

City of Fircrest

Town Topics

April 2020

CITY COUNCIL

Hunter T. George, Mayor
Brett Wittner, Mayor Pro Tempore
David M. Viafore
Shannon Reynolds
Joe Barrentine
Denny Waltier
Jamie Nixon



Mayor's Message



As I write this in mid-March, we've only just begun the closure of virtually everything to slow the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

The City of Fircrest's dedicated staff members are doing their part, and updates will continue to be posted at www.CityOfFircrest.net.

It's hard for me to imagine today what life will be like a month from now when you receive this newsletter. One thing's for sure — Fircrest residents take care of each other. I'm already seeing wonderful acts of kindness, and I'm confident that will continue.

We will get through this. It'll be hard, perhaps the hardest thing we've ever done. We'll be creative and resilient, and we'll learn from the experience. After the first few days of home-schooling my son, I know this much — teachers should be paid more!

Thanking our state legislators

The 2020 regular session of the Washington Legislature ended in mid-March, and once again the 28th District legislative delegation provided outstanding service to the residents of Fircrest.

Sen. Steve O'Ban and Reps. Christine Kilduff and Mari Leavitt secured a \$200,000 grant to help the city with its conversion to advanced water meters. This grant helps us keep our water rates reasonable while speeding up the conversion.

This marks the third consecutive year that our 28th District legislators have secured valuable grants for our city.

In 2019, the city received a \$1 million grant for the new community center. And the 2018 state budget included \$750,000 for the new pool.

If you see Sen. O'Ban, Rep. Kilduff or Rep. Leavitt when you're out and about, please thank them for helping your little city with some big projects.

Welcoming two new Planning Commission members

I'm excited to welcome two new members to the Fircrest Planning Commission. This volunteer group meets monthly to research and make recommendations to the City Council on land use policies.

It's important work. They provide valuable input on the municipal codes that make our city so special and sustainable. When two vacancies opened up, Andrew Imholt and Ben Ferguson applied to serve.

Andrew is an account executive with a local insurance firm, and if you google his name you'll find a News Tribune article about his successful effort to get the city to put a mural on the water tank next to Lowe's. Ben owns an architecture firm in Tacoma, and he has lots of experience with land use and development policies, as well as extensive volunteer experience.

Both are eager to serve your community. They will join Sarah Hamel (who chairs the panel), Kathy McVay, and Shirley Shultz. Please thank them when you see any of these folks.

Hunter T. George
Mayor

Home Improvement Projects

If you plan on doing any repairs or improvements to your home, there is a good chance a permit is required. What does the permit get you? With each permit, the City:

- Reviews the project to see if it meets the applicable rules and codes
- Verifies that your contractor is licensed, bonded and in good standing with the Washington State labor and industries
- Conducts inspections to ensure the minimum standards were met
- Provides proof of what and when work was done

When it comes to who can do the actual work, State law allows two options: Property owners and registered contractors.

Property owners are allowed to work on their own property without being a license contractor. Construction permits would still be required in most cases to ensure all work meets the minimum building code standards.

Registered contractors may be hired to complete the work. They are required to maintain a surety bond, have liability insurance, have a Washington business license, and a City of Fircrest business license.

Hiring someone who is not a registered contractor brings risk and liability. Besides the fact that they are not licensed and bonded, you could be considered their employer and could be held liable for any medical expenses, missing wages, and overtime.

Discussions with City staff are free – email

permits@cityoffircrest.net or call 253-564-8902, or stop by!



Thanks to your donations, the flags, and hanging flower baskets will be going up in May. If you wish to help keep this tradition going, please consider a donation no matter how small (or large). We will list your name as a donor in a future edition of the Town Topics. You may also memorialize a loved one or celebrate a joyous event. Flyers are included with your utility bill or visit City Hall.

Serving the Community Since 1925

City Manager's Corner



Hello Fircrest Residents,

For this edition of Town Topics, I want to introduce a couple of new staff members and talk about water meters. In the last couple of months, we have had turnover in our City Clerk position and Permit Tech position as well as with a couple of Police Officers. Jessica Nappi, our previous City Clerk that served the City since July 2017, moved on to a Planning position with Pierce County. In her place we hired Jayne Westman, who had previously served the City as our Permit Tech since April 2018. We'd like to welcome Jayne as our new City Clerk and we look forward to what she brings to the position. We have hired Suzie Capiello as our new Permit Tech and want to welcome her to the community as well.

Officer Pete Joyce retired from the Fircrest Police Department last year. In his place we have hired Officer Jeff Johnson, who comes to the City with a great law enforcement background, serving previously in Fircrest as well as the City of Lakewood. Officer Johnson started working for the City in February 2020. Officer Bob Deal has announced his retirement. He plans to depart in April/May 2020. In anticipation of his retirement, we have hired Sergei Andres, who has previously served in King County, the Puyallup Tribe and Ruston.

Now on to water meters! The City's current water meters were installed in 2001 and are manual read meters, meaning we have to read each meter by sight and record it. Every other month, it takes our meter reader 7 to 9 days to read meters. As water meters age, they slow down (meaning they don't read all of the water that flows through them). Generally, the City replaces meters as necessary, but as the City faces the need to start replacing all meters, the City's

Public Works Department has been looking at the best options with up-to-date metering technology. Most water utilities are now using radio read meters, which allow meters to be read by driving a vehicle along each street and a signal picks up the meter reading. This would reduce the time to read meters down to less than one day.

Most utilities are looking to upgrade to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). This process provides for the meters to send signals to a base station and then on to the billing clerk. The meters are continuously monitored without any meter reading needed. The City is going to move forward with replacing our current manual read meters with new AMI capable meters. Once the infrastructure is in place (the meters, one or two signal repeaters, and new computer software), we will make the full switch to an AMI System. The new AMI System will help us identify problems in the system much earlier than our current system. They will also alert us to potential customer leaks, a capability we do not currently have.

The actual replacement of meters is work our public works crew can accomplish without the need to contract work out. There will be no need to change or adjust meter boxes as the new meters will fit into the current meter boxes. We want to replace meters with as little impact on the community as possible, so we have scheduled to replace a specific amount each year over a few years so there is as little effect on water rates as possible.

Scott Pingel
City Manager

Protect Your Car From Theft



As warmer weather approaches, more people are out moving around and enjoying this time of year. Unfortunately, our law abiding citizens are not the only ones out moving about more; the criminal element is as well. This time of year we see a rise in vehicle prowls in Fircrest. In recent cases, the victim's vehicles were left unlocked. In almost all of the cases, valuables were not only left in the victim's vehicle but also in plain sight. We would like to remind residents to be more diligent about removing valuables and locking the doors when parking their cars. These simple steps will deter most would-be thieves. Do not hesitate to call 911 immediately if you see ANYTHING or ANYONE that seems out of place or suspicious. We cannot do our jobs effectively without the help and assistance of those we serve. Don't become a victim and as always, let's watch out for each other.

Chief John Cheesman

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Community Crime Map



The Fircrest Police Department Crime Mapping project has been completed and approved by the FBI. LexisNexis Community Crime Map connects law enforcement with the community in hopes to reduce crime and improve public safety. Crime mapping helps the public get a better idea of the crime activity in their area so they can make more informed decisions about how to stay safe. Community Crime Map goes beyond crime mapping by automatically alerting the public about recent crime activity if they choose. Community Crime Map empowers the public to make better decisions about crime by putting the same technology used by law enforcement to analyze and interpret crime activity into the hands of the public. Community Crime Map compiles crime data and other information from law enforcement agencies to make it easier for the public to stay informed about crime data in the community.

We have been working with LexisNexis to set up an automated feed of the data from our Records Management System into the crime database. Receiving the data directly from our agency ensures that the data is always up to date, accurate and complete. You can see the source of the crime data for any incident by clicking on the incident on the map. The information window lists the "Agency" that provided the information. You can type in **LexisNexis Community Crime Map** in your search engine and it will take you to the web site. You can select the type of crimes you would like to see and the date range you would like to be informed of. The map is fun to play around with. I am pleased that we can push this out to our community.



<https://communitycrimemap.com/>

Chief John Cheesman

Fircrest Pool and Bath House



Overhead View - January



February



Overhead View - March

March



Community Center Public Meeting



On February 20th we had a great meeting on the design of the new Community Center. There were over 60 people in attendance and many good questions were asked. At this time the City is in the design development process and is getting ready to receive updated cost estimates from the architects.

This is an exciting time for the City and we encourage you to contact us with any questions you may have regarding the project. You can find more information at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/communitycenterproject/>.

Like us on Facebook



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Upcoming Events

Mother & Son Dance
Friday, May 8th 6:30-8:30 pm



2nd Annual Color Run 5K & Kid's Dash
Saturday, May 16th 9-10 am

Whittier Elementary has partnered with the City of Fircrest for the 2nd Annual Color Run. The Color Run will begin at 9 am and the Kids Dash will begin at 10 am.

All proceeds benefit Whittier Elementary in Fircrest. Their goal is to raise enough money to provide field trips for all students.

Community Garage Sale
Saturday, June 6th

The 2020 Community Garage Sale has a new twist. In addition to the Garage Sale happening at the Park, the Community Center will create a list of participating Fircrest residents also having sales at their homes that day. If you would like to be added to the list, you can sign up at the Community Center for only \$5. The list will be made available the week of the sale. Space will still be available at the Park for \$20 per booth.

Strawberry Feed and Band Concert
Sunday, June 28th 6 pm

Enjoy a fun summer evening at the Park listening to great music and enjoying strawberry shortcake. Cost: \$2 per shortcake.

Rod Run & Picnic
Sunday, July 5th
10:00 am – 3:00 pm



Fircrest Fun Days
Friday, July 17th
Saturday, July 18th



For more information, please visit
Parks & Recreation at:
[www.cityoffircrest.net/
government/parks-and-recreation](http://www.cityoffircrest.net/government/parks-and-recreation)

Daddy Daughter Dance



City Hall 253-564-8901 | Municipal Court 253-564-8922 | Public Works 253-564-8900 | Community Center & Pool 253-564-8177
Non-Emergency Police 253-565-1198 | Westside Disposal 253-564-3212 | Animal Care & Control 253-627-PETS
Humane Society 253-383-2733 | Puget Sound Energy 888-225-5773 | Tacoma Power 253-502-8600