delivery information to Katy Times, P.O. Box 678, Katy, TX 77492-0678. Periodical-rate postage paid at Katy, Texas 77494.

CIRCULATION:
Address billing inquiries at 281-391-3141.

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to The Katy Times, P.O. Box 678, Katy, Texas, 77492-0678.