

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SUNSET CANYON SUBDIVISION

By Gary Hale

In about 1981 a developer, L O Jackson and his three sons, Terry, Larry, and Jerry, started a nice new subdivision in the area three miles east of Dripping Springs. The original section was just called Sunset Canyon and is located on land that was part of the Key Ranch and maybe Hazy Hills Ranch. There was some swapping of land done at the time. The original piece of land was the portion that is now directly behind Sunset Canyon Baptist Church. It is pretty much defined by the street called Hidden Hills as it loops around. The current church building was the headquarters and the sales office for the Jacksons as they developed the subdivision. Lots were sold and a good number of houses were built during the first several years. Most of the lots are residential but the lots located on the highway are commercial. A large entrance sign was built by the Jacksons on a commercial lot. It was lighted and had irrigation for the grass and the landscape. There is a set of CCR's or deed restrictions just for this section of the residential lots.

The Jacksons then went across the road (US290) from the sales office and bought some more property and started developing this section of land in about 1982-83. It was done in two sections. The front section is referred to as Section II and the part further to the south is Section III. Again, most of the lots are residential and the lots on the highway are commercial. Another large entrance sign was erected by the Jacksons on a commercial lot. There is a light and water for this sign also. This sign said Sunset Canyon II/III. It is now referred to as "South." There are CCR's or deed restrictions for each Section II and III. The restrictions are almost the same as the original but there are some minor differences.

The Jacksons continued to sell lots and were apparently doing well. They then went behind the original section and purchased some more property. They tied this property into Hidden Hills with a street called Cottonwood Creek and they laid out Section IV. It was roughly west of Trautwein, although a small section is on the east side of Trautwein and the street is Timberline Trail. Oakwood crosses through Section IV from Trautwein to Canyonwood. Most lots are residential but there may be a couple of lots that are commercial on the corner of Oakwood and Trautwein. There is a separate set of restrictions for this section.

In 1985, the Jacksons purchased their last land from the Hazy Hills Ranch. This land became Section V or as we refer to it as "West." It has a long main road, Canyonwood, and a parallel road, Oak Meadow. There are a few commercial lots up front but most of the lots are residential. There are separate restrictions for this section also. As a note, there are about five lots on the west side of Canyonwood, right at the front that are not in Sunset Canyon. I believe this is called Sunset Heights and was developed from the Ranch property. Just as this section was getting sold, in about 1986-87, there was a downturn in the economy. The savings and loan bust and the oil bust happened and the selling of lots came to a slow down.

The Jacksons filed for bankruptcy in about 1987-88. A large number of lots (about 159) were sold to an investor. These lots are what we now refer to as "Nassour" lots. The Hazy Hills Ranch also took back a good number of lots and then resold them. This event is what caused the

subdivision to be the size that it is now. There was some land across the highway, just east of South Canyonwood Dr., that was to be developed at a later date but was not developed after the bankruptcy. There are some commercial businesses in that area now. There is also some land in what we used to call the "horseshoe curve area" that was filled in with fill dirt/rock over a period of years. This is where the propane company, the large form factory/storage, the law office, and the storage sheds are now located. I do not believe that was an actual part of Sunset Canyon subdivision.

A note on the "Nassour" lots: These lots were sold by an investor and they do have a separate set of additional restrictions added. The old restrictions still apply but there are additional ones added. Nassour lot owners, after they build a house, are required to join the Sunset Canyon Landowners Association (SCLA).

The SCLA was not started by the developer. There was no Homeowners Association (HOA) in Sunset Canyon. The only rules that the owners needed to go by were the recorded restrictions, as set out by the developer, and a few new ones that were additionally added or supplemental ones that were later added.

In about 1987, a small group of people got together and started a land owners association and it was called Sunset Canyon Land Owners Association. It was chartered and filed at the Texas Secretary of State. Bylaws were set up and the membership was voluntary. Officers and board members were elected. When the Nassour lots were created, the restrictions for those lots stated that when you build a house that you had to become a member of SCLA. That is why there are two classes of members, voluntary and mandatory.

A few facts and figures about our sub-division. These figures are not exact but are close to being accurate. The numbered lots in Sunset Canyon go up to 1075. There may be some gaps in the numbering so we are not exactly sure of the total number of lots. We think there are about 900 or so residential lots in the five sections and about 40-50 commercial lots. There are about 1500-1600 acres in Sunset Canyon. There are about 750-800 homes in Sunset Canyon. Many owners used to have a house and several lots. There are fewer and fewer vacant lots for sale now. In Section I, the lots are an average size of about 2 or more acres. In the other sections, the lots average about 1.5 acres. The smallest lot is 1.1 acre in Section V and the largest is 11.0 acres in Section I. There are several lots that are 5-6 acres. The few lots that do allow livestock are listed in the restrictions and must be at least 2.5 acres or greater. These lots can have ONLY one animal per each 2.5 acres. Livestock is defined in the restrictions as horse, cattle, sheep, or goats. Absolutely NO swine or pigs are allowed on any lot in any section. Section V does not allow for ANY livestock including poultry, on any lot.

Since 1981, this area has been a very desirable place to live and our houses and lots are easy to sell when placed on the market. We have several creeks and we are near Little Barton Creek. We have been surrounded by large ranches such as the Hazy Hills and the Willingham Ranch. We have many beautiful oaks and the terrain varies with some lots having excellent views of the Hill Country. We have restrictions that are reasonable and not excessive. These were made by

the developer and not by SCLA. SCLA does not place any new rules or regulations on property. They only try to help maintain our area as a very nice place to live and raise children.

SCLA does help keep our roads and signs maintained by using the Hays County maintenance personnel. SCLA keeps the areas around the two entrance signs mowed and trimmed and they keep the lights operating. There is a Welcome Wagon operation to welcome new neighbors with information and a small gift. There is a newsletter to try and keep people informed and there is a website for information. SCLA was given the authority to conduct the Architectural Review by Mr. Jackson when he ceased operations and they have been doing this function for the past 30 years. The committee is made up of three members/landowners.

This subdivision, through the hard work of several of our dedicated residents and our Association, was able to get treated surface water piped in here many years ago. The water comes primarily from Lake Travis. Prior to that, we all had to drill wells and some wells were starting to run dry. The water was originally from LCRA and is now from West Travis County Public Utility Authority (WTCPUA). This is a very valuable asset for all of us. We used to get our mail up on Highway 290. We now have postal delivery to each house and not to a group of boxes like a lot of new subdivisions. We have reliable waste/recycle pickup by several waste companies. Electricity is provided by Pedernales Electric Coop (PEC) and is generally very reliable and the repair service is excellent. All homes are still on private wastewater septic type systems.

This subdivision is a safe area to live and to raise children. SCLA has a neighborhood watch and we have an active Neighbors Night Out program. This past year we had almost 250 people participate in this program. There is very little crime reported in this neighborhood and we do have patrols from Hays County Sheriff's Department and by the Constable's Office. You can feel safe walking, jogging, and riding bikes most of the time, although traffic on narrow roads has been and will continue to be a problem.

We hope you and your family enjoy your home and lifestyle in a beautiful, safe, and outstanding neighborhood. It really doesn't get much better than this.