

Council Comments.....

Good Evening Everyone –

Today was certainly a hot one in the “Bay”, with many more on the way over the next 3 months. While your City Council dealt with several important, yet not contentious, issues during the regular three o’clock meeting, the morning’s workshop efforts and future efforts concerning the streets, formerly known as roads, in the Horseshoe Bay POA is shaping up as the single most important and expensive issue the City has been faced with since it’s inception. While I will not repeat my facts and conclusions from last month’s workshop, suffice it to say, this is a biggie that will require positive participation by all the citizens of our City.

Steven Widacki of Lockwood, Andrews and Newnam, our consulting engineers, made a lengthy presentation on the current conditions of our streets, the alternatives available to bring our streets up to standard and the price tag. Steven substantiated our belief that the streets have deteriorated significantly since last appraised in 2004. The list of reasons for this deterioration was numerous (bogey on a par 5). A large part of the problem is a result of the base the roads were built on 20-30 years ago (more on this later). The price tag is up significantly since early 2007 and as oil prices continue going up – so will asphalt and associated materials. One bit of good news was that a viable alternative to 18 inch ribbon curbs might be 24 inch “sacrificial shoulders”. Much discussion followed on this concept, but suffice it to say, a new road technology phrase was born – Sacrificial Shoulders. So, what are they? They are what you see on Hiway 71 (and others) that are outside the solid white lines on each side of the road. They are non-load bearing and meant to expire over time. Good news is they are approximately one-third the cost of ribbon curbs. They won’t work in all situations (where deeper ditches occur roadside) - but when you got 122 miles of streets – a 67% savings is a good thing. Not to confuse, this doesn’t include the cost of HMAC, asphalt to the uninformed.

At the conclusion of our meeting, it was decided that we would contract with a geo-tech firm who would evaluate the street base and the condition of the ground where our water and waste water pipes are buried. Keep in mind folks, many of those pipes are old enough to run for the White House.

Bottom line is whether we ribbon or sacrificial shoulder, complete the project in 5 or 15 years, oil prices go up or down – doing nothing is not an alternative. We must innovate, plan, persevere, compromise and ultimately be of one mind. Hard things are never easy, but folks in the “Bay” have all solved greater dilemmas. More to Come!!

A brief respite and then on to the 3 p.m. Council meeting. Father Bob of St. Paul's Chapel led us in prayer and informed the Council that as much as he appreciated the opportunity, he thought it only fair that the Protestants with three ministers share 3 out of 4 such occasions. Seems fair to me. He also shared a brief history of the Chapel and the Church at Horseshoe Bay and the major contributions made by Wayne and Eileen Hurd to their formation. Thank you Wayne and get well soon!

Fire Chief Fiero reported that Stephanie Black would be our new Lieutenant in the Fire Department based on her top score on two written and one oral exam. Brad Casey finished a close second. More good folks rising to the top. Congratulations Stephanie!!! The Chief also reported that his department had received a \$22,000 LCRA grant to purchase a purified air compressor. We will add on \$7,800 to make the purchase. Every little bit helps the City's bottom line.

Allied Waste, our garbage collectors, made a presentation in which they asked for and were granted a \$1.14 monthly residential price increase for their services. This is an annual contractual conversation and usually results in a smaller increase, but like so many other things, the price of petro products is driving up costs dramatically. According to their presentation, this increase will only recoup about 66% of their increased costs.

The final action on annexation of Mike Walsh's Space Center property was deferred until next month due to a conflict concerning the road cuts necessary for the proposed two entrances off of 2147. The TxDOT Regional Engineer is denying Mike's request for 2 cuts where 3 currently exist and would approve only 1. Go figure. Since 2147 is our City's designated retail and commercial corridor, we will need TxDOT's cooperation if we are to attract the retail small businesses our community needs. There is an ongoing dialog concerning this issue. Mike – you get well soon, too.

The new, more flexible Fireworks Ordinance was passed 5 – 0. While removing the prohibition on fireworks during "Burn-Ban" periods and allowing public displays of fireworks by permit only, decisions will remain with the Fire Chief. Basically folks, it's up to our fire fighting experts, Chief Fiero and his folks to decide when, where and if we'll have fireworks.

The Brush Control Ordinance passed 5 – 0, with the only change being an increase to \$100, from \$10, for a dump truck load of brush. Our prime objective continues to be not to make a buck or discourage our local yard folks or handy men, but to insure that we process Horseshoe Bay brush, not stuff imported by outside haulers. Matter of fact, a word of warning to such haulers – an annual permit (\$50) is required to dump and if you are found to be bringing in foreign brush, your permit

will be revoked for a year. Just another fine example of the brush, litter and garbage police at work.

The final effort of this beautiful day in the “Bay” was passage of the long worked on Noise Ordinance. By a vote of 5 – 0, the Council passed this historic legislation – OK, I’m getting carried away. Too much streets, brush, fireworks and noise for one day. Anyway, the only final tweak to the Ordinance was the allowance of golf course maintenance to begin at 6 a.m. instead of 7 a.m., so you earlllllly morning golfers can hit the links at sunrise. It’s just as well, I’d miss those lawn mowing headlights shining in my windows during the winter.

Winter, what an interesting concept - Oh well, that’s a long way off.

Stay Cool - Your Scribe –
Jeff Robinson