

Council Comments.....

Good morning Horseshoe Bay –

And a fine day it is! I'll begin with a bit of a disclaimer this morning. That crack Beacon reporter, Jodi Lehman, who normally edits my monthly epistle for capitalization and punctuation flaws will not be on the job today. Instead, she will be enjoying this fabulous spring day on the links as she drives, chips and putts her way to victory in a golf tourney. Good Luck Jodi – and the rest of you will just have to bear with a few misplaced capital letters and commas!

Now, on to the business of the Bay. Larry Sherwood prayed and we pledged. The Mayor recognized Detective Jim Cooksey on his 5 years of service to the HSB PD. Chief Lane then introduced Jeff Smith as the latest addition to the PD. Unlike most of the Chief's seasoned veterans, this is Jeff's first job as a police officer. Congratulations Jim and welcome Jeff!

Yours truly then gave a brief update on Verizon and AT&T's broadband (internet and cellular) status in our community. Soon, in the Beacon (be on the lookout), an article will run requesting those of you who have tried unsuccessfully to obtain Verizon's new high-speed service to provide your name, addresses and telephone numbers to a group of local citizens who will accumulate the info and provide it to Verizon in hopes of their expanding availability of their service to all of HSB. City Manager Stan is currently working with AT&T to offer a site on or near our two new water towers above Skywater and HSB West. Either site will, hopefully, simplify their plans. As always – more to come.

Drew Crosby of the HSB Business Alliance thanked the City for its support of their efforts and communicated the recent successes of their events. This group of local business folks hosts a meet and greet from 9 – 10 a.m. on the last Wednesday of each month at the Taste of Thyme. Everyone's welcome, so come on down!

Some good folks from the LCRA discussed plans to replace the existing Ferguson Power Plant with a new more efficient, environmentally friendly facility. The plant will use 35 – 40% less fuel to produce the same amount of electricity. The new plant would be built next to the current plant and would not affect existing lake levels. Once plans and bids are solidified, the plant could be built in the late 2011 – late 2014 time frame.

City Manager Stan reported that the new HSB West water tower was about 30% complete and was on schedule for completion in May 2011.

Utility Director Jeff Koska and Stan have been negotiating the Bay's new Raw Water Contract with the LCRA. While it's very important, it's also somewhat complicated. So, suffice it to say, we are contracting to use a bit more than in the past at a level that should minimize fees for underages and overages. More importantly to you folks, water in Texas is a scarce natural resource. That means turn off the sprinklers when it rains, don't water in the winter, water twice a week in the spring, summer and fall and tell the City's water guys if you spot a leak.

Our contract engineer, Tony Plumlee, discussed a listing of 3.7 miles of streets in HSB West chosen to be chip sealed by the good folks of Llano County. The list includes about 2 miles of Fault Line with the remainder being streets in close proximity to Fault Line. All have a rating of "C" or worse. An agreement with Burnet County has resulted in a similar list of streets in that county.

Good News – the five houses in very bad condition on Sun Ray have now been granted "Certificates of Occupancy" and are on the market. The houses on Jade, Douglas and Bay West, abandoned by their builder, have been brought up to code and are ready for sale to individuals or builders for completion.

Several citizens spoke "pro and con" on eleven condo units in four locations that needed significant improvements. Neighbors of these units spoke of their unsightliness (a word?) and property value impacts. Also, that they certainly weren't up to the standards of a "world class resort". The council agreed. The owners of these units discussed the circumstances that had led to these problems and their plans to remedy the problems. After much discussion of what needed to be done and the schedule to do it, the council imposed a monthly update requirement on the owners, with all units to be fixed by no later than 6 months from now and with progress to be seen monthly. Failure to see progress and completion can result in "orders for repair" in which the city will bring the units to code and place a lien on the properties for the cost. There was much "give and take" on this issue and it will hopefully be resolved to everyone's satisfaction in a timely manner.

After the usual Skywater update, not much progress except for the golf course, the Council agreed to wait another month for the developer to provide the bucks necessary to begin the engineering work on the Skywater water tower.

Prior to adjourning, a discussion was held on the City funding a feasibility study, not to exceed \$7500, to determine if the City's population can sustain the much desired grocery store. No decision was made, but all seemed to agree that this was a potentially good first step to determine if or when such a store could "make it" in the Bay. Again, more to come.

At the end of the day, this seemed like a real good meeting. Issues like the houses on Sun Ray and others had been resolved. A plan was in place for resolving the eleven condos issue. More to come on broadband, power plants and grocery stores. All in all, a good day – and you have a good day, too!

Your Scribe -
Jeff Robinson