

City of Fircrest

Town Topics

August 2022

CITY COUNCIL

Brett L. Wittner, *Mayor*
Joe Barrentine, *Mayor Pro Tempore*
David M. Viafore
Shannon Reynolds
Hunter T. George
Nikki Bufford
Jim Andrews



City Council Spotlight—Jim Andrews

Over the past two years, the City of Fircrest has seen a sharp rise in property crimes. Our police department has been working hard to try and curb these crimes but their efforts have been hampered by current State Legislation which has placed limits on how police can respond to calls.

FIRCREST PROPERTY Crime Statistics:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Burglary	25	25	16	40
Thefts	109	83	102	144

(Please use this link for Police Chief Cheesman's 2022 police Report:

<https://www.cityoffircrest.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/041822-Police-Stats-2022.pdf>)

In the past year, our city has seen a rise in car prowls but many of our residents do not report these crimes as they feel that the police can do nothing about them or do not wish to take officers off the street.

It is important to report all crimes, even car prowls, as it allows our officers to come to the area and investigate. In many cases the officers will find the suspect involved in another crime in the area and this might be enough to allow the officers to arrest the suspect.

Another important reason to report all crimes is it allows the police to obtain data that can assist in discovering crime patterns and then set appropriate area patrols. Here are a few things we as citizens can do to try and deter these criminals.

- Lock your vehicles and leave nothing in plain sight. Most prowlers tend to check open door handles and avoid breaking windows. Once they're in though, they'll take anything they can find, from mail with personal details, loose change, laptops and even clothing.
- Install motion detector lights and cameras. Being able to look back on security camera footage allows officers to get a better idea of who to look for in an attempt to identify and catch the suspect. The more footage available, the more information officers will have to investigate the situation.
- Be a good neighbor and call if you see any suspicious activity in your area. A lot of times, crime happens when it's dark out. Keeping a light on in your driveway will help deter criminals.

In closing, please call our police department when you see or have been a victim of a crime, 253-565-1198.

Jim Andrews, Fircrest City Council
jandrews@cityoffircrest.net

Public Works—Water System — Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)



Public Works began the process of exploring options to replace its old and inefficient water meters in 2019. This led to identifying Kamstrup Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Meters as the technology of the future and best product for the City. Use of AMI meters increases transparency in the distribution network. Each meter converts water usage into electronic data and then transmits encrypted water usage data back to the PW Billing Department. This data updates numerous times throughout the day and will be "real time" and readily accessible via the H2O Analytics Customer Portal. Portal access will soon be available to customers as PW recently purchased the software and is going through the implementation and training process. A few of the immediate benefits with use of AMI Meters is faster leak detection and the ability to analyze water consumption by property owners.

Tyler Bemis, Public Works Director
For more information, please contact Public Works at (253) 564-8900

Check out our **Up To Date Information** webpage www.cityoffircrest.net/updates for the latest information, including current meeting agendas, minutes, resolutions, ordinances, and project updates.

Serving the Community Since 1925

City Manager's Corner



Hello Fircrest Residents,

For this edition of Town Topics, I want to call your attention to and recognize a tremendous Eagle Project that was completed at Thelma Gilmur Park over the last couple of months.

In the past, the various trees and plants along the trails were marked with wooden 4x4 posts that had a number on it, which corresponded to an identification list the City used to have available for the trail. The trail map was created by Brian Gustafson for his 2004 Eagle Scout Project. These wooden posts or markers over the years had fallen into disrepair or were simply lost to overgrown foliage, so even if you could find the old list of trees and plants, many of the posts were lost or no longer matched up to the correct plant or tree.

Noel Wittner came to the City earlier this year with the idea to renew these posts and identifiers along the Thelma Gilmur Park trails for his Eagle Scout Project. Noel worked with City staff and did the research as to what used to be there, what posts still existed, and whether they matched the identified tree or plant on the list. Since many of the old posts were in disrepair and many no longer corresponded to the correct tree or plant, Noel's project

included removing old posts that could no longer be used and putting in new posts. Noel also went a step further, and rather than sticking with the old number system to identify the trees and plants, Noel had plaques made that were adhered to each post identifying the tree or plant next to it, its common and scientific names, and a brief description. There are several posts up throughout the park with no plaques assigned to them. The City is working to replace several species of native plants so that this project can be expanded in the future.

I want to thank Noel and all those that volunteered their time, talents and efforts to complete this project. Generally, the final step or requirement a scout takes on towards becoming an Eagle Scout is to complete a project that requires them to show leadership and provides a benefit to the community. Ideally, the benefit to the community should be something that lasts. Noel certainly showed leadership and has completed a project that will bless and benefit the Fircrest Community for years to come. If you have not been to Thelma Gilmur Park recently, please take some time to go walk the trails and check out the new posts and plaques.

Scott Pingel, City Manager
City of Fircrest

Planning and Building

Mildred Street Prose Development

Alliance Residential is proposing to redevelop a vacant 9.5-acre parcel on the east side of Mildred Street. The parcel is best known for housing goats to keep vegetation at bay. The proposal is for a mixed-use development that would consist of four multistory buildings including commercial spaces and 389 apartment units, and a central plaza. While a mixed-use project is allowed on the site under current regulations, the applicant's vision for the project does not fully align with specific Form-Based Code provisions that would apply to the site. Before the project can move forward to permitting, the City will hold multiple study sessions and public hearings with the City Council, Planning Commission, and Hearing Examiner to solicit public input on required applications, including ones requesting amendments to the zoning map and text. Please watch our city website for more information. We will be posting hearing dates and application information on the website below:

<https://www.cityoffircrest.net/mildred-development-project/>



Fircrest Police



HOW TO AVOID A SCAM

Recognizing these common signs of a scam could help you avoid falling for one.

Four Signs That It's a Scam

1. Scammers pretend to be from an organization you know. Scammers often pretend to be contacting you on behalf of the government. They might use a real name, like the Social Security Department, the IRS, or Medicare, or make up a name that sounds official. Some pretend to be from a business you know, like a utility company, a tech company, or even a charity asking for donations. They use technology to change the phone number that appears on your caller ID. So, the name and number you see might not be real.

2. Scammers say there's a problem or a prize. They might say you're in trouble with the government. Someone in your family had an emergency or they may tell you there is a virus in your computer. Scammers say there is a problem with one of your accounts and that you need to verify some information. Others will lie and say you won money in a lottery or sweepstakes but must pay a fee to get it.

3. Scammers will pressure you to act immediately. Scammers want you to act before you have time to think. If you're on the phone, they might tell you not to hang up so you can't check out their story. They might threaten to arrest you, sue you, take away your driver's or business license, or deport you. They might say your computer is about to be corrupted.

4. Scammers tell you to pay in a specific way. They often insist that you pay by sending money through a money transfer company or by putting money on a gift card and then giving them the number on the back. Some will send you a check (that will later turn out to be fake), tell you to deposit it, and then send them money.

What You Can Do to Avoid a Scam. Don't give your personal or financial information in response to a request that you didn't expect. Legitimate organizations won't call, email, or text to ask for your personal information, like your Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers. If you get an email or text message from a company you do business with and you think it's real, it's still best not to click on any links. Instead, contact them using a website you know is trustworthy. Or look up their phone number. Don't call a number they gave you or the number from your caller ID.

Resist the pressure to act immediately. Legitimate businesses will give you time to make a decision. Anyone who pressures you to pay or give them your personal information is a scammer.

Know how scammers tell you to pay. Never pay someone who insists you pay with a gift card or by using a money transfer service. And never deposit a check and send money back to someone.

Stop and talk to someone you trust. Before you do anything else, tell someone — a friend, a family member, a neighbor — what happened. Talking about it could help you realize it's a scam. If you've experienced a con, scam, or fraud scheme, there are three major things you can do to fight back.

1. Stop thieves in their tracks

- Get a copy of your credit report from all three of the credit reporting agencies and read them thoroughly for signs that thieves have been assuming debt under your name.
- If there are accounts, transactions, or inquiries that you do not recognize, write a letter explaining such to the credit-reporting agency and ask that it be taken off your credit file. This forces the credit-reporting agency to investigate the entry. Send this request certified mail/return receipt requested.

*Equifax – www.equifax.com/credit-information/identity-theft 1-800-525-6285 P.O. Box 105069, Atlanta, GA 30348

*Experian – www.experian.com/identity_fraud/index.html 1-888-397-3742 P.O. Box 9554, Allen, TX 75013

*TransUnion – www.transunion.com/corporate/personal/fraudIdentityTheft.page 1-800-680-7289 (Fraud Victim Assistance Division) P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790

- Order a fraud alert from one of the three credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, Trans Union). That credit-reporting agency will inform the other two.
- Contact your creditors and ask to speak to the Fraud Department. Ask that your accounts be closed or given new account numbers. Again, confirm this request in writing and send it certified mail/return receipt requested.
- Consider putting a credit freeze on all three of your credit files at the credit reporting agencies.

2. Report the crime

- Go to www.ftc.gov/idtheft or call 877-438-4338 or TDD (202) 326-2502 to file a report with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
 - *Print out or request an Identity Theft Affidavit.
 - *Complete it and save it somewhere safe in your home.
- Contact the Fircrest Police Department. Have copies of accounts statements, credit reports or other related documents to serve as evidence.
 - *Ask for a copy of the completed police report for your records.
- Police reports and Identity Theft Affidavits are often the strongest evidence you can provide in order to get your money back from any criminal activity recorded using your identity.

By continuing to work together we can continue to keep Fircrest the wonderful place it has always been to live, work and play.

Chief John Cheesman

Serving the Community Since 1925

Fircrest Parks & Recreation

New Reader Board

The City's new electronic reader board was installed this July. With the old reader board, staff was required to visit the sign when each time a message needed to be placed or taken down. The new reader board can be programmed from a workstation in real time so messages can be updated and removed efficiently without traveling to the sign every time. You can find information on upcoming programs posted weekly on the reader board as well as the City's website at www.cityoffircrest.net.

Whittier Park Clean up

Staff and community members continue to partner with our friends at Pierce Conservation District and the Tahoma Audubon society for park stewardship work at both Whittier Park and Thelma Gilmur Park. To find out more information on how to get involved with Whittier Park you can visit the Pierce Conservation District Website at <https://www.pierced.org/497/Volunteer-Opportunities>. The next Whittier Park Habitat Stewardship work party is scheduled for September 3.

Community Center Programs

Join us for a new program tailored to older adults in the Roy H Murphy Community Center. Senior Mornings will take place in the gathering room and will include complimentary fresh brewed coffee, local rotating doughnuts, and the days newspaper. All this is made possible from a generous donation from the Edwards Family Foundation.



SENIOR MORNINGS

STARTING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 20TH

COFFEE
DOUGHNUTS
NEWSPAPERS

M, W, F 8:30AM-10:30AM
THE GATHERING ROOM

Edwards Family Aquatic Center

The Edwards Family Aquatic Center has been packed with swimmers since opening day on May 28. The Pool Staff has made adjustments throughout the summer on the check in process and the swimmer loads in the pool by bringing on additional cashiers and placing additional guards in busy areas of the pool. The office staff has also created a wait list for times when the pool reaches capacity. The pool has over 30 staff members and safety is our number one priority. Recreation staff continues to work with lifeguards and other pool employees to prepare for anything, including closely monitoring pool capacity and enforcing rules for swimmers in the pool. Our two-week swim lessons have been at capacity each session with our last session of the summer ending August 19. We will continue to evaluate pool operation and are taking the information that we are gaining and then implementing new and improved processes for next year. The Edwards Family Aquatic Center Pool is open through September 5th, 2022.



CONCERT, PICNIC & MARKET
@ FIRCREST PARK

THURSDAYS
AUGUST 11 & AUGUST 25

VENDORS: 5-8:30 CONCERT: 6-7:30



Wednesday, August 31
6:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

Espresso Yourself
1009 Regents Blvd

Join your neighbors and representatives from
the Fircrest Police Department
for coffee and conversation.

No agenda or speeches, just a chance
to ask questions, voice concerns, and get to
know the Police Chief and some of the
officers who patrol your neighborhood.



Espresso Yourself and owner Bryce Kalland will provide
free drip coffee for those in attendance.

We appreciate Bryce and his staff for their
ongoing support of our community.

Building Relationships... One Cup at a Time

Join us! City Council Meetings are held the 2nd & 4th Tuesday's of the month at 7:00 pm, Council Study Sessions are the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00 pm, & Planning Commission Meetings are the 1st Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm.