



Mayor's Message – July 2023



Many of our new Horseshoe Bay neighbors bring tough skin from managing frigid northern winters. All are now discovering that toughness is paying off as they get the experience of our July heat. Buckle up....it is 3-digit summer in Texas! You will see our population cut in half as snowbirds leave for 6 months, and others join in cooler weather migration vacations!

City News

- **4th of July weekend is upon us** – with family/friend visitors taking advantage of our USA spirit (and our lakes). The HSB POA works hard to put on a community wide celebration like none other. Our fire/police will join the land parade, Councilwoman Waddill will make her annual “walk with George Washington”, ending in sharing the story of independence at the Quail Point Festivities. Our City Manager has bravely ‘volunteered’ for the dunking booth (be gentle!) and the mayor will have the honor (alongside Jim Jordan and the Historical Preservation Committee) of presenting the first (more to come) **historical marker recognizing Quail Point**. This was one of the original lake lodges back in the day – long before the emergence of a resort and city. Remember: Balloons for kiddos at the fire station before the parade, adding to land, water and pooch parade décor). **Join the fun!**
- Road resurfacing is coming to a close. Be on the lookout for **new paved road work to begin** in areas across the city. Notices to residents (and maps on city website) will identify areas.
- In May the City Council **changed to more understandable irrigation schedules**. Before the change, allowable times were spread across two days (example is at 7pm Tuesday and ended at 10am on Wednesday). The revised times are, for example - Tuesday any time, except no watering will be allowed from 10am to 7pm (high evaporation times) any day and no watering on Mondays. Help us preserve our precious water resources. Check the city website for your specific two days of allowable watering. Full enforcement as of July 1.
- **It is hard to manage the mosquito attack in a lake-side community with multiple ponds** – but the public works is looking at any options for some corridor mitigation (without harm to our native flora/fauna). For now, prepare your own for outdoor settings (and think of our friends in land of lakes Minnesota where, I believe, the mosquito is the State bird!).
- **July begins budget planning** – and the recommended tax rate for 2024 will be set at the end of the month. Your council is committed to keeping the tax rate stable, taking advantage of increased homes/commercial and other revenue sources to meet the demands of increased costs for materials, insurance, and operations. Public hearings will be held prior to adoption. Your property valuations are not set by the city; contact Llano County Appraisal District for any questions or desires to appeal.
- June’s council meeting highlighted the complexity of city management – and efforts to meet the goals of the community while honoring property rights to develop. **One project was requesting a ‘conditional use permit’, essentially a variance** from what the current

zoning allows. The city rarely grants these CUPs, and those have been for undeveloped projects such as a request to temporarily use residential space for commercial parking (where it does not intrude on neighbors) or unique projects such as the dog park at Tuscan Village. If compliance to the agreements of the conditional use is not honored, the city can revoke this variance, with little financial impact on owner. The current project brought to council is a quality project by a quality builder (though felt to be in wrong location). But this project would have the builder devoting millions of dollars (and investors in this luxury garage venue heavily invested). If any compliance issues that might warrant a revocation of the CUP arose, it would be an understandably difficult challenge for future councils as they would be putting major investments at risk. While this builder was not questionable, future ownership (or sublet ownerships) are unknown. That is largely why CUP variances are rarely used – and primarily only best used where all parties have limited risk.

For this project, the location of a high volume (44 luxury garages) directly next to the nursing home and across from the equestrian Bay Country community was not ideal. The council underscored appreciation for efforts of the owners to build a premier project honoring city commitments to quality of life development standards....but encouraged them to look at property on Hwy 71 where external traffic would not be brought into our Hwy 2147 corridor. It is true that the location's current zoning of commercial will allow for construction of other projects (that may be less desirable), but this is where property rights emerge. The owner would not be asking for any variances (i.e. CUP) and would comply with all current building guidelines. The hope and trust is that the owner will identify a project that supports the city goal of keeping the Hwy 2147 corridor for businesses in support of local residents – and not attracting outside traffic to commercial projects in our city. Hwy 71 is less intrusive to serve this role for many high interest developments.

- **Speaking of Hwy 71**, despite our best dreams – we know that these ranches will begin to sell off. That is why the city put development agreements in place to allow some boundaries on what can built there. While we cannot deny the right to develop, we can oppose some high-density apartments (with no amenities), rock quarries, big box or manufacturing, etc. through careful construction ordinances. But we cannot deny submitted plans for well-designed commercial and/or mixed-use projects without reason (not wanting growth is not a legal reason...darn it!). **The current approval for the first phase of the Silver Rock on Hwy 71, near Hwy 2831** is an example. This project will absolutely add to the population and commercial activity of the area – but it is the right of the property owner. For over a year, the development services have worked with the owner to align their vision with the boundaries of city goals. Something will be developed there (by right), so careful agreements are essential and carefully reviewed by all city services.

Silver Rock is a mixed use (no apartments) that brings some much-wanted amenities (as noted in the citizen developed long range plan) such as assisted living, restaurant, specialty medical services, garden homes, etc. It intentionally ensures property abutting Bay Country has larger 2–4-acre estate lots, and has a 50-50 commercial/residential profile. The impact fee they will pay for access to water/sewer (for which we have capacity) will

allow for increased lines to be installed that complete a needed loop that will benefit HSB West in particular (at the cost of the developer and not local tax dollars). **Traffic on Hwy 71 is an absolutely legitimate concern.** Though the project does not extend to Hwy 2831 directly, TxDot is fully engaged to ensure entry/exit lanes are established and a traffic study will determine additional safety and convenience needs. If warranted, TxDot will make determinations about traffic lights or State Hwy accommodations. Councilman King who serves as liaison for transportation committee work and as our CAPCOG representative will be engaged in long-term discussions specific to the Hwy 71 traffic concerns.

As these developments emerge along Hwy 71, we are always grateful when we can reach an agreement for more benefit than challenge. **Those living in Blue Lake and the Trails** have legitimate concerns about growth at the already difficult intersection of Hwy 2831, so careful TxDot reviews are essential. I commented that I remember sitting on decks of friends in Sandy Harbor and Blue Lake when the Trails was under development. Much fear and loathing emerged at the thought of a dense community spilling onto Hwy 2831's two lane road, as well as a marina that could impact their quiet waterways. Legitimate fears – but as it turned out, the Trails brought premier lifestyle homes with 'good neighbor' low impact...that in fact improved the value of area homes (and brought some great new neighbors for us all). We have other project proposals coming to council along Hwy 71 and each is being vetted within legal rights of city control. We have secured enough water capacity for all development – and recent studies have identified the impact fees so that current residents do not pay for their services. We have been able to deny several not in line with HSBay standards (though we remain in an on-going lawsuit with one developer).

- We are all **so sad to lose our excellent Fire Chief who is moving to the City of Keene** to assume the City Manager role. Chief Batla and his wife attended the private college there, have friends and their church there, and have acreage they planned for their eventual forever home. This offer came by surprise and provides them the opportunity to step into that life a bit earlier – though they regret leaving the quality community of HSBay. We immediately reached out for an experienced/vetted interim Fire Chief who will join us in a few weeks. For now, highly capable Captains will take oversight of each shift and service will continue seamlessly. A search firm is working with the city to seek applicants who will bring the same high standards of knowledge, leadership, and ethics Chief Batla reflected. We will be a highly desirable Chief position, and anticipate filling this role by September.
- July is the month for volunteers to file for candidacy for elected positions. **For the first time in nearly 10 years, I will not be filing for a council/Mayor position.** I have 'termed out' and while it has been a great honor/privilege to serve alongside this great city staff and multiple council members/committee volunteers – I recognize the importance of handing the baton forward. I will complete the coming 4 months – ensuring the new budget cycle and honoring of long-range plans reflect the expressed desires of our citizens. But I leave with a lighter heart knowing that **we have a Mayor Pro Tem, Elsie Thurman, ready to lead a smooth transition.** Elsie stepped up to chair the broad scope of a long-range plan development in 2019, ensuring all voices of the city were involved. She then assumed a

council seat (for the past near 4 years) to continue her civic volunteer service. For all new council members, the learning curve of the difference in private and public management is large – but Elsie excelled and devoted herself to understanding the legal mandates and the ethical standards of municipal operations. Her multi-decades of accounting/CPA have been a blessing as the financial liaison for the city. She dug deep to understand ways to maximize all funding sources (grants, sales tax, bonds, collaborative funding, tax dollars) to keep pace with escalating costs without increasing the city tax rate.

In today's environment it is crucial to have city council experience prior to assuming the role of Mayor (just as I did – and Steve Jordan as prior Mayor did) to assist in the careful understanding for oversight of quality services. Elsie has worked closely with all department heads – gaining their full respect. She has joined me in networking with regional and state leaders on areas of shared emphasis (emergency management, water quality, internet, transportation, legislative action impact on cities, etc.). She has shared the important conversations with the resort (our largest commercial venue) to ensure their efforts remain sensitive to the broader goals of the community. More importantly, Elsie is a full partner in the life of HSBay, actively involved in the church (former Board member), social groups, and multiple volunteer efforts. She is a neighbor, a volunteer, and an exceptional/ high knowledge council member. So...I will leave with a comfort that my city can continue to focus on efficient fiscal practice with accountability...and high-quality service for all. She will be able to move forward to work with an exceptional council with diverse backgrounds – and the best city staff we could imagine. Mayor Jordan and Mayor Lambert (our founding Mayor) will join me in a dinner in August to share our gratitude for her willingness to apply for candidacy to serve.

Community News

- It was short notice for us, but we hope you are aware of the “Coffee with the Congressman” (Pfluger) at City Hall on Friday, June 30 at 9.am. All are welcome to come. While the city remains politically neutral – serving all residents – this will be a topic focused, informal opportunity to hear his goals for the current and future support of our region. For those unable to attend, a summary of the sharings will be provided.
- Short term rental/STR registrations are coming in to meet our expectations for local oversight of activity at properties near residential daily living. We have been blessed to have minimal problems arise, but this registration process will ensure compliance. Many of our part-time home owners lease out their beautiful spaces until they can join us as full-time neighbors – and others use as an investment opportunity. So, this is a benefit for residents and guests. (STR guests have no access to resort amenities without member).
- City staff joined Texas Park and Wildlife and LCRA in reviewing the milfoil concerns along the shoreline. Commissioner Jones also joined in to discuss full collaborative efforts. The milfoil is located in limited areas – where apparently some private mitigation work has already managed most – and the county, city, and TPW are examining any further needs.

We are all welcoming friends/grandmunchkins to the bounty of our life here (with a lot of sunscreen and mosquito repellent). As you enjoy the lake, take in the Nature Park/hiking trails, join the music/social events (THANK YOU Boogie at the Bay and Business Alliance), or just laugh together, enjoy the view off your back porch – and fully feel the pride of building memories that will long live in those you have welcomed. **My oh my – aren't we blessed.**

CC Cynthia Clinesmith, Mayor
City Website - www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov