

Hello Neighbors!

If you missed YOUR City Council meeting today, you missed some lively discussions and topics – along with a wonderful opportunity to see the diverse interests and activities of our community. After the invocation by Father Ruben (along with his reminder of the dedication of the Honor Garden at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church July 4<sup>th</sup>, to which the public is invited), we were able to recognize two quality staff members.

- Assistant Police Chief Garth Davis was awarded his 5-year service award with Horseshoe Bay. Police Chief Wardlow reminded all of Asst. Police Chief Davis' extensive 29+ years overall, his work as a Texas Ranger, his top-level certifications, and wealth of experience being applied in our city.
- Police Captain Jason Graham was given his pin for the Trilogy Award he earned through the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association. His two-year study program resulted in Capt. Graham being immersed in higher leadership and problem solving in law enforcement practice.

Public comments were made regarding a few varied topics:

- Jean Johnson asked for the status on the Dog Park discussed earlier in the year. Mayor Jordan described the extensive efforts to work with a committee to identify a suitable location and determine the level of interest before the proposal finally fell aside due to lack of citizen engagement. An article will be placed in the paper to explore the continued interest in this as a whole.
- Steve Jarrard queried potential actions for a house that has been unattended (with overgrowth and dead trees falling). The Code Enforcement Officer has been following protocol with notices and citations to the out of state owner. Final determinations are to notify the owner that the city will contract the clean up of the property and place a lien on the property.
- Bob Baker expressed his frustration based upon a near 200% increase in some property valuations. He followed channels for appeal with limited success and is further frustrated with the seeming randomness of the valuation. Mayor Jordan explained that the city (nor county or school district) have no influence over tax valuations. The City of Horseshoe Bay has one of the lowest tax rates for hundreds of miles...but that rate is applied to whatever valuation is provided by the appraisal district.

As a part of the monthly staff reports, Developmental Services shared the Tuscan Village project is moving forward. Infrastructure for water and sewer has been completed for Phase I with final testing in progress. The first model homes, and clubhouse complex, will begin work following LP gas installation and final permit issues. Eric Winter, Director, also noted that nearly 100 houses are under construction in Horseshoe Bay – a steady increase, as has been the case for the past 4-5 years.

Jeff Koska, Director of Community Services, noted that lake levels are solid and no LCRA water restrictions are in place. The city has opted to maintain the Level 2 watering schedule to keep the water

supply healthy as a part of the Drought Management Plan. **Remember** to check the days you are to water (on the city website) – 2x a week maximum.

Lively conversation began surrounding a ‘unique’ topic for our city – emotional support chickens. Yes, really.

- Dwight King, owner of a 10-acre property in Hills 3 (POA) leased to a family with a special needs adult son, spoke passionately about the unique need for a variance to current city ordinances forbidding chickens (fowl) within the city limits. This young man, with a medical verification, has a therapeutic program where he finds meaningful daily purpose in the care of his 10 chickens (and a Rooster named Doug). Yes...really. Mr. King reminded us all that the point of variances is for unique cases – and further reminded us that at the heart of our city is the care and protection of all our citizens.

100% of the neighbors in the Hills 3 signed approval for the variance (with the city and their POA) in the request – indicating they all recognized the potential for future requests by others but sharing their witness of the value of this therapy for this young man (and their own joy in watching the interaction...and hearing his country rooster!).

Some spoke well intentionally to the caution for ensuring that any potential variance have boundaries that prevent abuse (“none of us want herds of elephants next door”). Finally, the council approved a variance ordinance (not for chickens – but for ‘emotional support animals/ESA) that must be individually approved by the city and verified as a therapeutic process in place with a reputable program. Council Member Gray made the point that any request to the council should ask that the petitioner notify all neighbors of the request so that all would be aware and able to pose any objections during the permitting process.

So Doug, the Rooster – and his 10 chicken harem are returning home to their loved caretaker. See....you want to come to council meetings now don’t you!

- The City reviewed its frustration surrounding the recently installed Pickleball Courts. The surface of the courts has been a bane to players and has resulted in little or no use. The courts were a generous donation to the City park by the Martin Foundation with city support – and it was felt that action needed to be taken to rectify the surface and put this new asset to use by citizens. With Pickleball being the number one growing adult sport in the country (surprise, right?) – this is an asset the Mayor is particularly proud to get back in access for all. The council approved the cost (about 10% of the original cost) to resurface and reorient the courts for play. A large contingent of Pickleball Players were present and ready to get players back on the court! COME OUT and enjoy this fun sport – easy for even the most unathletic!
- Another point of celebration came as the city accepted a ‘donation’ of a 20-year lease on 12 acres of land at Golden Nugget near west entrance across from West Gate zone R-4 – multi

family. John and Sandy Smith, developer, made this offer on behalf of their two daughters, Whitney Shelly Properties LLC, both of whom are avid environmentalists, animal caretakers, and nature enthusiast. This will take the property off the market for 20 years and allow residents to enjoy this soon to be nature preserve. Mr. Smith shared his family story of pride in the work of his daughters around the world and here at home on behalf of improving the environment and the creatures who use it (including as a nurse). The council was honored to accept this offer and moved by the life stories of this generous action.

The meeting ended with the city finalizing contract and plans to acquire the acreage at the west entrance into Horseshoe Bay (off Hwy 2831 near Reclamation Center) to allow for the redirecting of the road for a safer road access – and opportunity for designated entrance signage. Win-win.

All left with lifted spirits and renewed realization that it is always a great day to live in Horseshoe Bay! (Listen for Doug, the Rooster, celebrating with his morning crow!)

Cynthia Clinesmith, Council Member/Public Information Officer