



Mayor's Message – January 2023



Happy, happy NEW YEAR! Another year of challenges, successes, and memories made...and we are officially looking ahead to '23! As a teen we all assumed we would be in spacesuits by now living a space odyssey life (anxious for our own "Rosie Robot" housekeeper like the Jetsons!) but at least/best, we are still blessed with the comforts of a hill country life. We are all optimistic that this year will be slower, free of natural drama. We said a sad goodbye to some wonderful friends, said hello to new grandchildren, and welcomed new neighbors...each year feeling the cycle of our lives fully and gratefully.

City News

- We ended the year with some confusion around zoning. Reminders were put in place that 'managed growth' does not mean 'no growth', and while we continue to see new homes, we see a slowing of the pace. With over 3000 lots still owned (with a right to build), your City team is committed to staying ahead of the pace to assure water, roads, and safety in all areas are prioritized. We have rejected several projects that did not meet City standards or alignment with the citizen preferred Future Land Use Map/FLUM visions. We negotiated with positive outcomes on other zoning to lessen density (from condo to garden homes), but also upheld the right of private property owners to build if their project fell within the City and associated POA guidelines. It is a process.

We were honored with a significant number of competent applicants interested in volunteering their service, bringing their experience and time to planning and zoning oversight. This new committee will meet with the attorney and Development Services for orientation, then begin their work in February if items are up for review. Some moved off our committees for varied reasons (committed to other service projects, moved out of City, etc.) – and we are grateful for the service they provided this past year. **For details on all advisory committees/members, go to the City website.**

- The new contract with LCRA for a firm water contract doubles our water access for at least 20 years which is sufficient to meet the demands of new growth within the City and any new development that may emerge in the ETJ property on Hwy 71. The completed audit on the water facilities and operations has already resulted in action to realign water usage demands to avoid water pressure drops in the coming year. **Be on the lookout for some areas to receive notice of change in days of the week to water** (especially in West and Escondido) to balance the draw on the water towers. For now, though, **you can cease irrigation** as your lawns and trees are hibernating like bears.

We are so proud our City serves as a model of conservation for Highland Lakes. **Our City Manager, Jeff Koska, is selected to be part of a team leading discussion** on Jan. 25th at Lakeside Pavilion with key decision makers to increase actions for water supply conservation in Central Texas. Additionally, all future LCRA firm water contracts will require a conservation component management similar to what HSBay has used since 2016 (with measurable success). This is how collaborative action works!

Your Utility Team completed a full preparation exercise last week prior to freeze warnings to ensure equipment was solid (with backups), generators were in place, WATERSMART prep to monitor any household leaks, pump stations secured, and staff on the ready to respond if needed. Be sure your pipes are wrapped.

- Woohoo! Finally, after another 3-month delay, **the FAA has approved our internet towers** are safe for air traffic – allowing for the installation in the coming weeks. This should strengthen speed and dependability for VGI and Zeecon users. Those living near the Vyve fiber installations along Hwy 2147 should reach out to Dir. Of Operations lou.alsteen@vyvebb.com for information on connecting service packages status.
- Your Council members will meet next week for their annual workshop to set the stage for the coming year. **Reports from citizen advisory committees** – the Parks, Historical Heritage, Communications, Internet and Transportation will result in recommendations to the city staff. Staff will review these in light of the Long-Range Plan/LRP (developed by citizens from resident surveys) and the FLUM. They will identify which elements are feasible, determine potential costs, and set forth calendars for implantation of approved actions then present to Council for review and approval.
- The Transportation committee is **awaiting the report from the formal Traffic Study commissioned in September**. This study (due in late February) will help guide plans for overall movement throughout the community – examining needs at ‘pinch point’ danger areas where traffic has increased, thoroughfare needs, and potential alternative mobility (shared paths = hiking, biking, golf carts). The Resort is exploring a similar study as a part of their upgraded amenities – and the potential for collaboration (i.e., saving money through shared efforts) will be examined. Primary routes such as Bay West Blvd, Hi Circle S/W/N, Clayton Nolen, Fault Line, and others will be reviewed for safety needs. Also, the Public Works dept is looking at upgrade needs to current emergency routes (Torrey Lane, Lost River, and Golden Nugget) for expanded exit security.
- We were able to sell our bonds for the new 1.2 miles of ribbon roads and the West Fire Station upgrades at a remarkable interest rate. New road work will be moving forward (routes posted on City Website/Dept./Public Works) while the fire station will partner with planning, construction of the City Hall/Center expansion to leverage shared costs of architect, construction manager, and construction/supply needs. The City Hall/Center is anticipated to begin construction work fully in the Fall with completion by early 2025.
- **The Short- Term Rental/STR ordinance is** getting fine-tuned with plans to have it before the Council at the January meeting – February at the latest. This should create some immediate impact for those STRs that have operated without respect for the neighbors by holding the owners immediately accountable – with revocation of their registration and right to operate as a STR if not in compliance. Thank you for your patience.

Community News

- The HSBay POA has installed the new kiosk mailboxes in West and officially began issuing keys this month. **If you have questions about the details – or are interested in registering for a box, contact the HSBay POA office at Quail Point.** We believe we now have all developments with their own kiosk availability in place – though some in Proper and South may still opt for the post office as locations are scattered. Thank your POAs for taking charge of this responsibility – which should solve the major challenges we have had over the years. **The City has had no authority to manage or provide for mail service through tax dollars, so the collaboration of the USPS with POAs is appreciated.**
- As I mentioned, we did not trap deer this year with the herds reduced, and we continue to seek new options for next year. Still, we have a healthy herd that is active (especially at dusk). Slow down and keep an eye on the shoulders of the road...they will jump without warning. **Call animal control if you hit/see injured deer (830.613.1326).**
- I am sure you joined me in **pride for the enormous generosity of all over the holidays –** Stockings for the Elderly, 100+ children ‘gift adoptions’ , end of year support funds for multiple area programs (CASA, Jacobs Ladder, Nature Park, BSWhite hospital, Highland Lakes Shelter, Phoenix Center, SPCA (with a great showing at the Holidaze), Hill Country 100, 1st responder gift cards, et al - and the simple acts of checking on neighbors, visiting those convalescing, baking for friends, doing the heavy lifting for church and community events.. adding your voice/actions to the multiple seasonal celebrations. What a **City of Care** we are in word and deed. It was a joyful, somewhat exhausting month of socials (eating, drinking, hugging, catching up) – with **new residents pinching themselves that they found this ‘hometown’ and, I trust, will join volunteer/contributions in the future.**

It is a good time for digging in for the winter days ahead – cleaning out, making new resolutions (shedding those holiday celebration lbs.), and reflecting on how we can continue to honor our motto together. We are all committed to “**preserving our heritage** (our hill country pride and quality lifestyle) **while preparing for the future** (with shared planning and support for inevitable changes). We have survived wildfires, floods, ice storms, electrical blackouts, CoVid/Masks/health, rampant growth, and drought. We are a resilient city team and community of neighbors.... who - though we pray this year will give us a break, free of natural drama.... we know that we will continue to manage it all together if need be – as we gratefully count **our blessing in being a Horseshoe Bayer!**

Happy New Year

cc

Cynthia Clinesmith, Mayor

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