

Council Comments.....

And a fine holiday evening it is –

As you've gathered at this point, this will be the evening version of Council Comments. Not because it was a short meeting, but Becky is in Brownwood with her folks tonight and I will spend my early evening hours on a description of the final council meeting of 2010.

So let's begin. Rev. Pete prayed and we pledged. Mayor Bob asked former Councilman Jim Babcock to step forward and as he has so often in our community – he did. The Mayor, former Councilmen Rantzow, Spence, Bird and yours truly shared experiences of their time working with Jim. All recognized his major role in the journey from POA Board through leadership of the incorporation effort, establishment of the City's ordinances and Charter, five years as Councilman and many hours of off duty time researching and developing plans for the City's business. That is a real long sentence, but only scratches the surface of Jim's contributions. As Dick Rantzow said, "We might not always agree, but I always respected his opinion." He will be missed.

Several residents of HSB South expressed concern about speeding and drag racing in the Gazelle and Stag street area. This area is home to many small children. Chief Lane responded that his officers have spent much time in the area, but the bad guys recognize police cruisers too. New more visible signage, more use of radar and speed bumps will be used or considered. If any lead foots read this article – Beware!

The Chief then introduced his newest officer, Joe Lorette. Officer Joe is a retired U.S. Army First Sergeant and a veteran police officer. Welcome Joe.

Dennis Hill, superintendent of Llano ISD discussed recent progress in his school district. For the first time – ever – the district is rated exemplary (the highest). Graphs presented by the superintendent reflect 4 years of TAKS scores rising from 70's and low 80's to low and mid 90's. In my school days, that would be going from C's and D's to B+'s and A's. Biggest improvements in math and science (two of my favorites). He also expressed concern that the possibilities of a 10% state legislature reduction in overall funding for school districts could result in a revenue impact of \$1.6 million. This could represent a 20% reduction in the professional staff. Good news is Llano ISD's financial house is in good shape and will deal with this shortfall better than most and that reduction can be avoided. While the economy is certainly a contributor, the property tax reduction passed several years ago was supposed to be replaced 100% by the new business tax. Didn't happen.

Yours truly then gave his annual appeal for support of the Hill Country 100 Club. The Club supports the families of police, fire and EMS personnel lost in the line of duty in Burnet, Llano, Blanco and Lampasas counties. The annual recognition of our outstanding first responders will be held at the Burnet Community Center at 6 pm on January 20. Four of your neighbors: Joe Holtslag, Craig Haydon, Mike Pickering and I

currently serve on the Board of Directors. If you'd like to join this worthwhile endeavor, give us a call. Annual memberships are \$100.

Councilman Phil then led a brief discussion of the Street Improvement Plan outlined in the last week's Beacon and Highlander. In the interest of saving a tree, I will not reiterate the details – but – it's a good plan and the details are on the City's website, www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov or at City Hall. A workshop is planned for 1 pm on January 18 to begin a nitty-gritty discussion of details. Come on by.

The HSB West low water crossing bridge low bid was rejected by a 5-0 vote. Too much! By another 5-0 vote the Mayor was directed to retain a leading engineer to review all possible bridge constructions that would meet our requirements. This would include a look at the bridge construction suggested by Tom D'Arcy. The desire is that a meeting between the engineer retained by the City and Tom might result in a solution.

The revised Horseshoe Bay Center Planned Development and Concept Plan was approved 5-0. Changes required included reducing the two story building to one story and a conforming reduction in parking spaces. This is Mike Walsh's Space Center project. Could a one story grocery store be in the works?

Manager Stan reported the deer have been counted. 663 were spotted. There are definitely more. 160 of the 200 approved by Texas Parks and Wildlife have been captured. The trapping will conclude in January. Lot clearing continues and should conclude in West in January.

The Council approved by a 5-0 vote the replat and rezone of 11 lots to become part of the P & K Development (across from American Bank). This will result in the demolition and removal of the current 10 townhome condos.

Also approved were the commercial building plans, in the City's ETJ, for the first of four building of the Spanish Trails Assisted Living Facility located west of the Craig Veterinary Clinic on 71. This first building will include 14 apartments and dining room, library, kitchen and other rooms. Artist's renderings and plans indicate a good and necessary project.

Interim agreements and amendments with the SW Ownership (Skywater) and the IBC Bank's set aside letter (Skywater water tank funding) were received, reviewed and blessed by Lawyer Rex. This is a major step in the right direction for the development. On a related note, the Council approved 5-0 Bob Rowan's Westway Construction request to develop and build 50 houses on unplatted Skywater property. This development will be allowed within the current limit of 200 LUE's for the Skywater Development. The City's current commitment is to provide water and wastewater to 200 homes. These Westway homes will be in the 2100 to 2900 square foot range. Sure would be nice to get real estate bidness going in the Bay again.

More to come on lots of projects in the Bay – both private and public. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you in 2011.

Your scribe -
Jeff Robinson