

Horseshoe Bay Council Comments

by Council Member Elaine Waddill, Public Information Officer

The April 21, 2020 Horseshoe Bay City Council meeting was closed to in-person attendance by the public. A temporary suspension of certain aspects of the Open Meetings Act has been granted by Governor Abbott to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in accordance with Section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code. Members of the public were able to participate by listening to the meeting via telephone, but public comment was restricted. The meeting was recorded and uploaded to the City's website following the conclusion of the meeting and is available on the Agendas & Minutes page of the City's website www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/agendacenter.

Mayor Cynthia Clinesmith welcomed the City Council and Staff and opened the meeting with a prayer. The gathering of 9 people (Council and staff) was seated with spatial distancing guidelines and full sanitation measures. She thanked the Council Members for their roles over the past month "behind the scenes", including Council Member Rives's and Waddill's efforts to solidify the plan with the postal services, Council Member Hosea's focus on internet access development, Council Member Graham's review of financial standings, and Council Member Gray's Mayor Pro Tem role and daily support of overall leadership. A lot goes on between meetings in support of the city staff and citizens. The Mayor also thanked Brent Batla for his leadership in the Emergency Management Coordinator role and preparation/communication efforts. Though a more involved salute will come forward for Eric Winter when he retires in December – the Council Members took a moment to thank him for his service. See the Beacon article for more on the service years he has provided to your City.

Fortunately, Horseshoe Bay continues to be COVID-19 free. The Mayor's weekly reports will reduce to monthly updates unless there is urgent information. The Governor continues to modify the State plan – with expectations for more updates next week. The Mayor will be meeting with the County Judge, Resort Management, and other business leaders to begin the process of planning for soft reopenings across the county. The May report will offer details. In the meantime, while not required – it is encouraged that citizens continue to wear face masks in large mixed areas (grocery store, post office, pharmacy, etc.) and maintain continual sanitation practices.

The first item on the agenda was a Public Hearing to be held regarding a possible change in a zoning designation. The request for the zoning change was withdrawn by the applicant, therefore, the hearing was not held. The City Council moved forward to discuss city funding for a Landscape Architect for Horseshoe Bay Park, Inc. A Cooperative Agreement was completed in 2019 that provides for the development of an 11-acre Nature Park – a partnership between the City and local citizen's non-profit. The request was to begin the master plan and Phase I of the plan. A projected budget was not developed prior to the development of the 2019-20 budget so only limited funds were set aside for initial steps. The Council discussed available resources and the expenses involved with moving forward with the project at this time. Since funds for the more in-depth progress of the park development are not in this year's budget, it was agreed that it was more appropriate to bring this to the July Budget Workshop to plan for closing of this year's budget and creation of next year's funding. Concern was expressed that the current business closures (loss of sales tax revenue) and the loss of water sales resulting from the COVID-19 issues could create a measurable decrease in available funds this and next fiscal years. Additionally, a request was made by Council Member Hosea to review a long range five-year financial plan from the HSB Park Inc. responsible for this Nature Park.

A few City Department Directors and Chiefs presented brief updates. Police Chief Wardlow included positive reports of compliance to expectations set by the Governor's Orders. Eric Winter, Development Services Director, reported that digital services provided to our contractors and residents have kept business moving forward without delays. Stan Farmer, City Manager, recommended allowing all contractors a short-limited extension of time for house construction due to pandemic. Tim Foran, Public Works Director, reported that the current road work on FM 2147 is moving forward on schedule.

City Manager Stan Farmer thanked the wonderful residents of Horseshoe Bay for their thoughtfulness and generosity in donating monies for the city employees and helping local restaurants. The funds totaling \$6,800 were used to purchase gift cards from local restaurants and shared equally with 88 of the city employees. The City Directors donated their cards back to the employees and a few also donated monies to this fund-raising effort. This was a win-win as nearly \$7,000 was provided to local businesses in the process. As Stan said, "Horseshoe Bay is just a GREAT place!" All are encouraged to continue to SHOP LOCAL.

Our wonderful April showers will bring beautiful May flowers and hopefully a gradual depletion of the COVID-19 issues. Mark your calendar and join us for our next City Council meeting on May 19, 2020 which we hope may return to full access (with safety precautions in place).