



It's up to us to stay informed

The Boerne Master Plan Update is back on track now with a different consulting team. Halff Associates was the runner-up firm during the original consultant selection process last summer. They will take all of the information gathered from the public forums and focus group meetings held so far and continue the public input process. The steering committee, comprised of local citizens, will also be valuable as we move this project forward. So stay tuned for more chances to get your voice heard and create the future vision for our community.

As you've probably heard, the city council received a report recently from the City Hall project advisory committee. This citizens group, led by Jeff Haberstroh, was charged with evaluating the appropriateness of the size of the structure and the anticipated cost based on current construction costs for similar facilities throughout Texas. Other members of the committee include: Christina Bergmann, Ben Adam, Bruce Baker, Bob Vollmer, Lance Pettigrew, Robert Thornton and Tommy Mathews. Their final analysis reveals that the proposed square footage and the estimated construction costs are consistent with those for similar "built to last" structures in other cities. In fact, the committee even went so far as to say we might be too conservative. The report does highlight the ability to expand the structure down the road if needed. Remember, this new city hall building is expected to last a good one hundred years, just as the current building has.

In my last column I attempted to clarify the impact that the April petition has on the financing piece of this important capital project. The petition requires an election if, and only if, the City Council were to approve certificates of obligation to finance the project. The council has reviewed other funding options available, and with advice from our bond counsel and based on the current bond market, we have directed staff to pursue issuing tax notes to fund the project. This item will be on the August 8th City Council agenda. Proceeding in this manner will avoid the cost of an election and keep the overall project cost in the range that we have been anticipating all along since current tax note interest rates are one and a half to two percent lower than for certificates of obligation. I can't stress enough how much we value citizen input as well as the time and effort the citizen volunteers on both the 2016 City Hall Ad Hoc Committee and the 2017 City Hall Advisory Committee spent to help us get this project moving again.

In other news, CT 17 Herff Land, LP, the owner/developer of the 17 Herff Road mixed-use project in Boerne, has submitted an application for rezoning a portion of the Herff Road parcel from MU-1 (mixed-use neighborhood district) to R-4 (multi-family residential district). The current zoning of MU-1 for the entire 26.654 acres was approved by the City Council May 9, 2017. The request for rezoning will be on the agenda for the August 7th Planning and Zoning Commission meeting and a public hearing will be held prior to any action. As you may recall, the city council approved annexation of this property last January. The next step was to zone the property based on staff recommendation and approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The property owner now has the right to request a rezoning of the property; therefore, the owner is requesting a rezoning for about fourteen acres to R-4 (multi-family residential district) while leaving the remaining acres as currently zoned MU-1.

The city's draft proposed budget for 2018 is now available for public review on the city website. Every year the staff and city council review the current operations, costs for services, and the public demands for service - especially for public safety and utilities. Most people don't realize that a one cent property tax rate increase will only yield about \$157,000 in revenue and that's barely enough to fund and equip

one new police officer and one new firefighter to keep up with our growing population. This proposed budget does not include a rate increase again this year – as a matter of fact, we have not seen a property tax rate increase since 2012. We are always looking for efficiencies and innovative ways of doing business; our city team works diligently to avoid the need to raise taxes.

You may have heard me say this out loud already - Texas cities are under attack! Our state legislators are working through this special session in Austin, but they do not seem to hear our concerns about the potential loss of local control. We elect local leaders to work for the betterment of our communities, because we live here and we all want our town to thrive in a way that maintains, or improves, our overall quality of life. But our area state representatives are pushing for law changes that amount to “one size fits all” for the entire state. State Representative Kyle Biedermann addressed our city council a few weeks ago and shared his thoughts and intentions on some of the key items the Texas legislature will be considering – these are in direct conflict with the ideas that your local elected officials believe are best for Boerne. Check it out for yourself by listening to the video of his July 11 presentation, also available on the City of Boerne website. If you have particular concerns, I encourage you to contact your state representative and express your thoughts.

Despite our best efforts to get messages out in a variety of ways, including social media, I sometimes hear from people who say they didn’t hear about this or that, or they didn’t know the City of Boerne was doing this or that. We live in a thriving community here in the hill country and our city staff makes every effort, short of knocking on doors, to get messages out and provide factual information. So I am asking: Do you check our city’s website? Have you liked our city’s Facebook pages; did you sign up to get the city’s monthly e-newsletter? The information is out there so I encourage you to reach for it rather than rely on rumors or partial details.

Please like my Mayor Mike Schultz Facebook page also and stay tuned for my Facebook Live events. This is a great way to get the facts on an issue and get your questions answered.