

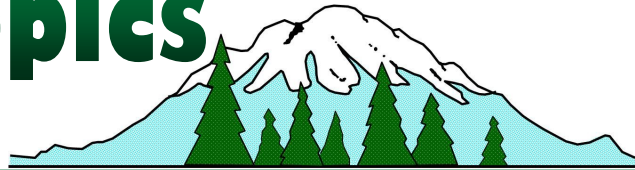
City of Fircrest

Town Topics

August 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



An Update on the New Pool & Community Center

When Fircrest residents voted overwhelmingly in April 2019 to approve the financing plan for a new pool and community center, the goal was to complete design, development, and construction in June 2020 and not miss a swim season.

We were right on schedule until March when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. As of the time of this writing (in mid-July), the slowdown in work and delays in getting materials will push completion of construction to late August. After that, we have to train staff on the new pool systems, and the delivery of furniture, fixtures and equipment is unpredictable, which means we are into September before we have a completed, ready-to-use facility. Add to that all of the uncertainty about the region's recovery amid increasing cases of infection, and we just cannot get to an opening this year.

It was a hard reality for me to accept. Lots of people worked really hard to try and deliver this community gem on time, but forces beyond our control have made that impossible.

That said, the Parks and Recreation staff and the Fircrest City Council are already working on plans for an epic grand opening and summer season in 2021. We anticipate offering new programs and experiences, including lots of themed events for all ages.

There is one new feature that you will not have to wait much longer to use. The party room in the pool house – with its fantastic view of the park and modern kitchen – will be available for rent beginning later this year. We believe that will be a popular spot for birthday parties, meetings, and other gatherings for years to come. (Doesn't it sound nice to think about gatherings?)

And here's another reason to look forward to 2021. We put the new community center out for construction bids in July and expect to award a contract in late August or early

September. That's about a year ahead of schedule!

We anticipate beginning the work of tearing down the old center in September or October. If all goes well (knock on wood again), the new Fircrest Community Center should open at the end of 2021. Check out the latest artist renderings on www.CityOfFircrest.net.

Supporting Black Lives Matter and Fighting Racism

As we all know, the horrific death of George Floyd in Minneapolis has sparked a meaningful look at systemic racism in the United States and all over the world. That meaningful look is happening in Fircrest, too.

On June 9, the City Council unanimously approved a proclamation that condemns systemic racism and declares our intention "to listen, to learn, to be willing to experience discomfort, to collaborate with community partners, and to protect the Constitutional and human rights of every person who lives, works and visits our city."

At the same time, the City Council began working closely with Police Chief John Cheesman to review, understand, and update our use-of-force policies. I will share a more detailed update on this endeavor in the next edition of Town Topics.

The City Council has also indicated it wants to identify opportunities for diversity, equity and inclusion training for all City of Fircrest employees.

These are what a friend of mine calls "the next first steps." I still want to coordinate community conversations so we can all learn from each other's life experiences. That will require a lot of us feeling discomfort. I feel strongly this has to be done in person, not in a Zoom meeting, but that means we have to wait for a safer time to gather in groups.

I hope you have a safe and healthy summer. And please wear a mask!

Hunter T. George, Mayor
hgeorge@cityoffircrest.net

Capital Improvements for Summer 2020

The City of Fircrest has received two grants from the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) to fund the Emerson Sidewalk Extension Project and the Alameda Overlay Project.

Both projects will be starting construction this summer around August.

The Emerson Sidewalk Extension Project will add sidewalks to the South side of Emerson from Alameda to Thelma

Gilmur park. The project also includes improving the existing crosswalk at Thelma Gilmur park across Emerson so that becomes a safer crossing situation. Estimated cost of the project is \$590,700.

The Alameda Overlay project provides a grind and overlay of Alameda from Regents to Electron Way. This project will grind down the existing pavement to improve the gutter height for better drainage and also improve the existing roadway surface. Estimated cost of the project is \$638,200.

Serving the Community Since 1925

City Manager's Corner



Hello Fircrest Residents,

For this edition of Town Topics, we want to recognize 2 long-term employees that retired at the end of June 2020. We also have a couple of new staff to introduce to you.

First, we want to thank Bob Deal and Sue Lockard for their years of service to the City of Fircrest. Bob served the community as a Police Officer in the Police Department for just under 16 years. He was our detective for about 11 of those years. Bob served the community well, the police department well, and he served his fellow officers well.

Sue served the City for 35 years in various positions. She retired as the Public Works Support Coordinator. Sue was with the City when we transitioned from a Town Council form of government to a Council-Manager form of government. She was able to help the City through that transition period, which can be very difficult as roles and norms change.

At the beginning of June 2020, our Police Sergeant, Josh Miller, took a position with the Pierce County Sheriff's Office. We have promoted Officer Victor Celis as our new Police Sergeant. Sergeant Celis has been with the Fircrest Police Department since January 2017, previously serving in Lakewood and as the Ruston Police Chief. Vic has also served as our detective for the past several months. We are in the process of filling two vacant Police Officer positions. We are currently doing background checks on our top candidates.

We also want to introduce June Wheeler, our new Administrative Assistant in the Public Works Department. June comes to us from the private sector, most recently working in Human Resources for a construction company. The Administrative Assistant is a retooled position, and we are excited for June to get her feet wet.

Scott Pingel, City Manager
City of Fircrest

Crime Prevention Tips from Fircrest Police



Many people are victims of crime. Often times, there are steps that people can take to protect themselves and reduce the risk that they will become victimized.

Below are some crime prevention tips that the Fircrest Police Department encourages you to employ to decrease your odds of becoming a victim:

- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed.
- If you are going to be away for a length of time, use automatic timers to turn lights on and off during the day. Submit a vacation check to the Fircrest Police Department.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- If you are on vacation, have the Post Office hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to pick it up.
- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.
- Install deadbolt locks on all of your outside doors.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable however special locks are available for better security.

Don't Tempt a Thief:

- Lawn mowers, barbecues and bicycles are best stored out of sight
- Always lock your garden sheds and garages.

- Use curtains on garage and basement windows.

Get the Best:

- No lock, regardless of its quality, can be truly effective. Ask a locksmith for advice on your situation.
- Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen.
- When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.

Targeting the Outside:

- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyards.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- Make sure your door hinges are on the inside.

Windows:

- Most windows can be pinned for security. Drill a 3/16" hole on a slight downward slant through the inside window frame and halfway into the outside frame - place a nail in the hole to secure the window.

Alarms:

- An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation. There are a wide variety of alarm systems on the market so make inquiries to different companies for the best security system available to you.
- **If you have a home alarm system, use it!** Alarm systems are only useful when you remember to activate them.

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Parks and Recreation Update

Construction Projects

The past few months have not been normal for those of us in the Parks and Recreation industry. All of our best laid plans to offer programs, sports leagues and events have been disrupted by COVID-19. While we all are trying to make the best of things while practicing physical distancing and wearing masks, the Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department continues to move forward with several essential items. The Fircrest Pool project, although delayed by COVID-19, continues to move forward. Phase two of the Pool and Community Center Project will commence in September as we prepare to demolish the existing Community Center (built-in 1960) and begin construction on the new Community Center. To prepare for this project, the staff is diligently going through old files, equipment, fixtures, and furnishings, by itemizing and organizing everything in the building. Once organized, we will determine which items to store, archive, sell, or surplus.

Recreation Software

We recently entered into an agreement with RecDesk, a cloud-based recreation software program for the Parks and Recreation Department. RecDesk Recreation Software will allow the community to register online for all of our programs, sports leagues, swim lessons, and anything else that we offer within our department. Community members will also be able to view an online facility calendar and process facility reservation requests online. RecDesk recreation software will also allow us to streamline the management of our operations, which will reduce back-office tasks, increase efficiency, and boost revenue for the City all in one place. Keep an eye out for upcoming instructions on how to create an account for you and your family.

HAVE YOU VISITED THESE PARKS LATELY?

The City of Fircrest has 6 beautiful parks within the City limits. Have you been to all of them?
(Due to COVID-19, the playground at Fircrest Park and the Gene Goodwin Memorial Tot Lot remain closed.)

Alice Peers Park 601 San Juan

This is a street-side pocket park. It is the site of the City of Fircrest reader board, a rose garden, and a flagpole. The Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony is held here every 1st Sunday in December.



Fircrest Park 555 Contra Costa Avenue

This 10-acre park is the home of the Roy H. Community Center and Pool. It contains the Ron Russo Pavilion which is used for staging events and picnics. It also features youth baseball and softball fields, and basketball courts. Across the street, you can enjoy a game of tennis or pickleball at the Fircrest Park Tennis Courts.



George Masko Park 805 San Juan Ave

Dedicated in 1960 in honor of George Masko, a long time civic and community leader, Masko Park includes a rhododendron memorial garden with paths that meander past City Hall through groves of Douglas Fir Trees. This is a great spot for a mid-day picnic.



Thelma Gilmur Park 1404 Evergreen Drive



Thelma Gilmur Park is an undeveloped, 7-acre site featuring foot trails, interpretive signs, and lookouts around a diverse wetland environment, acquired by the City in 1975. It is surrounded by single-family housing on all sides, with the exception of a church to the northwest corner. This site is easily accessible from the north and east by adjoining streets. There are currently foot trails around a portion of the wetlands, predominantly on the east side of the slope down to the wetland, and is heavy in native grasses, brush, and trees. The wetlands have aquatic plant life consisting of reed grasses, cattails, and native willow. This park is a former sphagnum peat bog, which was mined for peat many decades ago. The open pond located in the center of the wetland is likely the result of the historic peat dredging. This diverse wetland community and a mature upland community provide an excellent habitat within an urban setting. On October 24, 1995, the City of Fircrest dedicated the park to Thelma Gilmur, who fought vigorously to preserve the land and prevent it from being developed upon.

Whittier Park 921 Contra Costa Avenue

This 13-acre playfield is adjacent to Whittier Elementary School. Vehicular access to the park is limited to the northwest corner only. The Park features a covered picnic shelter, bocce courts, a ball field, two soccer fields, tennis courts, one basketball court, horseshoe pits and restrooms. It is bordered by a nature trail that is maintained in cooperation with the Pierce Conservation District. This park has been home to the Fircrest Soccer Club for several decades during the summer and fall.

