



Mayor's Message – September 2021



As we tiptoe (run) towards Autumn – joyfully seeing kids/grandkids off to school and summer crowds leaving.....we can relax into the bounty of activities (lake living, hiking, game groups, resort member activities, church family, and neighbor gatherings). **Travelers.....welcome home!**

City News

Just when I was bragging that we were headed for a carefree year after a series of challenges...a **sinkhole appears!** Thankfully, it was a short episode and a good test of our emergency alerts. But it could have given us a taste of future traffic if we aren't diligent about our proactive transportation planning. **Thank you all for signing up for CIVIC READY and WARN CENTRAL TEXAS alerts.** In addition, please ensure your contact info with the utility dept is current so we can reach you in times of emergency at your residence. Keeps us prepared for anything!

YOUR City Council worked a long (8:15-5 pm) day last week to finalize the budget and the Long Range Plan for the coming years. A Public Hearing was held, and a recommendation will be on the September agenda to **approve NO increase in the property tax rate for 2022 (keeping it at .2700, essentially an annual cost of about \$1350 for a home of \$600K)**. I am so proud that we are able to employ exemplary skilled staff in all areas (fire, police, finance oversight, utility, road, development services, and city operations) at under \$150 a month/\$5 a day average! That's over 100 steady hands lifting you up each day for less than a cup of coffee/or cocktail!!

October will bring **early voting and an opportunity for residents to vote on sales tax**. One way we are hoping to keep our property tax rate flat is by taking advantage of recent legislation that allows us to use sales tax funds more flexibly. As the only city in the region that has not collected the full .825 sales tax over the years, the change makes **bringing our local sales tax up from .8 to .825** to fund roads, etc. valuable. The impact is negligible for us – paying the same sales tax as we do when shopping in Marble Falls, Bee Cave or Austin...but allows those visitors to our community to help in paying for the services/roads they use. The estimated \$250K increase in sales tax equals about a penny (.01) on property tax. If you want more detail prior to the November election voting, please be sure to call the City for clarity. **Vote!**

The **final Long Range Plan**, reflecting the work of a citizen committee and your survey input **is posted on the City web**. We so very appreciate the time of the Communications, Planning and Zoning, Parks, and other citizen committees to a meaningful Long Range Plan for our City.

In October, we will begin **deer trapping again to cull the herd** and keep the number of deer who grace our community at a level where they can be healthy, well fed (naturally) and productive. We have seen a significant reduction of car incidents as well as in starving/over-population and diseased herds. Please help us keep a natural balance by **NOT FEEDING** the deer to encourage them to forage throughout the hill country. **This is true for all animals.** The deer trapped are

recycled for food and provided at no cost to area food shelters. For details about this deeply researched topic, go to city web: <https://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/171/Deer-Management> .

A reminder to the near 100 residents who have attended the **Citizens Academy** in the past five years...the Alumni Workshop (and high-five reunion) will be on Sept. 29/2-4 pm. RSVP to rhagen@horseshoe-bay-tx.gov. Also, the new/2021 Citizen's Academy will kick off in October for a 9 week in-depth understanding of each City Dept. (3-5pm each Thursday at City Hall). Contact City Hall if interested in signing up....details will be in the Beacon this month.

Thank you for your patience with **high grass on area lots**. The City contracts out for mowing twice a year which typically allows for management in general, but the rains have definitely let the weeds shoot up high quickly this year. Delays also occurred when lots were saturated. The second mowing will begin earlier than usual – **September 15th** and work its way across the City. Lot owners who do not maintain their own lots are charged a fee. Unfortunately, not all lot owners reimburse and it takes a while for recovery of costs (tax payer dollars) through filing of a lien and court collections.

Sadly, **the pandemic continues** (maybe forever in some form just as the flu and other viruses). Until we reach some full management, **the local medical facilities request our support** and ask me to remind all to continue practices to limit contagion (FDA approved vaccination/boosters when available, distancing and masking where appropriate, quarantine when exposed). They indicate they are physically and operationally challenged as **they are at “saturation”**, nearly “surge overflow” – with new chart showing cases reported are higher than this time last year. They are **trusting us to do our part for others and partner with our medical professionals** so the hospital can serve non-Covid emergencies and allow for needed surgical procedures.

On a personal note, I want to thank my neighbors for allowing me to serve as Mayor. So many are bringing their skills to varied community needs/activities all across our city...and for me, this has been my opportunity to be a part of that effort. **With no one filing for the election, I will join our two incumbent councilmen (Rives, Hosea) in beginning a new term.** I am reminded that the best part of the prior election was the many small group gatherings I joined for open, candid discussions about our city. I gained a clear sense of the priorities expected by taxpayers and the genuine care for the quality of life we share. Please know I will continue to be available to any group or individual for a conversation about our current or future city actions. **Just call.**

Finally.... next month marks **Patriot Day** and a reminder of our losses, as well blessings in living in a protected America. Take a moment on 9/11 to reflect and/or join one of the many remembrance events hosted by the churches, resort, community groups . We all came/ migrated to America (through ancestors) from somewhere else – and are **so fortunate to live safely and richly in a country and city we love. Thankful and grateful to those who made/make it so.**



Cynthia Cline Smith, Mayor

City Website - www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov