

Council Comments.....

It looks cold, it looks cloudy, looks like rain – but – it’s still a Good Morning in the Bay. A good day for a good book. A good day for bridge or mah jong (however it’s spelled). It’s also a good day for Council Comments!

We had a workshop on Monday afternoon. The first topic we talked about was the possible acquisition, by the City from the Resort owner, of the Horseshoe Bay Airport. This discussion followed three meetings last week, attended by two council folks at each (that open meeting thing). At these meetings with the Resort Owner and his team and a representative from TxDOT (Texas Department of Transportation), who represents the FAA (Federal Aviation Agency) in Texas, the Resort Owner (Doug Jaffe) expressed a desire to sell the Airport to the City. “Not with my nickel,” you might say and I would agree. BUT the way this deal would work is the Feds pay 90% of the appraised value (purchase price) and the owner forgives the remaining 10%. And why would he want to give away this 160 acre multi-million dollar asset at a discount? Well it seems that capital improvements to airports are very high dollar. While Mr. Jaffe has funded the recent improvements out of his pocket, in the future, improvements could be funded up to 90% utilizing state and federal airport improvement grants if, and a big if, the airport were publicly owned (by the City) instead of privately owned (by the Resort). Although an in-depth analysis has not been made, initial assurances are that the airport has a positive cash flow (it makes money), primarily due to fuel sales. It could be a positive revenue stream for the City and also could be a property tax rate reducer.

As with most city projects, this is a work in progress and the work has not yet begun. The plan is to form a committee of interested and informed Horseshoe Bay folks to work with TxDOT, the FAA, the Resort and the City staff to develop and discuss the pros and cons and deliver to the council a report in six months that will aid in making decisions on this important and complicated issue. If you are interested in participating in this effort, please contact City Manager Stan or any member of your City Council.

Following a lengthy airport discussion, we moved on to a streets discussion that actually required less time. Amazing!!! The first discussion item was the payment terms available for the street improvement assessment. Voted and approved were assessments to be paid at completion by a payment in full with cash or possibly a credit card or in six equal principle and interest (4%) payments over 5 years. Horseshoe Bay Street Upgrade Policies may be obtained from the city website at horseshoe-bay-tx.gov or at City Hall.

We then discussed initial upgrade plans for Bay West Blvd and Horseshoe Bay Blvd. Our engineer Tony Plumley gave a presentation on what would be involved in replacing the Bay West low water crossing with a bridge. The bridge would cost the City 300 – 350 thousand dollars, withstand the 100 year flood and accentuate Horseshoe Bay décor – fancy term for look good. Yet to be determined is a plan for

the cart path from 10 green to 11 tee on Ram Rock. Several public safety improvements at Blue Ground and Broken Hills were discussed as part of the Bay West improvements. Also discussed was keeping, removing or improving those bouncy cobblestones. Moving on to HSB Blvd, the improvement would begin at the entrance from 2147 and extend to the boat ramp street.

Much of the money to improve these two streets would come from ad valorem taxes as there are comparatively fewer resident lots than in other parts of the Bay. Also, improvements to streets and cul-de-sacs intersecting with these two streets are highly encouraged. From both an economical and hassle standpoint, doing all these streets together is a real winner. If you and/or your neighbors have questions concerning the street improvement plan for those streets, if you are interested in beginning the petition process for your street or you would like a city representative to join you and your neighbors in a street upgrade discussion, you may contact City Manager Stan at City Hall. The petition, to be signed by registered voters of Horseshoe Bay, will begin the process of upgrading your street. The petition process is also applicable to all other streets currently owned by the City. As usual, more to come at next month's workshop on February 17, 3 p.m.

Moving on to Tuesday's Council meeting – Reverend Johnny prayed, we pledged and then Craig Haydon gave an update on our broadband improvement efforts, specifically – the Verizon status. The Bay citizens who have this service are quite pleased with speed and reliability. The bad news is that it is not available in much of the Bay – including yours truly's house. In a conversation I had with Carl Erhardt, Verizon's Texas Prez, he stated that new gizmos were to be installed in HSB West that would extend coverage to most of that area. While not giving me a specific completion date, my impression was sooner rather than later.

Donning my Hill Country 100 Club Board Member hat, I introduced Fran Shull and Joe Bates as Horseshoe Bay's Police Officer and Firefighter of the year. They both were recognized and received their awards at last Thursday night's HC100 Club Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet. Way to Go – Fran and Joe! Chief Fiero then introduced Kyle Schmidt, Jeff Walker and Travis Mc Daniel as three recently employed firefighters. Welcome Guys!

A brief discussion was then led by Utility Director Jeff and Councilman Steve concerning the new million gallon (that's big) elevated water tank to be built in West. The approved bid for this project is approximately \$1.7 million, \$259,200 less than the original estimate and it will be completed during the first quarter 2011. This tank will provide improved, more consistent water pressure in West. It will also deal with future growth in homes.

During the course of our meeting numerous public hearings, plats and replats, zoning classifications, variances and annexations were discussed and approved. Concerning a sign variance on an Office Building Monument Sign, Warren Newman asked if the city could make these rather routine variances easier to obtain. All agreed

with that idea and Mayor Bob directed the city staff to come up with a simpler, less time consuming process.

The HSB P & Z (how 'bout those acronyms) has proposed a definition for a "Bar" and requirement that a "conditional use permit" for such an establishment be required by the City. In a 2 – 1 split decision, the P & Z folks approved this proposal. Sharon Botello opposed this decision and asked Lou Bright of the TABC (Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission), the LCB to us old timers, to give us a brief synopsis of the licensing of these establishments and possible city roles in the process. While most all oppose loud music, late night traffic and a night club row, certain establishments such as wine bars could be attractive additions to our city. Sharon's point is not to make our city requirements so onerous as to discourage owners of such establishments (wine bars, for example) from locating in the Bay. This was a discussion only item and will be researched and discussed in more detail in the future.

Abandoned and/or foreclosed houses at: 116 Arollo Court, 110 Amethyst, 202 Sweetgrass, 303, 336, 240, 1000 and 1206 Sun Ray were discussed. The owners (banks) and Mike Light and Eric Winter (Mike and Eric are city folks) all reported that progress on the completion of these houses is on schedule or close and should all be on the market in the spring. This is a win-win for all involved.

The Mayor then gave a brief synopsis of the previous day's airport discussion, asked for committee volunteers and we adjourned into Executive Session on several items. All in all a busy and productive two days, with the addition of several more of those "works in progress."

Have a good day!

Your Scribe -
Jeff Robinson