

TOWN TOPICS

The City of Fircrest

FEBRUARY 2010

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A PUBLICATION OF THE
CITY OF FIRCREST
115 RAMSDALL ST.
FIRCREST, WA.

City Council Adopts Reduced Budget

The Fircrest City Council has adopted a budget for 2010 that while reducing expenditures, maintains municipal services and programs at 2009 levels. Total revenue for 2010 is projected to be \$200,000 less than in 2009.

Cutbacks were made in areas that would be least felt by residents. There are no cost-of-living raises budgeted for non-represented employees. Residents can review the budget at City Hall or on the City's website at www.cityoffircrest.net.



From left, re-elected Councilmember Matt Jolibois, City Attorney Mike Smith who conducted the swearing-in ceremony, re-elected Councilmember Chris Gruver, newly elected Councilmember Denny Waltier, and re-elected Councilmember Kathy McVay.

Councilmembers Sworn Into Office

Three re-elected Councilmembers and one newly elected Councilmember were sworn into office at the January 12 Council meeting.

The Council members were Matt Jolibois, Pos. 1; Chris Gruver, Pos. 2; Denny Waltier, Pos. 6; and Kathy McVay, Pos. 7.

The City Council on Jan. 12 elected David Viafore to a two-year term as Mayor and Robert Thaden as Mayor Pro Tem.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I am greatly honored that the City Council elected me as your Mayor for the next two years. I'd like to congratulate Councilmember Thaden who was re-elected Mayor Pro-Tem and welcome to our newest Councilmember, Denny Waltier.

This is a difficult period for our City as we are forced to make due with less. The City will receive a projected \$200,000 less in revenue in 2010. Cuts have been made in areas not generally noticed by residents.

As mayor 10 years ago, I asked our community to support a beautification program to raise funds through donations for hanging baskets along Regents Boulevard. The program has been a great success over the years, and the City has been able to expand the beautification program to other areas throughout Town. Donations can also be made to help pay for the fireworks show at Fircrest Fun Days.

Once again I ask you to support the beautification program with a donation of any amount. If you have any suggestions for improving this or any other City program, please feel free to contact any of your elected officials or your City Manager at Town Hall.

As always it is a pleasure to serve you.

*- David M. Viafore
Mayor*

Annual Beautification Program

Each year residents and businesses in Fircrest are asked to contribute to the costs of the beautiful hanging flower baskets you see along Regents Boulevard during spring and summer. The fund-raising campaign also helps pay for the popular fireworks show on the final evening of Fircrest Fun Days. Inside this newsletter is a flyer with information about the 2010 Community Sponsorship Program and a form for donors.

Garbage Rates Drop Slightly in 2010

Rates for residential customers will be slightly lower in 2010 because of a reduced Consumer Price Index adjustment charged by the hauler, Westside Disposal.

The monthly rate for the typical residential customer will be from 6 cents to 15 cents less than current rates depending on the container size.

Rates for commercial customers will increase slightly, by less than \$1 a month. The new rates go into effect on March 1, 2010.

FIRCREST CITY COUNCIL

David M. Viafore
(Mayor)

Chris Gruver

Matthew Jolibois

Kathy L. McVay

Robert Thaden
(Mayor Pro Tempore)

Denny Waltier

Mike Weinman

FIRCREST CLEAN-UP DAYS

Friday & Saturday, April 9 & 10
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Westside Disposal Refuse Yard
2815 Rochester St.

Bring your unwanted junk for free disposal.

- No loads larger than a standard pickup or small trailer.
- No regular household garbage.
- No liquids, paints or hazardous materials.
- Residential only -- no commercial material or loads.
- Separate recyclable items: wood, metal.

Call Westside Disposal for information 564-3212.

Educational Campaign Focuses on Stormwater

Despite its natural beauty, Puget Sound is suffering the ill-effects of dirty stormwater. Scientists say that poor water quality, along with habitat degradation, is jeopardizing the health of everything from orcas to salmon to shellfish.

To help people understand how the health of Puget Sound is affected by activities far from the water's edge, a new educational campaign of the Puget Sound Partnership began last summer. It's called "Puget Sound Starts Here."

The idea behind the slogan is actually pretty simple: What happens on land – no matter where you are – is connected to the marine waters of Puget Sound by stormwater. Stormwater that runs off your roof, your yard, and the street in front of your home rushes via pipes and creeks to Puget Sound. In the course of its journey, stormwater picks up oil, tiny bits of metal, pesticides, bacteria and viruses from pet waste, and many other pollutants. Unlike waste water from sinks and toilets, stormwater is not treated before it enters Puget Sound. Puget Sound Starts Here challenges all of us to translate this awareness into action in up to four areas of our daily lives:

- With your car
- In your yard
- In your home
- Around your dog



The website – www.pugetsoundstartshere.org – gives you specific recommendations and information resources. You also can print out coupons from the website that will save you money on products such as car washes, yard fertilizer and dog waste bags.

Fish-Friendly Car Wash Kits Available

Are you planning or participating in a car wash fund-raising event? You can make the fund-raiser "fish-friendly" by using a free car wash kit from Pierce County designed to keep soapy water out of storm drains and away from fish.

The kits keep soap, oil, and other pollutants from going down the storm drain and directly into streams, lakes, groundwater and Puget Sound. Soap and pollutants from cars can be particularly toxic to fish and other aquatic life. The kits help by directing the car wash runoff to a sewage treatment facility or a grassy area where it can be filtered. The kits come with a catch basin insert, submersible pump, garden hose, extension cord, instructions, and everything else needed to make it work, including a large sign identifying the car wash as fish-friendly.

There is no charge to borrow the kits. To reserve one, contact Teresa Lewis Pierce County Public Works Education & Outreach Coordinator, at (253) 798-2725. For more information go to www.piercecountywa.org/carwash



The kits are available free of charge.

The Fircrest City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The Council conducts study sessions the third Monday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Council meetings and study sessions are open to the public.

PUBLIC WORKS

Sewer Project Update

All indications are that the State Legislature will not provide funds for the Public Works Trust Fund loan programs in the 2011-12 biennium. This forces the City to look elsewhere for loan funds for the project, at interest rates higher than the 0.5% discussed in all the neighborhood meetings. The State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan programs have an interest rate of about 2.8% which will increase the debt service requirements for the project as well as the costs to property owners who request loan funds for their side sewer service relocations.

In November 2009, the City submitted two applications for SRF loans to relocate/replace the most critical segments of the sewer system, mostly north of Regents Boulevard. One was for \$7.6 million for construction of approximately 5,300 feet of new sewer mains and the relocation of side sewer services at 44 homes. The design of this project was completed in early November. The second was for the design and construction of another 5,180 feet of new sewer mains and the relocation of side sewer services at 111 homes with an estimated construction cost of \$5 million.

We will not know until June whether we have been successful in obtaining one or both of the requested SRF loans. If we are successful in obtaining one or both SRF loans, construction on the project would likely begin in the summer of 2010.

If we are not successful in obtaining a SRF loan, the City will have to issue revenue bonds to fund the project. The present interest rate on revenue bonds is between 4.2 and 4.5 %. Having to issue bonds for the project will further increase costs to the City and property owners because of the higher interest rate.

In August 2008 the City raised sewer rates \$4 per month to begin to develop funds to meet the

debt service requirement of the loan. To meet the debt service on the \$1 million pre-construction loan, obtained from the Public Works Trust Fund for design of the project, an \$8 per month sewer rate increase was necessary.

On August 1, 2009, the City raised sewer rates another \$8 per month. \$4 of this increase is required to meet the debt service requirements of the Pre-Construction loan. Another \$2 of the increase is intended to begin providing funds to meet the debt service requirements on future financing for construction of the project. The last \$2 of the increase is intended to begin providing funds to accomplish another three million dollars of sewer replacement needs not associated with the Relocation of Backyard Sewer Mains Project.

Future rate increases will be required to meet the debt service requirements of loans that will be necessary to fund the construction of the project. The amounts and timing of future rate increases are not known at this time and will be dependent on the amount of construction undertaken and the terms of construction loans obtained by the City.

Storm Water Management Plan

The draft Storm Water Management Plan will soon be presented to the City Council for adoption. If you have any comments about the plan you can mail them to the Public Works Department at 115 Ramsdell Street, Fircrest, WA 98466, or you can submit them by email to Bill Larkin, our Public Works Director at BLarkin@cityoffircrest.net. The draft plan can be found at the City's website at www.cityoffircrest.net.

**Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
Hotline: 253-564-8900**

The discharge of pollutants into the City's storm drainage system is illegal. If you observe anyone discharging a pollutant into the City's storm drainage system, please notify the City at the above Hotline number.

CITY PHONE

NUMBERS

**Administration/
Finance**

564-8901

Public Works

564-8900

Planning/Building

564-8901

Police (business)

565-1198

Fire (non-emergency)

565-1198

Police/Fire Emergency

911

Community Center

564-8177

Municipal Court

564-8922

**Incident/Alert
Recorded Information**

460-INFO (4636)

CLEAN CLOGGED GUTTERS:

Residents can help prevent stormwater flooding in your neighborhood by raking or shoveling leaves and debris away from stormwater grates in the street.

Please do not rake or blow leaves into the street since they clog the storm drains and cause flooding. Place the leaves into your yard waste recycling bin for pickup.

**BRING IN YOUR
GARBAGE CANS:**

Please help keep your neighborhood attractive by bringing in garbage/recycle/yard waste containers as soon as you can after pickup and not leaving them out next to the street.



SHORT PLATS

(Creating four or fewer building sites)

Numerous inquiries have been received from property owners wanting to subdivide their property (short plat) in an effort to create a separate tax parcel to accommodate either a new single-family dwelling or a vacant lot that could be sold for future development.



There are two major single-family residential districts within the City of Fircrest: Residential-4 and Residential-6. Listed below are the criteria for each district that would apply if you were interested in a short plat on your property. For example, if you have property located within the Residential-6 district and it is 10,000 square feet or more in area, it might be possible to short plat it into two parcels. Please keep in mind that there are additional items for things such as allowable encroachments, accessory structures on existing properties, parking accommodations, etc. that could influence a future short plat.

RESIDENTIAL-4

- Minimum lot size: 8,000 sf
Minimum setback for new interior property line: 8 feet from existing house on property
Minimum lot width: 75 feet
Minimum frontage on a public street: 75 feet (45 feet if located on a cul-de-sac)
Corner lot setback (side street side yard) 15 feet

RESIDENTIAL-6

- Minimum lot size: 5,000 sf
Minimum setback for new interior property line: 5 feet from existing house on property
Minimum lot width: 50 feet
Minimum frontage on a public street: 50 feet
Corner lot setback (side-street side-yard): 15 feet

If you are unsure about your zoning district or have questions about the short plat process, feel free to contact the Planning/Building department at 564-8901 or access the City of Fircrest's website: www.cityoffircrest.net. Once you have accessed the site, click on Departments and then Planning/Building. There is a link to both the City's zoning map and a link to the Fircrest Municipal Code for additional information regarding your zoning district.

Recent Development Code Amendments

On December 8, 2009, the Fircrest City Council adopted amendments to the City's development regulations. These are:

- Amending chapter 22.62 to simplify landscape requirements for "in-fill" development of single family lots;
Amending chapter 22.78 to allow consideration of rezones on property less than one acre in area IF the proposed zoning designation is identical to adjacent properties;
Amending chapter 22.26 to increase the number of allowed off-premise real estate sandwich board signs for open houses from 3 to 4.

CITY STAFF

- Bill Brandon City Manager
John Cheesman Police Chief
Bill Larkin Interim Public Works Director
Bev Olsen Court Administrator
Jeff Davis WaterSewer/Streets Foreman
Colleen Cocoran Finance Director
Ray Gilmore Planning/Building Director
Rick Rosenblatt City Clerk
Jeff Grover Recreation Director

New Emergency Notification Program To Be Tested in Fircrest

The Pierce County Department of Emergency Management has purchased a software program that can send automated incident notifications to tens, hundreds, or thousands of people in minutes and to maintain an ongoing dialogue as the situation progresses for full transparency. In addition, the program will give residents the opportunity to tell authorities how to reach you, which alerts you want to receive, and whether you have special needs.

An example of the type of notification is the water contamination issue the City faced a couple of years ago. This system is

capable of notifying a section or the entire City of such an issue with related instructions and real time updates. Fircrest has been selected as a testing site for the new emergency notification program. The testing phase is expected to begin in late February and run through March.

More information and public education related to this testing phase will be on the City website, in mailers, and hand-delivered flyers. You are strongly encouraged to participate in the tests and follow up with comments or information as requested.

CITY COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



David M. Viafore
Mayor



Chris Gruver
Councilmember



Matthew Jolibois
Councilmember



Kathy L. McVay
Councilmember



Robert Thaden
Mayor Pro Tempore



Denny Waltier
Councilmember



Michael Weinman
Councilmember

In meetings October – December 2009, the Council:

- Set January 19, February 16, March 15, April 19, May 17, June 15, July 19, August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15 and December 20, 2009 as special meeting study sessions.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with Washington Traffic Safety Commission for participation in the DUI & Speeding Traffic Safety Emphasis Project.
- Held a public hearing to receive comments on a recommendation by the Planning Commission to amend the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, page LU-30, to allow automobile

- oriented drive-throughs for coffee houses in the Neighborhood Commercial areas.
- Held a public hearing to receive comments on a recommendation by the Planning Commission to amend Section 22.46.007 to allow a drive-through for coffee houses in the Neighborhood Commercial District.
- Confirmed the City Manager's appointment of John A. Miller as Municipal Court Judge for a four-year term, which expires December 31, 2013.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing an agreement with TerraFirma GIS (James Coyle) to update the City's GIS data base and provide staff training.

- Adopted a resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to assist in the "X-52: DRIVE HAMMERED GET NAILED" project.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing an amendment to the agreement with Sound Inspections and Investigative Engineers (S.I.I.E.) for building inspection services in 2010.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute an Equipment Use and Hold Harmless Agreement with the Town of Steilacoom for use of the Holiday sleigh.
- Reviewed and discussed the application for liquor license renewal for Charley's Steak & Ale,

- objected to renewal and directed staff to request a hearing before the Washington State Liquor Control Board.
- Held public hearings to receive comments on the 2010 Budget.
- Adopted an ordinance increasing the utility tax on water.
- Adopted the 2010 Budget.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Fircrest Police Officers Guild.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing an agreement with the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County for animal sheltering services in 2010.

Motor Vehicle Thefts Down in Fircrest

Crime statistics for 2009 (see below) show that Motor Vehicle Thefts were substantially lower than each of the past two years. Police Chief John Cheesman attributes the decrease to the police department's increase in residential patrols. Cheesman said officers have made a point of being more visible in the community and that seems to be making a difference.

The Police Department reminds residents to practice crime prevention by always locking doors and windows in your house. Park your car near your destination and always lock valuables in your trunk.

POLICE DEPARTMENT YEAR-END STATISTICS

	2007	2008	2009
Alarms	171	131	153
Assaults	44	51	54
Burglary	31	41	36
Criminal Citations	638	617	628
Domestics	44	56	65
Foot Patrols	1233	1098	1753
Infractions (tickets)	3838	3419	3884
Motor Vehicle Thefts	28	15	8
Robbery	5	1	2
Thefts (other than veh.)	128	113	86

TACOMA POWER

You're going to see a lot from Tacoma Power this year, and here's why. You may remember that Washington voters approved Initiative 937 in 2006. It requires that, starting this year, utilities such as Tacoma Power must meet aggressive energy conservation goals that require its customers to save about four times more power than you do now.



But it'll be easy, and the utility can lighten the load to your wallet with great rebates and incentives for things like using those twisty light bulbs, recycling old refrigerators and adding insulation and replacing windows.

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10 for 10 in 2010: Take the pledge

Kick off 2010 by making a pledge to switch . . . and save. It's easy. Pledge to switch out 10 incandescent bulbs for 10 compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), and you'll save energy and money as long as the CFLs last, which can be up to 10 times longer than the old-fashioned bulbs.

Sign up at KnowYourPower.com or by calling (253) 502-8377 and Tacoma Power will send you a special decal. Place it on your window to let people know you've made the pledge to switch and save. Get started now by visiting local stores that have discounted CFLs.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Summer Employment at Pool

Lifeguards and pool guards with life-guard credentials, instructors and cashiers will be needed for the opening of the pool in May. Apply at the Community Center. For further information, call 564-8177.

Daddy-Daughter Dance

Friday, February 12
7 – 9 p.m.

Community Center

Buy tickets in advance at the Community Center.

Fish 'n Fun

Saturday, March 20

8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Fircrest Park

For children ages 10 and younger. Bring your own fishing poles!



Tickets for Fish N Fun reservations can be picked up at the Community Center starting Monday March 8. For information, call 564-8177.

Hot chocolate, coffee and doughnuts are served. Sponsored by TAPCO Credit Union.

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 3 10 a.m.

Tot Lot: Ages 4 and under

Fircrest Park: Ages 5-8

Bring your camera for pictures with the Easter Bunny!



Community Garage Sale

Saturday, May 22

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Fircrest Park and Community Center
Sellers preregister at Community Center

Fircrest Pool Opens

Saturday, May 29, 1:30 p.m.

Pool schedules with information about lessons and other activities will be available beginning May 3.

Go Hawaiian Pool Party

Saturday June 5

5:30 to 8:30 PM

Fircrest Pool

Strawberry Feed and Band Concert

Sunday, June 27, 6 p.m.

Fircrest Park and Community Center

Classic Car Show

Sunday, July 11

10 am – 3 pm

Fircrest Park



TOWN TOPICS

City of Fircrest
115 Ramsdell St.
Fircrest, WA 98466

PRSRST STD
US Postage
Paid
Tacoma, WA
Permit #236

MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE CHIEF

It has been a tough couple of months for our agency and the entire law enforcement community.

It was with great sadness and shock that I received the news Sunday morning November 29, that Lakewood Sgt. Mike Renniger, and Lakewood officers Ronald Owens, Tina Griswold, and Greg Richards were ambushed and killed while drinking their morning coffee at a Forza coffee shop in Pierce County. After receiving the news I was in constant contact with the Incident Management Team which coordinated police activity after the shooting. I also spoke with and was in contact with all our officers shortly after the incident, and each and every one of our officers volunteered to assist the Lakewood Police Department in any way possible.

Most of our officers personally knew and have had the honor to work with the fallen officers. We often train with the Lakewood Police Department and other local agencies. I was fortunate enough to work with both Tina and Greg. Greg was on my squad at the Puyallup Fair and I was blessed to have worked with him and had him as a partner on many occasions. To me the taking of these lives was cowardly, senseless and unconscionable.

During the time between the shootings and the memorial service we provided security for one of the fallen officer's families. It was an honor to do so and was very much appreciated by Lakewood Police Chief



John Cheesman

Brett Farrar and the entire Lakewood Police Department.

I received another horrific phone call on Monday night, December 21 advising that two Pierce County deputies had just been shot while responding to a domestic dispute. I was advised that the deputies involved were Kent Mundell and Nick Housner. We trained and often worked with these deputies. As you are aware, Deputy Mundell succumbed to the injuries he received passing away on December 28.

Once again I was contacted by all the members of our department voicing their willness to volunteer and help out the Pierce County Sheriff's Department in any way possible. I remained in contact with the Incident Management Team and they requested our assistance in covering calls for service in University Place which would allow all of their deputies to attend the memorial service. We accommodated their request and we were able to do so without expending any overtime.

Most importantly for you to know is that I am very proud of our department and each one of our officers who often give so much of themselves that it is truly remarkable. I can assure the citizens of Fircrest that our resolve is as strong as ever and will not be deterred.

In summary I would like to thank the citizens of Fircrest for their ongoing support especially as we struggle to make sense of these nonsensical acts. I can assure you that your support is never taken lightly or for granted.

– Chief John Cheesman