

Horseshoe Bay Council Comments

by Council Member Elaine Waddill and Mayor Cynthia Clinesmith

The Horseshoe Bay City Council Meeting was held as an open meeting following a year of closed meetings due to COVID-19. The meeting was also made available via ZOOM.

Following the invocation and pledges, celebrations/recognitions took priority.

Fire Chief Brent Batla recognized a group of nine volunteers who gave of their time and talent – and at personal risk, who in conjunction with Llano County and Dr. Franklin, provided a COVID-19 Test Site at Fire Station 1 at City Hall. Since the opening of that site in November, they amassed a total of 160 volunteer hours over ten weeks with over five hundred tests administered in addition to the rapid contact tracing completed. We would like to highly recognize and thank Dana Rushing, Beth Dop, Mary Daniel, Teri Flanagan, Beth Dahlberg, Linda Burling, Nancy Moeller, Michelle Walker, and Ann Platt for their willingness to serve our community. There is no doubt the positive impact their help made in slowing the spread of COVID-19 within our community. Awards were offered to signify their contributions – with a standing ovation by all present.

Another special recognition was provided by Finance Director Margie Cardenas who presented a 25 Year Service Award to city employee Shelly Linder. Shelly is the Utility Office Manager responsible for the utility billing of water, sewer, and garbage services to over 3,500 customers. When customers have questions or need further research on their utility account, Shelly and her staff make sure they provide appropriate information for their concerns in a courteous way.

Shelly began employment in March 1996 when this organization was the Lake LBJ Municipal Utility District. She was joined by her two sons and two of her four grandchildren who all shared our pride in Shelly's service to the community. It is not often that an employee receives a 25-year Service Award. The City is fortunate to have Shelly providing quality services to our neighbors.

All public comment attendees were present for an item on the agenda (8) except for Mike Thuss who spoke as a representative of the Horseshoe Bay Proper/West POA. Mike shared an update of the activities following the board meeting, thanked the staff for their efforts during the "SnoVid" event, expressed appreciation for the City's Sunshine Week proclamation, and welcomed all to join the annual POA member meeting on Saturday, March 20th at Quail Point. Visit the Horseshoe Bay POA for details.

Mayor Clinesmith presented a Proclamation Declaring the week of March 14th – 20th, as "Sunshine Week" in Horseshoe Bay. Sunshine Week is celebrated the third week of March each year in an effort to promote transparency and open government in America. It was launched in 2005 by the American Society of News Editors – now News Leaders Association – and has grown into an enduring initiative to promote open government. The proclamation serves as notice to the public that the City of Horseshoe Bay will work diligently to continue to enhance the public's access to government records and information, to increase information provided electronically and online, and to ensure that all meetings of deliberative bodies under its jurisdiction are fully noticed and open to the public.

Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) representatives Eddie Dauterive (Chief Operating Officer), Virgil Maldonado (Vice President of Operations), and Nathan Burns (Director of Regional Operations for Marble Falls) provided a presentation focused on the Horseshoe Bay 2021 Winter Weather event. Burnet County Judge James Oakley, a Board Member with the PEC, introduced the team and shared his commitment to be available during times of need. The Council invited PEC to this meeting to request

clarity of the events of the outages during the ice vortex event last month. The goal was to ensure on-going communication and to learn how to better strengthen response to any future events. A copy of the information provided is posted on the City of Horseshoe Bay website under Emergency Management.

Gary Gauci, Waste Management Operations Manager, shared an update. Over a year ago the collection of curbside waste shifted from Republic Services (Blue Trash Receptacles) to Waste Management/WM. This past year trash receptacles were transitioned to the WM green containers for all commercial areas. The process will now move to residential homes. As you can imagine, this will take several efforts given the mobility of our citizenry.

During the week of April 5th (notifications will come through CIVIC READY – be sure you are signed up) on your regular trash pickup day on Mon, Tue, or Wed. Citizens **will LEAVE OUT their full blue trash cans** like usual– and they will ONLY bring back the new green one to their home. Most of the blue cans will be picked up within 24 hours and replaced with the new green ones. **For those out of town**, there will be an opportunity to contact WM upon return to make the switch. Sign up for CivicReady notifications by clicking the link on the City’s website.

Director of Developmental Services Sally McFeron presented updates to building standards in the Horseshoe Bay South Manufactured Housing area. As neighbors of that community have worked with staff with the goal of continually upgrading the area, as we do with all areas, certain changes were proposed for any new developments. These focused on external property, including the provision for driveways, carports, lawns/soil erosion protection, and roof slope standards. The overall quality of life and pride of community was at the core of all recommendations.

Three representatives (builders/developers) spoke during the public hearing. Perry Butler (Butler Homes, LLC) shared some concerns regarding the requirement for a permanent foundation. Dan Price spoke to the importance that the ordinance allows for the required carports to be standalone (as a safety factor) -which the ordinance supports. Curt Hodgson shared three priority goals, one of which focused on reconsidering the set back on property line (at the back) to allow for more front space. Staff engaged in the dialogue to clarify the ordinance. No action was taken by the Council – and staff will bring back any revisions at the April 13th City Council meeting.

Under Business, agenda items A-C were reviewed and approved by Council. Item D, regarding a building permit extension request (from 2 to 3 years) by a builder of a home of over 13,000 sqft, was discussed. The challenges (beyond sheer size) included the granite foundation and extensive work into the water for decking. Current ordinance does not allow for this extension and the builder was reminded he has the opportunity to come to Council at the end of the 2 years to request any extension needed (with fees). All did acknowledge that it may be that the current time frames (designed for homes over 5,000 sqft) may need another level for homes of larger size (over 10,000 sqft for example) and Developmental Services will review this in the coming year. The builder will be able to draw upon any changes made to time limit increases if made.

Agenda items E and F, both referencing changes to street names or addressing (Azalea Court and Syncline Court) were approved.

Agenda G welcomed Chuck Haven to the Broadband Advisory Committee, replacing a former member who moved from the area.

As part of the annual review of each department, Directors shared their budget status, their progress toward identified goals, and any anticipated challenges.

Fire Department Update: Chief Batla shared the impact of COVID-19 on staff with quarantine requirements and other challenges – the cost of which will be filed for reimbursement (at 75%). He highlighted the progress on goals (based on strenuous national standards) – even during this tough year – and the outstanding work of the team.

Utilities Department: Director Koska provided a comprehensive review, citing similar costs due to the COVID-19 and SnoVid event, with overtime and equipment costs being significant. Again, both insurance and FEMA will be filed for reimbursement to offset the cost to the City.

It was especially exciting to recognize two key celebrations for the utility team (beyond the exceptional work during the storm). The department took on a competitive grant (paperwork intensive/data review) regarding the flood event from 2018. Together with the Finance Director and City Manager, the grant was submitted to mitigate costs to the City of \$229,000+. The department received notification this month that their grant was approved, saving the City tax payers over \$170,000 of this cost. Even more pride is shared in recognizing the Department as the winner of the Blue Legacy Water Conservation Award from the AWWA. This award acknowledged the significant work over the past six years to conserve water through efficient practice, quality tools, communication with customers, and management of site operations.

City Manager Stan Farmer provided an update on one of the City's primary goals – continually improving communication. An Ad Hoc committee of citizens will join Farmer and a Council Liaison in developing a multi-platform plan to ensure all citizens are given access to their city operations with full transparency. Currently the City has one of the most extensive efforts of any community – but given the mobile nature of our citizens, the committee will look to identify additional strategies. The committee will be appointed by Council in April.

The Consent Agenda was approved without added discussion. Executive Session was held...and the Council adjourned at around 6:40 pm.

Citizens are welcome to attend the Council meetings which will be open going forward. We will continue to work for social distance seating and masks are encouraged – especially for anyone not vaccinated or who has health challenges in particular. Please go to the City's Website (horseshoe-bay-tx.gov) for any needed information. In the meantime – we hope to share the comfort of Spring weather and the joy of being together knowing we have come through so much...positively...as a community.