

Hello Neighbors!

YOUR City Council met today to conduct the business of YOUR city. As Pastor Johnny White voiced in the Invocation, the blessing of the recent rain followed by beautiful sunshine days created a positive atmosphere among those in attendance.

Special recognition was given to Joe Bates for his 15 years of service as an Engineer/Firefighter to the City Fire Department. This was followed by presentation of the Hill Country 100 Club Firefighter of the Year award to Captain Brad Casey, and Police Officer of the Year award to Sergeant Travis McRee. Both serve with distinction in the protection of our community. The Hill Country 100 Club, and liaison Council Member Craig Haydon, were thanked by the Chiefs of both departments for their years of commitment in providing for the families of these departments when in crisis. Donating to the Hill Country 100 Club is one way to let your police and fire service providers know that you appreciate their risk and the impact on their families. (Of course, dropping some 'thanks' brownies by the stations on occasion helps too!)

The Mayor and City Manager were excited to introduce the final addition to the City Manager's leadership staff, the new IT Administrator Mr. Jules Martin. He comes to the city after relocating his family to the Hill Country for a quality of life focus for his three children, currently in the Marble Falls schools. He attended college in Louisiana, served in the U.S. Air Force, worked for the New Orleans Police Department, and joined forces with an emerging IT firm for the past several years. The City of Horseshoe Bay has grown to need more sophisticated technological resources and programs to support safety, financial management, water treatment, planning processes, and organizational competency. The presence of the skill set Mr. Martin will bring to support the expanded software applications – as well as to provide current training to the staff – meets a critical need for assurance of quality services to the citizens. This is timely as the citizens recently appointed to the Broadband Advisory Committee for improved technology have begun their efforts to improve connectivity reliability in our area.

Several City staff members offered relevant updates:

- Jeff Koska noted that the work on the West Water Treatment Plant was underway on schedule with 50% of the work completed, and they anticipate beginning usage testing in mid-May.
- Chief Wardlow shared that this Thursday, at the direction of the City Manager, there will be an Active Shooter drill at City Hall. Since there is the potential for loud gunfire sounds and alarms, they have been careful to notify neighboring communities and our citizens to relieve any concerns. These drills ensure our Police and Fire Departments are prepared to work in harmony with each other and Marble Falls Area EMS in the event of a major incident. The City Manager wrote a media release that should be published in the local media Thursday and/or Friday.
- Animal Control numbers indicate that we already have 80 more deer related accidents than last year – most minor, but potentially dangerous, car collisions. The City will continue to review the balance of deer population for both their health and the City's safety. All underscored the essential policy of not feeding deer so that the natural course of balance can occur.

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Community Outreach Manager – Doise Miers – presented the results of recent surveys and social media input regarding the proposed Wirtz Bridge Dam. This bridge is anticipated to span Lake LBJ from Wirtz Dam Road in Marble Falls area to eventually connect across the lake and move traffic to FM 2147 at the intersection near the current Subway Restaurant. A total of 247 citizens responded to the survey seeking input as to need/concern. In general, all acknowledge there is a very real need to address the congestion on Hwy 281 in Marble Falls and the likelihood of additional developments impacting future traffic/safety needs. There was discussion as to other options, with Judge Oakley (Burnet County) sharing the reasoning for support of this current plan. It was noted by the Mayor and others that there are actions in place to request immediate consideration for an extension from Wirtz Dam Road (on the FM 2147 end) across land to connect to Hwy 281 south of Marble Falls. In this way, traffic moving across the bridge could continue to Hwy 281 rather than drop onto FM 2147. These conversations are in the beginning stages.

Traffic discussions continued as the Mayor noted his efforts to get support from the Texas Department of Transportation and state funding sources for a continued turn lane on FM 2147. The turn lane currently in place in front of business areas on the east end of the City has improved traffic flow and safety in turning/entering and exiting high traffic locations. The need for a similar expansion near the current market/post office/developing business areas on the west end has been under discussion for months. The Mayor and City Manager have met with leaders seeking support, and plan to bring back findings from discussions to a City Council Workshop forum in the near future. Citizen Diane Jones addressed the City Council to add her concerns about the danger experienced at the intersection of FM 2147 and Hwy 71. The speed and visibility issues led to considerations of lighting on the highway, expanded turn lanes, and prioritization for those turning onto Hwy 71 for safety reasons.

The City Council appointed members to a new Board of Adjustment committee to be chaired by David Pope. Members Lee Peterson, Elaine Waddill, John Bird, and Jim Babcock will review requests for variances, conditional use permits, as well as respond to appeals from certain decisions made by the Development Services Director. While these were previously heard by City Council, the establishment of Horseshoe Bay as a Home Rule municipality (rather than its original General Law municipality) requires a separate entity for these reviews. Please thank these neighbors for their time and service in these important reviews.

Discussions took place regarding two building projects/home sites whose lack of progress or trash ridden sites impact the quality of life of neighbors. Jim McNabb spoke to specific multi-year concerns experienced by Applehead homeowners. This property was re-permitted, with a cash fee assigned, for no later than May 15th completion. The Code Enforcement Officer was asked to be more proactive in assessing violations and holding builders/owners accountable as appropriate.

The near three-hour meeting ended with all pleased with the current status of the City with the sunshine reminder that it is truly always a great day to live in Horseshoe Bay.

Cynthia Clinesmith, Council Member/Public Information Officer