



Mayor's Message – August 2023



While many of us are keeping the home fires burning (or NOT burning!), half of our residents are enjoying the cooling climates elsewhere. We will welcome them back to our paradise in September with open arms (and tougher hides)-ready to end a blazing hot summer.

City News

-You likely read about the July Council meeting, but a couple of items bear repeating. **Dan Herron, Communications Director** was recognized for a high-quality communication award (see the improved website, weekly City Corner articles in the Beacon, and campaigns for Oak Wilt, conservation of water, and Fire Safety).

-The Utility Dept was proud to share that **it has been one year since a water pressure outage**. Those in West particularly still have bad memories of waking to limited water due to over-demand pressure drops. Changes in water source tanks, consistency in irrigation, and plant operation reviews have helped manage pressure even on high demand holidays. It is tenuous, but plans to replace some significantly weak infrastructure lines will make consistent water access the new reality for all of Horseshoe Bay. Kudos to the hard-working utility staff!

-The bulk **of July city council/staff work involved multiple budget planning days**. Each department shared their immediate budget needs and 5-year forecast, alongside a review of the citizen long-range plan recommendations. This helps in identifying large costs on the horizon and ways to prepare by pulling forward items when revenue allows. While the city budget continues to be 75-80% dedicated to salary/benefits for staff (mostly police/fire/utility), there are some big- ticket equipment/ material needs arising. Of particular priority are:

- **4.5 million\$ of aging infrastructure of clear wells, west water plant expansion and upsized pipeline from Central** to Summitt water tank is critical. Most breaks in water access are a result of this pipe, though thankfully the field operators have quickly repaired for limited interruption. This multi-million-dollar project **cost will be spread out over two decades** to ensure the cost is borne not just by current residents, **but also paid for by future beneficiaries**. The Monarch Ridge Development will also pay an 'impact fee' for accessing water that will help offset the cost of the upgraded lines. Additionally, they will pay for water reserved for them based on anticipated needs. Any other new development along Hwy 71 will also pay their 'impact' proportion. We are well situated for capacity of water for coming decades – and this new line will allow for stable and consistent moving of that water to meet resident/commercial needs. * You may have noticed the Beacon article showing LCRA is asking communities to help conserve and may move them to Stage 2. **Horseshoe Bay always stays at Stage 2so no adjustments will be needed by us**. We anticipate heavy rain this Fall that will help the lakes, but we still need to always conserve.

- Waiting two years for **new roads** (after completion of this year's \$3 million 1.3 miles) means the already existing 1.5 miles of homes/streets that qualify for road surfacing would have a long wait. Due to careful budget planning, the Public Works can move forward to install these roads this coming year (mostly in West) as well as address some needed repairs and road service in HSBay South.
- The high need **West Fire Station expansion/upgrade** costs require additional safety features to be prioritized, particularly for fire service workers health and storage for new 'squad' trucks (to relieve stress on large fire trucks making medical response calls).
- The existing city hall which will continue to house Development Services, Public Works, and Utility staff for coming decades has been tested and requires **water leakage damage removal and new roofing**.
- The first phase of a **comprehensive city drainage study** to develop a flood prevention plan is completed (Tiger Creek Watershed). This was paid for through federal grants, but the remaining 4 creeks will need to be part of a long-term plan. Pecan Creek will be the next primary study, allowing the city to identify waterflow obstacles/detention needs. **Monarch Ridge will pay a 'community benefit' fee to the city which can help offset the cost** since their development sits above the city south watershed. They will also install a detention pond on the back of their development to capture waterflow (if it ever rains again!). The remaining costs for watershed drainage studies will come through current budget process.
- The **citizen led Parks Dept appropriately** recommended several needs, including work at Martin Park (donated through private foundation as all park properties in the city) for replacing the near 20-year-old pavilion, restrooms, and some play equipment. It will expand parking near the pickleball courts and provide windscreens and shaded seating. The city will also commit to a water source line as part of HSBay South's effort for a grant funded park for children as a safe after-school and weekend activity. The city also signed a letter of support for the HSB POA grant request for a hiking path along Slick Rock Creek.

Residents should remember that the city supports private/grant funded amenities (such as the Nature Park and the potential new grant funded shared use paths) whenever possible. However, **any public space** (park, boat ramp, hiking path) **developed with tax dollars becomes a public space available to any public entity**. This often draws people from neighboring communities (lacking amenities) who have a public right to our city spaces. In an effort to manage traffic and focus use for our citizens, the city builds limited facilities.

-The increased valuations this year (hopefully to perhaps get some relief through legislative action on school property tax soon) will fund all of these projects...setting the city in strong standing for decades to come. These projects will be completed **without raising the current tax rate**. This .27 rate (compared to near .60 in Marble Falls) has held for over six years. Proactive project completion such as this budget year will allow for maintaining a stable tax rate in years of lower valuation and growth.

-Inspections of new building/remodels are paid for through construction fees (not tax dollars). Once the amount of fees collected annually begin to be more than what is paid to current external contractors, cities look to **minimize costs through hiring an internal inspector** (paid for

through fees). This allows support for the builders with quicker and more consistent responses, while also providing some cross department leveraging of resources. In times when inspection fees are down (as we face some reduction in builds), the inspector will provide support to the utility department (to offset contracted services). This year's budget will explore this option – though the current market to find qualified inspectors is competitive.

Community News

- As leadership within the resort (the original declarant of the city) shifts, a meeting with Jordan Jaffe helped identify future oversight areas – especially for HSBay POA. The need for code enforcement was underscored with **a commitment to have the HSB POA hire an enforcement staff (with vehicle and communication plans)** to address concerns across all HSBay POA properties. Reports often arrive at the city (landscaping concerns, debris, violations of architectural controls) which **the city cannot – by state law – address**. Any concerns during construction do fall under worksite management and should continue to be reported to the city. Once occupied, it becomes the responsibility of POAs. We noted to Mr. Jaffe that each POA has the right to require compliance, and continued ignoring of policy can be referred to Pct1 JP Marquis Cantu by the POAs for citation and fines. New to Horseshoe Bay residents should review your ACC/POA guidelines carefully as they vary somewhat by specific POA in the city.
- **Tuscan Village residents** celebrated a full open house social as their club house was showcased. The views, entertaining areas, and small group 'game' or meeting spaces add to the initial fitness center and pool areas. A great community of neighbors very ready to see the end of construction....and settle into their full living! (With ground being moved, Summitt Rock members see light on the horizon for a similar celebratory open house).
- It was such **fun to welcome Ruth Newman home from her around the world 6-month adventure!** We delighted all year in her weekly blogs sharing her "Where in the World is Ruth" locales – but getting to see the video footage of some of her up close and personal experiences was inspiring. Giant elephants bathing, then slathering in the sand as a natural sunscreen was such fun (should we consider this?). Beautiful vistas, artwork, music, and lots and lots of new friends filled her memory kit. She says she will try to put together a coffee table photobook to share with us all in the future. For now, I like to believe that after seeing the world – **she's happy to come home to the most wonderful place to live!**

Before we know it, it will be Labor Day weekend...our last hurrah of big boat/visitors/traffic challenges for the summer. In the interim, use fire safety, water conservation, and personal hydration. The city website has updated **the "things to do" in Horseshoe Bay page** with wonderful local contacts to help everyone find some indoor fun – while continuing to enjoy early/late in the day outdoor pleasures if brave. *Every day offers a quality life here in HSB!*