



Mayor's Message September 2022

For a moment some thought the sky was falling – but then took real joy in remembering this was the feel of rain! The trees, plants, and grass let out a collective sigh. And the tension on us all from constant extremes finally let up. We need more for sure, but the ebb and flow of Hill Country drought/flood requires us to be Texas strong and patient -- and ever thankful when the balance is in play! Take some childlike splashes in those puddles – forever young!

City News



Mark your calendar for a **SAVE the DATE Town Hall**, Wednesday, September 28th / 2:30-4:30 at the Horseshoe Bay Yacht Club Ballroom. This will be City Staff led Q&A time focused on four key topics: **Update** on Internet Tower installations, Water Management, Growth Management, and the much needed City Center. Come join your neighbors if interested in this City work. If you are unable to attend, see the www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov for posted details on each topic.

The City will set the official annual tax rate this month at 0.27 per \$100 valuation of property – continuing its NO tax rate increase above 0.27 since 2010. Growth and values this year provide an increased revenue to allow for the funding of multiple needed projects and a deserved adjustment to salary and benefits to retain quality staff (about 75% of total budget) plus all equipment, training, basic operations and State and Federal compliance requirements.

Note: If you are a full time resident, you may be eligible for a **homestead exemption** of 20%. For details, visit county appraisal: [Burnet CAD](#) / (512) 756-8291 or [Llano CAD](#) / (325) 247-3065.

Full transparency of the City's AA+ rated financial standing and activities is available in detail at: <https://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/560/Financial-Transparency> (with annual Transparency Star Award and Distinguished Budget Award since 2016).

Want to get even more informed about your City??? Beginning Sept 12, you can apply for the **2022 Citizens Academy**. Each Thursday (2-4 pm) one department will share an overview/tour of their services in depth (Fire, Police, Finance, Admin, Dev Services, Public Works, Utility, Tech, HR). Workshops run Oct 13th - Dec 8th (except Thanksgiving week), with a graduation/alumni celebration on Dec 13th. Come get a deeper understanding of how your tax dollars are at work – and follow-up committees you might want to join. Contact City Secretary Kerri Craig at kraig@horseshoe-bay-tx.gov or look for an article in the Beacon the week of September 5th.

HAPPY DANCE ! As anticipated, the “gold rush” has slowed and requests for new building permits are vastly reduced. Most are custom homes (citizens who have owned/ purchased lots to join us as new neighbors, many after years of paying taxes/POA fees in anticipation of retirement.) **The City's growth management commitment is working** – as the intent has always been to ensure the pace of growth did not overstretch the ability to maintain quality services. Even with the sizeable jump in migration all across Central Texas, your City remains fully functioning at high standards. **The City couldn't legally mandate NO GROWTH, but has been able to pace the growth through building ordinances and monitored services.**

One of the strategies for growth management was to reduce speculative building for any one builder to a maximum of 2 at a time. This has been fully enforced and our builders have been almost completely compliant in good practice. We have had to issue some fines for delayed completion (one home fined over \$20,000) – and code violation citations (mostly for trash, parking, weekend building). Cited builders can be suspended if repeated-see

<https://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2794/Contractor-Registration-Application>.

We do have 5 homes under compliance review as work has ceased mid-build, posing a nuisance for neighbors . Staff are pursuing options of placing liens on the properties, revoking permits/ requiring lots be returned to original state, or engaging litigation. Out of over 200 homes in the past year, unlike surrounding cities - we are fortunate to face only 5 homes in flux. This is one of the reasons for limiting spec building (though 2 of these homes are owner/custom projects).

 **A significant part of our growth management is securing our borders** along Hwy 71. With Marble Falls exploding on Hwy 71/281, it is even more essential that we have control over the land that directly borders our City. I remember just 7 years ago sitting with hundreds in a petition driven forum fearful of the encroaching Rock Crushing Plants as seen in Spicewood and Burnet County (especially concerns for the potential dust blasts so near the hospital intake).

The mandate to the City Council was clear - secure the border. Billboards were banned and development agreements were put in place for property in our ETJ for annexation should a development proposal emerge. The dream goal is for the landowners to just keep the land open or establish wildlife preserves (two have obliged w/one in discussion – and we have deterred at least 3 large developments through denied zoning of high density projects) – but they (or their heirs) do have the right to sell/develop. So - **the legal City options put in place to honor the ‘protect our borders’ mandate include:**

- 1) **Letting an ETJ** property exercise their right to build w/out restriction. They have fire/police support through County and HSB, though they pay no City taxes. They have access options for water through LCRA, Marble Falls from the same river as HSBay. Left alone, the ETJ can pursue any mass development with no regard to City standards/ ordinances or industry limitations . Annexation stops any predatory or undesired builds.
- 2) **Annexation.** Once annexed, an ETJ property will pay City taxes for their police/fire and be restricted in building compliance to City zoning ordinances. They pay for their own installation of water/sewer/roads and pay an ‘impact fee’ to connect to the City systems. Their water capacity does not come out of the current HSBay allotment – rather from the additional ‘reserve’ water allocated in new LCRA contract which they pay for. This is the basic (most common) approach to managed growth. They use their own funds/bonds to pay for the project. **No taxpayer dollars ever fund private property build.**
- 3) **PID.** A PID is just like any annexed property, but with a developer willing to build at a higher quality level than the basic City ordinances (example: under 500 homes instead of 1000, guaranteed increased greenspace, negotiated community benefits). They can request the City verify this Planned Infrastructure Development/ PID project. The developer pays for the review (attorneys, financial and bond advisors, and staff time). They show a plan to fully pay for the project through investors and bonds. If the City finds this PID meets ‘above

standard' levels, the developer can secure their bonds at a lower interest rate (that of the City's rating) and save millions in interest over time. **No taxpayer dollars ever fund the project NOR are responsible for payment if the project defaults. In fact**, in addition to paying for all their own infrastructure, securing LCRA reserve water, paying the 'impact fee' connection, the PID is also obligated to provide a 'community benefit' to the City (in the case of Monarch Ridge, this could be over \$1 million that could offset costs for potential new City drainage plan implementation, additional water storage tank, hiking trails, etc.).

For more info, go to www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov, scroll to City News/PID with top 10 FAQs.

Community News

So many inspiring efforts to benefit the quality of life are in place in our area....with calls to support with time, talent, or treasure (donation). This month's focus is on the **Phoenix Center, a mental health therapy center** in HSBay near the hospital. No child is ever turned away due to inability to pay – and the provision of counseling and intervention for child trauma victims has a proven history of healing for countless in need. For more info: visit www.phoenixtx.org.

This summer, **the Phoenix Center will begin Phase II of their trauma support** with the development of an Equine/Horse Therapy Center, using the model of verified post-traumatic stress disorder strategies. They have raised significant initial funds, and now have the opportunity for a matching grant from the Mabee Foundation. The saying "no burden is too heavy if everyone lifts" is so true when we pool our resources. In return, we have children who can become better citizens, with educational success, emotional wellness, and social behavior.... living into adulthood with thankful and productive lives. Access online giving: <https://bit.ly/3w8j7xO> or mail to Phoenix Center, P.O. Box 732, Marble Falls, TX



FINALLY – Thank you to the 240 citizens contacted who began overwatering (7 days a week) – who are now in compliance. The massive drain on a Sunday evening (when the filters are typically being cleaned/cycled while still prepared for normal anticipated use) caused an immediate drop in capacity (especially as some chose to water in excess of 8 hours on that Sunday evening). After ensuring there was no major leak, the utility team quickly diverted water from the Central to the West water tank. There is full capacity available from the lake, but the West tank does not store huge amounts beyond range of anticipated use as excess water sitting unused can degrade both the quality of the water and the materials in the tank. **Help keep the balance through consistent, responsible practice – water only on your days.**

As recent articles indicate, it does not help your grass to overwater as the roots need to learn to grow deep for water source – and no amount of water will slow the effects of extreme heat on plants. Drip irrigation is the best bet – or use of drought tolerant xeriscaping. We are in good shape for drinking water for decades to come, but irrigation practice (which is over 60% of our entire water use) makes all the difference for both maintaining this water level – and for quality landscaping. For more LCRA information: <https://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?CID=8> (scroll down to LCRA Water Management Plan) or <https://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/197/Conservation-Suggestions>.

Looking ahead

We will kick off Sept. with Labor Day activities which according to History* began as *an annual celebration of the social/economic achievements of American workers. In 1882, a Workman's Holiday was staged by workers and in 1894, it was established as a Federal holiday (with emerging changes to work environments/demands)*. Today - it is a weekend of family, relaxation, and work/life balance.

Just one week later, we will remember September 11th – not as a focus on the horror, but as a reminder of how quickly life can change by hate-filled actions of others. We are all ever grateful for those who immediately responded to the emergency needs, those in the past two decades who have worked to keep us safe, and to be reminded of our good fortune. Here in Horseshoe Bay - this coming month of Labor Day, 9/11, kids/grandkids returning to school and a goodbye to summer heat/drought encourages us to keep **living this good life so well earned!!**

Remember water safety, fire wise practice, and hydration!



Cynthia Clinesmith, Mayor

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