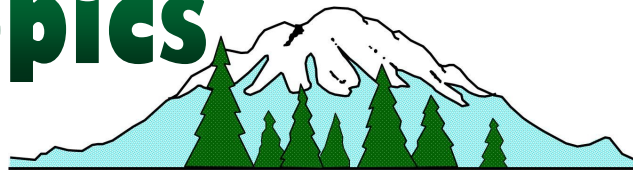


# Town Topics



## Mayor's Message



The global pandemic continues to wreak havoc on the economy. We all know people who have lost their jobs or closed their businesses. The City of Fircrest received a pair of federal CARES Act grants from the state, and we distributed over \$219,950 during the fall to Fircrest business owners and renters in the hopes that would help them get through lean times.

As of this writing in late January, President Biden and Congress are talking about another round of COVID-19 relief, and we will be on alert for any opportunities to continue helping residents and business owners in crisis.

In the meantime, I want to share this bit of good news. Because the City of Fircrest is in such excellent fiscal health, the City Council

decided for the second year in a row not to raise property taxes by the 1 percent allowed by state law. You read that right – state law allows cities to raise property taxes by 1 percent, but we can manage our needs with existing resources so we decided to “bank” that increase for possible use in the future.

Furthermore, we also did not raise our water, sewer or stormwater utility rates this year either.

I hope that gives you confidence that your elected Fircrest City Council members and professional staff are working hard to support this wonderful community.

Be well, be safe, and please keep wearing your mask!

Hunter T. George, Mayor

## Fircrest Police-Stimulus Checks

Millions of Americans have been receiving their COVID-19 second round stimulus checks.

If you are still waiting for your check, be sure to keep your guard up for any suspicious or fraudulent activity. The critical state of the economy has created the ideal climate for financial predators who know consumers are desperate and will do whatever it takes to make ends meet. Whatever your situation, you won't want to fall victim to scams.

Once the funds are disbursed, the IRS is sending out official notices to confirm the details of the payment and who to contact if the funds don't arrive in your bank account.

You can check eligibility or the status of an Economic Impact Payment with the IRS directly at [www.irs.gov/Coronavirus](http://www.irs.gov/Coronavirus) or by calling 1-800-829-1040.

Below are some helpful tips we found to help you avoid falling victim to a scam:

- Know that the federal government does not require consumers to make a purchase in order to access a federal benefit or cash a federal check.
- Know that the federal government is not contacting people and offering them grants to stay home to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Never click on links sent in unsolicited messages, whether it is received via text, email or social media. These links could contain malware or connect the consumer to a website set up

to obtain personal or financial information for nefarious purposes.

- Do not trust the name and number listed on Caller ID. Spoofing technology allows scammers to change phone displays to impersonate others to include government agencies.
- Never provide personal or financial information in response to an unsolicited message or call.
- Be wary of anyone that says they can expedite the availability of stimulus funds for a fee-at best this is a short-term loan offer and at worst it is an outright scam.
- Remember that a person making contact and urgently requesting an up-front payment, especially through wire transfer, prepaid cards, bitcoin, or gift cards is a sure sign of a scam.
- Always look out for messages and websites that contain typos, incorrect spelling, grammatical errors or awkward phrasing as these may be indicators that the messages are from imposters and scammers.

What's the easiest way to deal with stimulus check scammers? Ignore them! The IRS also encourages you to report the incident by forwarding any correspondence to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).

The less personal information you share with others the better protected you are from becoming a victim of a crime. The criminal element takes advantage of any tool they can get their hands on in order to further their cause, so let's not assist them in doing so.

Chief John Cheesman

## Planning-Comprehensive Plan

The City of Fircrest is hereby giving notice that the Planning and Building Department will be accepting applications for Comprehensive Plan amendments beginning March 1, 2021 and ending April 30, 2021 at 5:00PM. Except as provided for in FMC Chapter 23 and RCW 36.70A.130, amendment requests received after the deadline will not be considered during the 2021 amendment process. Please contact us at 253-564-8902 or [planning@cityoffircrest.net](mailto:planning@cityoffircrest.net) for more information pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan and amendment process.

# Serving the Community Since 1925

## City Manager's Corner



Hello Fircrest Residents,

For this edition of Town Topics, we say goodbye to our Public Works Director, Jerry Wakefield, and hello to Arlette Burkhart, our new Public Works Administrative Assistant. I want to remind everyone about the opportunity to buy a brick that will be installed at the plaza of the new Community Center. I also want to provide a brief reminder about a service provided by Westside Disposal.

As of the end of January 2021, Jerry Wakefield, our Public Works Director, is moving on from the City of Fircrest. Jerry has been with the City since November 2013 and has been an incredible asset for the City. Jerry came to the City at a time when capital projects were really starting to ramp up. He provided great leadership and accomplished much during his 7-plus years with the City. He will be missed. I anticipate hiring a new Public Works Director this winter.

Just before Christmas, Arlette Burkhart started as our new Administrative Assistant in the Public Works Department. Arlette has already become an asset for the department, picking up quickly on the things that need to get done, learning department needs,

and how her role fits in. Arlette served in the National Guard and the US Army, and she comes to the City with a mathematics background.

I also wanted to remind everyone about the opportunity to support the Pool and Community Center project by buying a brick that will be installed at the outdoor plaza of the new Community Center. Bricks can be purchased for \$100. They are 8 inches by 8 inches and provide for up to 6 lines of text with up to 18 characters per line. For more information, go to the City's website at [www.cityoffircrest.net/buy-a-brick-campaign/](http://www.cityoffircrest.net/buy-a-brick-campaign/). The last day to purchase bricks is March 31, 2021.

Finally, a reminder about a service that Westside Disposal provides that may not be commonly known, which is their Bulky Waste Collection. Single-family customers have the opportunity to request up to 2 times per calendar year curbside pickup of certain bulky items. Requests are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. You can contact Westside Disposal at 253-564-3212 for additional details about this service.

Scott Pingel, City Manager

## Fircrest Parks

Did you know the City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains 27.1 acres of land providing a range of recreational opportunities at six park sites?

Three of our most used parks are Fircrest Park, the Gene Goodwin Memorial Tot Lot, and Whittier Park. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), through its Statewide Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), define general classification park types depending on size, service area and public use. Both Fircrest and Whittier Parks are designated as Community Parks while the Tot Lot is a Neighborhood Park. Whittier Park hosts a small trail system through the wetlands on the east side of the park. Through our partnership with the Pierce Conservation District we are consistently working to remove invasive plant species as native trees and shrubs are planted in place.

There are three remaining parks within the City's park system which are not as heavily used, but are just as important to our community.

Thelma Gilmur Park is designated as a Natural Use Park. It is an undeveloped, 7-acre site featuring foot trails, interpretive signs, and

lookouts around a diverse wetland environment. Foot trails around the east portion of the wetland allow urban hikers to enjoy the 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. 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.

George Masko Park is located just west of Fircrest City Hall and exhibits many tall fir trees and a variety of rhododendrons. Dedicated in 1960 in honor of long time civic and community leader, George Masko Park includes a rhododendron memorial garden for music composers, authors and artists. The city has recently increased maintenance efforts within Masko Park and is working on plans to rehabilitate the rhododendron memorial garden.

Alice Peers Park 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 each December. This is a great place to take a break on your walk around town.

## Tell Us What Makes Your Heart Happy!

Music? Family? Splashing in mud puddles? Let us know and we will include it in the Fircrest "What Makes Your Heart Happy" Project.

As we enter 2021, our goal for this project is to encourage community members to focus on the things that make their hearts happy. BIG or small... does it bring a smile to your face?

The City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation is creating a giant heart that will be attached to the Tennis Court fence on Electron Way. This is where we will post your "What Makes Your Heart Happy" comments for the community to enjoy. Once you have submitted your "What Makes Your Heart Happy" comment, you may choose to

complete the second part of the registration to be eligible for prize drawings from local businesses and friends of Fircrest. Your last name and contact information will NOT be shared.

How to participate:

Tell us what makes your heart happy by following this link and answering the question. <https://form.jotform.com/FircrestParksandRecreation/what-makes-your-heart-happy-project>

We will print your answer on a laminated heart, along with only your FIRST name and age (age is optional). Your heart will be posted within the BIG heart for the month of February.

Find your heart and take a selfie with it. Post it on your social media with #fircresthearthappyproject

We will have a daily drawing Monday through Thursday for the month of February. Prizes include: chocolate & coffee basket, Bliss Ice Cream cakes, THE Fircrest beanie hat, tulip plants, \$25 gift cards to Costless Pharmacy & Gifts and more!

The REGISTRATION DEADLINE is February 24, 2021. There is no cost to enter. Must be a Fircrest resident to be eligible for prizes.

Questions? Please contact Judy at [jschmidtke@cityoffircrest.net](mailto:jschmidtke@cityoffircrest.net)