

## **Council Comments.....**

Good morning – If you are up with me this morning, you are seeing a spectacular sunrise. Just one of the many benefits of the City Council Scribe job.

Yesterday began with Roads in the morning. I've given up on calling them streets. The 9 o'clock workshop began with many of the same discussions about ribbon curbs, road base, cost, street committees, etc., etc., etc. Fortunately after the 10:45 a.m. break, the light came shining through and the council determined what the few key ingredients to getting the roads transferred to the city were. The goal is as follows:

By the December 18 City Council meeting, the city will have the HSB POA, the Resort owner and the Declarant's agreement (and all that encompasses) to the conditions necessary to assume total control and maintenance responsibility for the HSB POA's 122 miles of roads. They will also have negotiated and agreed upon a financial commitment from the POA and the Resort owner concerning the maintenance and future improvements to those roads. Following transfer, the first priority for the city will be to eliminate any safety hazards, while few, which currently exist. The type of improvements, priority of various road projects and method of financing (ad valorem, property owner assessments, sales tax, permits, fees, etc.) will be discussed as we proceed, but not determined until after the Home Rule vote in May. Home Rule will provide more financing options than are currently available.

The importance of this meeting of the minds yesterday is that even though the how, what and when have not been decided, the most critical element, the firm goal of transferring the roads will be accomplished by a date certain, December 18.

It is my opinion that yesterday's workshop ended more positively and more collegially than any to date and if all involved proceed in the same manner the roads will belong to the city before the New Year.

And now on to the more mundane afternoon events – the Council Meeting.

As usual the Mayor was prompt – 3 p.m. – welcome to the meeting – Reverend Johnny prayed – we pledged and so began another afternoon of heady decision making. First off, Ryder Warren, Superintendent of the Marble Falls Schools, shared with us the first 18 days of a very positive school year. Last year was an excellent academic year as many students excelled not only in their grades, but also in the state's standardized TAKS test. Two hundred of our Horseshoe Bay children attend Marble Falls schools. Of the 7 projects comprising the recent \$63 million bond election 6 are well underway or nearing completion. Marble Falls ISD is a net contributor under Robin Hood, although not at the much higher level that Llano ISD is, and will join other contributor ISD's in petitioning the Lege for relief beginning in January.

The Council recognized Chris Carter, Chief Utility Operator, for his 15 years of exemplary service. Following that recognition, Chief Lane, in a humorous but moving ceremony, recognized and honored retiring Officer Calvin Tidwell for his

30 years as a law enforcement officer, 18 in the Bay. Good luck and many beautiful sunrises and sunsets to Calvin.

The Council then capped a three-year effort by approving the Escondido PID Agreement. Councilman-to-be Spence asked if the city would have any financial exposures or liabilities in this process and the Mayor replied – Nada.

Stan Farmer, during his remarks, commented that our new Brush Disposal Ordinance has already reduced brush accumulation by 50%. The removal of commercial brush from our piles met the last of the TCEQ concerns and could result in a further 25% reduction.

The Council then approved the 2009 Budget. Following that the \$.35/\$100 valuation tax rate for 2009 was approved, down from last year's \$.40/\$100.

Utility rates were tweaked to eliminate the last vestige of taxes subsidizing utility rates. A several year goal of the Council has been to eliminate this subsidy.

The Walsh (Space Center) retail development annexation was once again deferred till next month. The good news is that the TxDOT issue may be resolved, allowing this project to proceed.

The Welding Ordinance was approved 5 – 0. Enough said.

Incumbent Councilmen Babcock and Robinson along with new Councilman Spence were certified and the election cancelled due to lack of opposition. Welcome Steve!

The 18 member Home Rule Charter Committee was appointed. Home Rule may allow for recall, initiative and referendum, involuntary annexation in our ETJ and other new options for the city and its citizens. It may also provide other financing opportunities for our road maintenance and improvements. The timetable is to have a recommended Charter by January, call an election in March and a vote in May. The Charter Committee will be an independent group facilitated by members of the Council.

4:25 – Claudia moved adjournment and we're out of here. Enjoy fall – summer will return soon.

Your Scribe –

Jeff Robinson