

Hello Neighbors!

YOUR City Council members took the beautiful drive through bluebonnets to City Hall to engage city business with a full house of community members and guests. Several announcements and comment followed the opening prayer and pledge.

- Justice of the Peace Bebe Rocha introduced guests and fellow advocates in support of the Mayor's Proclamation of April as National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. Staggering statistics within our own counties underscored the essential need for all to report any suspected abuse to Child Protective Services immediately. Joining the supporters were the District Attorney Sonny McAfee, Llano County Commissioner Peter Jones, and Llano County Judge Ron Cunningham along with area DPS troopers, business leaders, members of the CASA (Court Appointed Advocates), and Alma Lahmon, Highland Lakes Family Crisis Center Executive Director. The proclamation echoed the Horseshoe Bay community's commitment to support all children's rights to healthy living.
- Helen Smith, representing the residents of The Trails, was commended by state and local leaders for The Trails' 15 years as a Firewise Community. Living in a wooded neighborhood, these citizens have taken ownership of the responsibility for preventing area fires.
- Chief Rocky Wardlow presented the "Preservation of Life Award" to Officer Richard Ciolfi for his courageous efforts at the recent plane crash on FM 2147. Officer Ciolfi reflected the high standards of the HSBay Police Dept. by taking quick action to assess the victims and applying a tourniquet to the passenger who had sustained a severe fracture with arterial bleeding...a life saving move for this accident victim. A standing ovation recognized the quick action impact.
- Chief Joe Morris acknowledged the 'beyond the call' efforts of Assistant Chief Stephanie Black who spent four years earning a rare Executive Fire Officer certification from the National Fire Academy – a part of the work resulting in improved practices in training and practice for the whole department.
- The Mayor recommitted to the city's National Wildlife Federation Monarch Pledge as a part of efforts to bring sustainable living host habitat to the migrating monarchs. Already the city has altered mowing schedules in open areas to allow for the native butterfly weed (white) to drop seeds in late June to expand this resource – the only source the Monarchs use for their eggs. The city's native demonstration garden also has pollinator plants to support Monarchs and other butterflies – and is available for the public to view and learn.

What a kick start to the meeting with so much for which to be proud and thankful! Come see your city work in action sometime....and leave feeling even more blessed than ever to call this home.

- Public comments were made by two area contractors, Dean Blaine and Scooter Lofton, requesting the city consider adding an amendment/discussion to future meeting regarding current concrete slab pour restrictions. Several good points were made specific to weather related impact that could affect guidelines. Both contractors also echoed their understanding of the need to be sensitive to the neighbors when building is on-going and the potential noise impact of concrete pour days.

- Patty Gillean, Gillean and Assoc. Realty, responded to a request by the city to present an update on market activity about sales, market prices, and housing availability. No huge data concerns arose, and it appeared that both new construction/speculative homes and existing homes were moving at a rate that does not leave vacant homes in the community. HSBay, as with other key areas across the state, has seen significant growth and movement over the past two years – but signs seem to point to an upcoming year of leveling off for all. This data helps the city council in monitoring any action it may be taking that could impact the housing market for our citizens.

Several presentations were made by city employees, including:

- Our 2018 Audited Financial Report (presented by BrooksWatson) found no discrepancies and reflected that we were in good standing in practice and management – including holding firm to our reserve funds in case of emergencies. Kristen Woolley, Finance Director, presented this month’s highlighted department by walking those present through the monthly review and reporting mechanisms of the financial status of the city. Good news.....we are doing well!
- Jeff Koska, Community Services Director, invited guests from LCRA and a contracted study firm (Walker & Partners) to share the status of the Zebra Mussels infestation problem in the Highland Lakes area and the preventative efforts of Horseshoe Bay. The YAY! was that there have been no detections of invasion in Lake LBJ or other lakes ‘upstream’ (though Lake Travis is plagued). A proactive plan for preventing and/or treating any future mussel invasion into our drinking water (as Austin experienced with taste and odor recently) was put in place to keep our water fully palatable. None of us want to be drinking stinky water resulting from dead mussels!
- Speaking of palatable water, Jeff Koska and Bill Teeter, Water Conservation Inspector for the city, presented a recommended ordinance establishing minimal standards for irrigation systems. One key issue in keeping our drinking water clean is by each home having a working backflow system in place – among other practices. While current ordinances require most necessary elements, this will go further to require we as homeowners are responsible for checking the backflow (which if failing, can bring in contaminants from our yard including animal droppings, fertilizers, and organic matter into the public water system) – and replacing if found non-functional. Any inhalation of backwater can affect the whole water collection system – not just your individual home. Those present seemed to find this a fair expectation based upon possible health challenges for us all. Even more important than smell and taste is that our water is CLEAN and uncontaminated from a faulty backflow preventer.

Coming upon four hours into an informative, but long working meeting most were ready to head out the door almost before Jerry Gray could make his ritual motion to adjourn. Everyone stepped out into a beautiful sunset of crisp spring weather – reminding us, yes, it really is always a good day to live in HSBay.

Cynthia Clinesmith, Council Member and Public Information Officer