

Citizens' Academy Graduates Another Class of Super Citizens

By Cindee Sharp, Communications Director

Local governments are where the rubber meets the road. The task of providing a safe environment and essential services to a community is not always inherently clear and may be easily taken for granted.

Perhaps you wonder if you receive good value for your taxes and fees paid to the City, or what is involved in providing safe drinking water for your home 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Are you curious about what it takes to have top rate police and fire departments respond to emergencies? Do you know how your Mayor and City Council are elected and how they plan for the future of the City? These functions happen every day so we can live our busy lives comfortably.

In 2016, Horseshoe Bay leaders initiated a program to promote understanding of the City with a goal of creating long-term partnerships for shared community expectations and actions. The City's Citizens' Academy educates citizens through direct contact with City staff and elected officials, site visits, and hands-on activities. In remembrance of long-time resident Dottie Anderson, a spring 2019 graduate, the academy was renamed the *Dottie Anderson Citizens' Academy*.

"This is a wonderful program dedicated to informing our citizens about the daily tasks required to run a city of Horseshoe Bay's high caliber," said City Manager Jeff Koska. "Not only do we provide information, we gain information from the students. We also fill many of our City Council and Committee seats with graduates who want to make a positive impact by serving the community."

The 16th academy recently ended, and a graduation ceremony was held on April 11. The City congratulates the following Horseshoe Bay residents and Spring 2025 Citizens' Academy graduates: Michael Hussey, Mary Beth Kerby, Roger Hearne, John Layton, Dick Smith, Thomas Andrews, Cathy Brown, Kristi Lofton, Richard Rathwick, Barbara Rathwick, Dee Wolfe, Kay Colapret, Julie Jackson, and William Prather.

"It is amazing the quality job that our city personnel do, and the professionalism is greatly appreciated," said William Prather, a member of the 16th Academy class. "I don't think you would find this in any other city of our size. They are to be congratulated."

Graduate Roger Hearne said, "I have only lived in large cities like Dallas and Los Angeles. The operation of these mega cities is remote and vast. Being trained by the actual people that manage the key departments of Horseshoe Bay has given me unique insight and understanding of how small cities are managed and run on a daily basis."

During the ceremony, each student is presented with a certificate signed by the Mayor and a jacket or vest with the City logo. Mayor Elsie Thurman, a Citizens' Academy graduate, said she received a wealth of information and understanding of the inner workings of the city during her class.

“The academy was most beneficial to my understanding of the city, and I use this information to help provide the leadership needed to maintain exceptional high quality living standards the residents have come to know and expect,” said Mayor Thurman.

To date, more than 230 HSB residents have participated in the academy, gaining knowledge while fostering a sense of community.

The 17th Academy will begin in October and run for nine class sessions. Each Thursday from 2 to 4 p.m., a different subject about local government will be covered by the City's various departments. Classes will cover a range of topics including City Council and Elections, Open Government, Fire, Police, Utilities, Finance, Code Enforcement, Development Services, and Municipal Court. The final session is a graduation ceremony.

If you want to learn more about the Citizens' Academy, please contact Cindee Sharp, Communications Director, at csharp@horseshoe-bay-tx.gov. A brief application, available on the City's website, must be completed to be considered for the academy. Applicants must be a City of Horseshoe Bay resident, with preference given to full-time residents. Emphasis is given to creating a diverse class from as many neighborhoods as possible within Horseshoe Bay.

PHOTO



Congratulations to the City of Horseshoe Bay 16th Class of Citizens' Academy Graduates.