



# City of Converse Texas

*Connecting Community + Commerce*

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## Letter From the Mayor

A very Happy 2016 to everyone! We just completed an OUTSTANDING productive 2015 and one of the city's best years ever. Congratulations again and my sincere thanks for your overwhelming support of the 2015 Bond Propositions. With your approval, we will now improve our neighborhood streets, expand our Library facility, build our first Animal Care & Adoption Facility, build a new Fire Station on the North side of Converse, build a new City Hall Facility, and improve our City Parks. Please note that we will be posting the monthly progress of all Bond projects on the city website. In addition, we will also be providing monthly briefings during ALL City Council Meetings and will publish updates on our City Newsletter. The best is yet to come but my first priority will be to maintain a safe place for all of us to enjoy.

On November 12, 2015 the City Council canvassed the Official Election results for each elected position in accordance with the City Charter & Texas Election Laws:

<u>Mayor</u>	<u>Votes Received</u>	<u>Place 1</u>	<u>Votes Received</u>
<b>Al Suarez</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>Kathy Richel</b>	<b>543</b>
<b>Deborah James</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>Everett Taylor</b>	<b>479</b>
<u>Place 3</u>	<u>Votes Received</u>	<u>Place 6</u>	<u>Votes Received</u>
<b>Nancy Droneburg</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>Rick Davis</b>	<b>669</b>
<b>Earl Boutelle</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>Robert Raney</b>	<b>344</b>

Thank you for the overwhelming votes of confidence and support. Together, we will improve the quality of life here in Converse. Congratulations to Councilman Steve Brown for his appointment as Mayor Pro-Tem by the City Council.

On November 17, the City Council unanimously approved the appointment of new members for the newly formed Converse Youth Advisory Commission (CYAC). The CYAC members are volunteer students from Judson High School that will provide input & recommendations to the city council and staff regarding some of the local issues. The City Council also approved the implementation of the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP). This proactive Law Enforcement program will assist in addressing traffic control issues throughout the entire city.

On December 1, the City Council approved a policy to prohibit the Carrying of Firearms (both concealed & open carry) during open City Council & Commission Meetings in accordance with the Texas Statutes. We respectfully

ask all licensed concealed handgun holders to please abide by this policy during ALL open City Council & Commission Meetings. In addition, the City council also pre-approved five local Engineering firms to be used as needed. This will expedite the building process and demands currently facing the City of Converse.

On December 15, the City Council unanimously approved a Resolution opposing the City of San Antonio's proposal to annex all of the property adjacent to the boundaries of Converse. We are asking the City of San Antonio to reconsider their aggressive annexation plans. This Resolution will facilitate an option for the City of Converse to consider future annexation plans. In addition, the City Council approved a proposal for enhanced Audio Visual equipment in the Council Chambers. Several television monitors will be installed throughout the chambers to provide the audience with visual access to documents under consideration. The expense of the Audio Visual equipment (at no cost to the Converse taxpayers) will be paid by the Public Educational & Governmental (PEG) fund.

Congratulations to Police Chief Rick Jamison on his retirement after 37 years with the Converse Police Department. Our thanks to Chief Jamison for making a difference and maintaining a safe Converse for all of us to enjoy.

Congratulations to Mr. William Lisenby & Mr. Everett Taylor for their appointments to the Ethics Review Board. Thank you both for getting involved and volunteering your valuable time to the City of Converse.

Please welcome our new Grants Administrator Elizabeth Brown to the Converse City Staff. Elizabeth will be working aggressively to secure a variety of federal, state, county, municipal and local grants for the City of Converse.

The maintenance re-surfacing & re-stripping of Toepperwein Road from Kitty Hawk Road to FM 1976 will not be completed until March 2016 due to the cold weather temperatures. Please note that this chip-seal process is only a maintenance procedure to extend the life of Toepperwein Road until the New Toepperwein Road expansion project is completed.

The Intersection of FM 78 & FM 1604 construction project is well underway. This \$3 million dollar TXDOT project will upgrade the intersection into double turn lanes to facilitate and expedite the safe flow of traffic during the Converse - Randolph AFB high peak driving hours.

We are happy to announce that the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority

*cont'd on pg.2*

cont'd from front pg.

(ARMA) recently approved the FM 1516 Roadway Expansion project from FM 78 to IH-10 for expansion to 4-lanes; this \$17.5 million dollar project is scheduled to commence in late 2017.

The City Council recently submitted three Roadway Expansion projects for funding to the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization: Toepperwein Road (expansion to 5 lanes from FM 1976 to Kitty Hawk Rd), Kneupper Rd (expansion to 4 lanes from FM 1604 to FM 78), and Rocket Lane (expansion to 4 lanes from FM 1604 to Schaeffer Rd/Judson High School). If approved, the overall costs to the city will be limited to 20% for each individual project.

Our Economic Development Corporation (EDC) continues to work diligently by increasing our commercial growth and providing more retail options for all residents to enjoy. My sincere thanks to the EDC Board of Directors for increasing the commercial tax base and creating new jobs. Thank you for funding three entrance monuments that will highlight & identify the City of Converse. And thank you for the proactive approach in relocating the new EDC offices into the local business community.

Congratulations to local developers Troy & Jami Lott for their Economic Development efforts in Converse since 2004. Thank you both for making Converse a better place to live. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Finally, I encourage and invite everyone to attend City Council meetings, which are held at 7:00 pm on the first and third Tuesdays of every month. Your City Council, City Staff, & Employees will work together as ONE COHESIVE TEAM... for one common GOAL... to make Converse a better place to live, work and raise a family. If you have a complaint, concern, question, or suggestion, please contact me anytime at 210-658-5356 (office), 210-787-7295 (cell) or email: mayorsuarez@conversetx.net. Please stop by and visit me at "MAYOR'S CALL" on the 2nd & 4th Saturdays of every month from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. (City Hall Conference Room/ 405 S. Seguin).... NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY.

Let's make difference together! We look forward to hearing from you very soon! Stay involved!

My Best Regards,

*Converse Mayor Al Suarez*



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## Bond Issue Update

### Streets – \$10,600,000

The Public Works Department and the City Council have solicited proposals for engineering firms and selected the firm of Young Professional Resources as City Engineer. Mr. Young and the Director of Public Works are ranking streets in priority from worst to best and evaluating the best solution for their repair. The utility department is videotaping the sewer lines under the worst streets with a sewer line camera to see which lines need to be replaced before the roads are dug up. They are also looking at the location for the waterlines to see if any of them need to be replaced.

Plans for street repairs should be done in March-April, 2016 and work should begin in June and finish by September, 2016.

### City Hall – \$2,500,000

Proposals from Design Build Firms are being reviewed now with interviews conducted during the end of December, 2015. A selected design/build team will be brought to the City Council in the last meeting of January 2016. Design work should begin in February and proposed drawings brought back to the City Council in May 2016. The work should begin in June 2016 and conclude in June 2017. The land due N.W. of the Police Station is being considered for the site of the new City Hall.

### Fire Station – \$3,000,000

(Same as above)

Locations being considered for the Fire Station are 6th & Toepperwein, FM 1976 & Patsy, Toepperwein & Bob Grubbs, Old Cimarron Trail & Scheel Road, and the S.W. corner of the campus of NE Lakeview College.

### Library – \$800,000

(Same as above)

The expansion will be on the vacant property due S.E. of the existing Library building on S. Seguin Road

### Animal Care Facility – \$2,000,000

(Same as above)

The location will be on 7.5 acres of land acquired from Judson I.S.D. at the intersection of 1516 (S. Seguin Road) and Upper Seguin Road.

### Parks – \$1,000,000

The Converse Economic Development Corporation has hired the Architecture Department of UTSA to prepare a Park Master Plan for the City of Converse, Parks System. When that plan is complete, we intend to apply for park funding from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department in Austin for a Converse Parks grant. Grants are funded in the amount of \$250,000 per year. In this way we hope to leverage our \$1,000,000 to \$1,250,000 and the spend the money on playground equipment, athletic fields, fencing, hike & bike trails and develop the unused lake area in City Park for public access. Work should begin on the Parks system the fall of 2016 and be completed by June of 2017.

Please call Lanny S. Lambert, City Manager with your questions and comments – 210-658-5356.



# Converse Public Library

Saturday Storytelling Adventures continues with Decee Cornish on Saturday, February 6 at 10:30 am. Decee will be telling us stories in celebration of Black History Month. He was born in Texas and raised in Houston's Fifth Ward. Decee served in the military, traveled and attended universities worldwide. He has over seventeen years telling stories and entertaining nationally! His performance is greatly anticipated!



On Saturday, March 5 at 10:30 am History in Person will be at the Library/ Billy Perryman will be performing William B. Travis at the Alamo - 1836! Mr. Perryman is well known for his historical portrayals of iconic figures throughout history. Both of these events are partially funded from the Texas Commission on the Arts Performance Support Grant. Please come and bring the whole family to these entertaining and educational events!





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## Frequently Asked Questions of the Converse EDC

By Kate Silvas, Converse EDC Executive Director

From time to time, Converse residents will stop me and ask some of the following questions. On behalf of the Converse EDC Board and staff, I'd like to take this opportunity to address those frequently asked questions.

### **Q: Why is the EDC renovating a 1940s home for the EDC offices? Why is that the best use of taxpayer resources?**

First, the Converse EDC Board of Directors and I take seriously our management of taxpayer resources. For the five years I have been here, the EDC has consistently under-spent its budget.

When we needed to expand our staff, there was no room at City Hall. In fact, for over a year, my new staff member has occupied space in a temporary building.

The EDC has studied alternatives for over two years. We looked at renting commercial space, but we concluded that spending several hundred thousand dollars or more in rent over a five year lease term was not justified. (The EDC would not own the lease space or improvements and the taxpayers would have no equity in the property.) We also considered building a new building (at a cost of about nearly a million dollars) which we believed was also not justifiable. We also considered a 1900s farmhouse that would need major upgrades. Given the location and retrofit and maintenance costs, we concluded that this last location was just not the right fit.

Ultimately, the EDC purchased the home at 110 West Legion in July for nearly \$20 K below list price. We believe this was a good decision for many reasons. First, reusing an older home conserves existing resources and also honors our past. Re-furbishing an older home is being responsible with the city's history. Second, the new building is within walking distance of City Hall. Third, the home required minimal investment, having major internal systems recently updated. With minimal renovations, Converse will be able to be proud of the end result.

The Converse EDC will be moving into its new offices in late January. We are planning a two-day Open House February 11-12, 2016. We look forward to proudly serving you in our new location.

### **Q: Why is the EDC erecting monuments at the entrances to Converse? Why is that the right thing to do?**

Monuments make an impression. They are a statement. It says, "You have arrived." Think of the Statue of Liberty. This is not only a sign, it is a statement. It tells you where you are. It says, "We are New York. We are the United States. Welcome." When entering Converse, what is the message? Does it say, "You have arrived!" Or, does it make people wonder about what matters to us? Our monument signs will communicate a sense of pride and of place in our community. Pride is an important element that prospective businesses examine when choosing a location. Making this investment is a small first step in declaring an identity and welcoming businesses and residents to our city.

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For more information contact at  
[www.converselions.org](http://www.converselions.org) email:  
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## HOME REMODELING & REPAIR RECOMMENDATIONS



**Door-to-Door Sales** - Be cautious when a salesperson appears at your door uninvited. Please take time to check them out, and if they are legitimate business people, they will welcome your questions.

**Choosing a Contractor** - The best policy is to get bids from more than one person for any work you are going to have done on your house. Get the bids in writing, and look for detail about exactly what will be done. Seek references and ask to speak to satisfied customers, and ask them if you can visit their homes to inspect the work done by a contractor you are seriously considering.

**Be Smart about Contracts** - Legitimate businesses will usually insist on having a contract for their own protection, and a well written contract should protect the homeowner, too. DO NOT sign a contract with blanks in it or until you have carefully read and understood every word of it. Sometimes it can be difficult to get out of a signed contract. Do not allow anyone to rush you into signing a contract. Get and keep copies of everything you sign at the time you sign it.

**What the Law Says** - Any contract you sign for work on your homestead must contain the following warning next to the space for your signature: "Important Notice: You and your contractor are responsible for meeting the terms and conditions of this contract. If you sign this contract and you fail to meet the terms and conditions of this contract, you may lose your legal ownership rights in your home. Know your rights and duties under the law." When you sign a contract for home improvements on your homestead, the contractor can legally place a lien on the homestead. If you sign a contract containing the language quoted above and you fail to make the payments, the company can take away your home. If you have any questions or doubts, consult an attorney before you sign the contract. If there will be a lien on your home, make sure a notary is present to witness your signature. It bears repeating: get and keep copies of everything you sign. If your contractor fails to pay the subcontractors and suppliers, YOU are responsible, even though you have not contracted directly with the subcontractor or supplier. Under Texas law, if a subcontractor or supplier who furnishes labor or materials for the construction of improvements on a property is not paid, the property may be subject to a lien for the unpaid amount. If your homestead improvement exceeds \$5,000 in cost, the contractor is required by law to deposit your payments in a construction account at a financial institution. Ask the contractor for written verification of the existence of the construction account.

**Paying for the Work** - It is normal for a contractor to ask for partial payment in advance, and provided that you have taken the precautions recommended above, you should expect to provide a part of the cost before the work begins. Scammers involved in door-to-door rip-offs will ask for payment in full in advance, and then abscond without completing (sometimes without even starting) the job.

## CONVERSE POLICE DEPARTMENT



The Converse Police Department is proud to announce another successful year. As 2015 comes to an end we want to thank our citizens for their role in making this a safe place to live and work.

In 2015 we began a new tradition of Cops and Kids Picnic hosted a National Night Out event with the Lions Club and Citizen's Alumni Association, and followed up with a very, successful Blue Santa program! Blue Santa served 23 families and 68 children through the generous donations of organizations such as: The Converse Lion's Club, The American Legion Riders, Converse Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association, and many other private donors.

As we take on new resolutions in our personal lives, please take time to get to know your neighbors and learn to be proactive in your neighborhood. Drive an extra block on your way home from work, school, or general outings. Make your presence known.

Converse Police will be happy to provide information on starting a Neighborhood Watch program for your subdivision, just call and ask how (210-658-2322).

Converse Police have new, exciting changes coming our way and we will continue to serve our community with pride!

We look forward to another great year.

## CONVERSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Converse Fire Department is pleased to announce the acquisition of new Cardiac Monitors as well as Lucas Devices.

The Cardiac Monitors will provide our personnel with enhanced capabilities when providing



care to Cardiac patients such as continual 12 lead monitoring and CO monitoring. The Lucas device provides mechanical chest compressions to patients in Cardiac Arrest. These devices provide for continuous high quality compressions that increase the chance for survivability for these type patients. There is no delay or interruption in compressions in order to move the patient or while performing other treatments. When manual compressions were performed, personnel had to stop compressions and change out frequently in order to provide quality compressions. With the use of the Lucas devices, personnel can focus on performing other treatments thereby enhancing patient care. Please contact us at 210-658-8900 if you have any questions.

## CITY OF CONVERSE STORM WATER DEPARTMENT

**Working For A Clean & Safe Environment.**

The City of Converse Storm Water Department is now in its seventh year. The City's second 5-year permit was approved by TCEQ in April 2015. The Storm Water Department has performed over 1,082 inspections on construction sites, repaired five drainage ditches and assisted eight residents with drainage problems on their property throughout this last year; as well as, mapping out the remaining city outfalls and inlet storm water systems which included the new subdivisions as they were completed.

As of June 11, 2015 Converse has received 27 1/2 inches of rain this year. All Converse inlet systems with storm drains have been marked with plaques stating "NO DUMPING DRAINS TO CREEK". These inlet systems were inspected for necessary repairs to be done to insure good water flow.

It is illegal to dump trash or debris over fencelines into the City's drainage. The fine(s) for illegal dumping in the City of Converse are up to \$500.00 a day for each offense. REPORT ILLEGAL DUMPING. If you see illegal dumping, please call Converse Police Department at 658-2322.

The Converse website has been updated with information to help the citizens maintain a healthy home and safe environment. Education flyers have been placed in all city buildings for information or you may contact the Storm Water Department at 658-3453.

If any person or group would like to have a roadside clean up please contact Larry Moxley at the Storm Water Department at 658-3453.

The City of Converse thanks you for your help and support. Please do your part to help keep the environment safe and clean.

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# Public Works Department Is Staying Busy

Public Works Department Employees had a busy 2015 serving the citizens of Converse. In trying to identify major projects completed in 2015—we are particularly proud of the resurfacing of 2.5 miles of Topperwein Road. This street project provides a nice and smooth riding surface for public use and improves the overall appearance in an important entry way to our City. Public Works crews also constructed an ADA accessible sidewalk on Rocket Lane that is currently being used extensively by residents especially students from Judson High School. Our parks crew made much needed improvements to the swing sets at City Park and North park plus they installed new exercise equipment along the walking trail at North Park. In addition, just like residents decorate their homes during the holidays, public works crews decorated facilities throughout the City during the holiday season. They also performed similar functions during the Night in Ole Converse event held this past October.

I outlined some key projects accomplished during 2015 however our Public works employees would say that the day-to-day maintenance activity is what they are the most proud of. Often time the work performed goes unnoticed because it involves routine maintenance of streets, drainage areas, parks, sidewalks, city buildings, brush collection and the City's fleet operations. This is important work that is necessary for our community and our employees are essential in performing these tasks.

2016 will also be a busy year for Public Works. I want to showcase three projects that we will focus on this year.

1. In early spring we will beginning an extensive street capital improvement program as part of the Bond Package approved by citizens in November. Many city streets will receive major repairs. We will do our best to keep you informed of construction activity around the city to minimize delays and disruptions. We will post regular progress reports on our website on activity related to the Bond program.

2. This month, we will be completing the City Parks Master Plan which will outline a vision for development of the parks system for Converse. Citizen input and participation is critical for developing the plan so we welcome your comments and input. Once the draft plan is complete, we will post it on our website for citizen review and comment. The plan is being developed by the University of Texas Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research in conjunction with the City's Parks and Environmental Commission. The commission has regular meetings that are help on the 2nd Tuesday if each month at City Hall and we welcome you to attend the meetings.

3. Staff is also working on plans to install sidewalks along Topperwein Road between Kitty Hawk Road and Laurel Creek Street. It is our goal to complete this project during the first couple of months of the year.

And as always, we will continue to stay focused on the day-to-day maintenance activity of our City.

We hope you have a happy and safe new year.

Manny Longoria, Public Works Director



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# Streets!



The conditions of City streets is a constant, repeated, and often mentioned topic in any Converse citizen's conversation! Converse streets are bumpy, uneven, rutted, and cracked (in many places). Let's discuss why and what can be done about them.

When you see a street – all you see is the top asphalt surface. A street is the 1) compacted dirt, 2) caliche base, 3) compacted fill, and 4) asphalt surface. The major components of a street is the material under the street surface and its construction. The depth, composition, and composition of the street BASE is what makes a street – not the asphalt surface that you can see.

The asphalt (or concrete) surface of a street is like a "coat of paint" on your house. The paint is what you see, but the paint reflects the configuration and structure of the house as it was designed and built.

If the structure of the house is uneven, bowed, rumped or has holes in it, the paint will not cover those house failures. If the road base is uneven, bowed, rumped or potholed – the street surface will not cover these base failures.

Our soil in this area is very high in clay content and has a very high, plasticity (i.e. expands & contracts depending on the amount of moisture in the soil) and this high plasticity will buckle our streets (and break concrete slabs).

Apparently when many of our streets were built—our construction standards did not require the construction of an adequate base that would allow for the expansion & contraction of the soil.

Also, water is the enemy of the streets. If the street surface cracks and water gets through the surface then it will weaken the base and cause a pothole. Potholes expand with more water ...

So, how do we maintain our streets? Several options are available:

1) Reconstruct → The streets can be dug up and new base laid and new asphalt placed on top. This is extremely expensive and would cost many many millions of dollars.

2) Mill & Overlay → A mill machine can remove 4-6 inches of the top asphalt and base of the street can be removed and a new surface installed. This was what was done on Toepperwein from Kitty Hawk to Miller. This provides a nice smooth black surface to the road and is very popular with drivers. This last project cost about \$50 per lane, per foot (This is very expensive and we cannot do it to every street.) The base under the mill is still inadequate and this road may buckle and bow in the future.

3) Chip Seal → This maintenance activity calls for a coat of hot liquid asphalt to be sprayed on the surface of the street and a layer of small rocks to be sprinkled on top. The liquid asphalt will cover and seal any cracks and small imperfections in the asphalt surface so water cannot get through. This program works like a coat of paint and will provide 5-7 year protection to the streets involved. This program is what the City has been doing for many years and is very unpopular because of its rough surface and the loose rocks available from the process. However, the program is inexpensive (relatively) and readily available to City crews. This was what was done on Toepperwein from 1976 to Kitty Hawk. This costs about \$8 per foot per lane.

4) Slurry Seal → This maintenance activity calls for a coat of hot liquid asphalt to be sprayed on the surface of the street and a layer of sand to be sprinkled on top. This works the same as the Chip Seal, but without the loose rocks. San Antonio uses this for routine maintenance of their streets and seems to be more popular than Chip Seal (no loose rocks). However it may not last as long as seal coat because of the sand covered surface. We are going to look at this program for future routine maintenance of our streets (this program is relatively inexpensive).

All street maintenance is expensive but must be performed in order to save the base of the street.

Please call me with our questions & complaints. Lanny S. Lambert (210) 6585356

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Job opportunities with the City can be found at <http://www.conversetx.net/jobs.aspx> or by calling Human Resources at (210) 658-5357 and selecting option 2.

Applications are accepted only for open, posted positions and to be considered, applicants must submit a properly completed Application.

Applications for Fire Department uniformed positions may be found at <http://www.conversetx.net/DocumentCenter/View/956> and more information obtained by calling (210) 658-8900.

Applications for Police Department and Dispatcher job openings may be found at <http://www.conversetx.net/jobs.aspx> under Tools and more information obtained by calling (210) 658-2322.

Applications for all other jobs may be found at <http://www.conversetx.net/DocumentCenter/View/767>.

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## City of Converse Contact Information

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[www.conversetx.net](http://www.conversetx.net)

**ADMINISTRATION:**

**Lanny S. Lambert, City Manager**  
citymanager@conversetx.net  
(210) 658-5356

**Holly Nagy, City Secretary**  
citysecretary@conversetx.net  
(210) 658-5356

**Stella Calvillo, Administrative Assistant**  
adminasst@conversetx.net  
(210) 658-5356

**Le Ann Piatt, Assistant City Manager**  
acm@conversetx.net  
(210) 658-5356

**STAFF DIRECTORY:**

Administration.....(210) 658-5356  
Building.....(210) 658-8285  
City Council.....(210) 658-5356  
Economic Development.....(210) 659-9163  
Finance.....(210) 658-5357  
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