

# City of Fircrest Town Topics

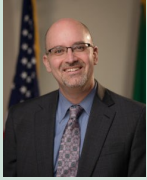
February 2023

## CITY COUNCIL

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



### City Council Spotlight—Hunter T. George



As we hit our stride in 2023 I'd like to share news about important developments that will be happening behind the scenes in Fircrest this year.

**New leadership:** we are seeking a city manager to succeed Scott Pingel, who took a career-enhancing opportunity with a larger city last year; and we are recruiting our next police chief to succeed the legendary John Cheesman, who is retiring after 40 years of service to our city. Watch for announcements about how you can participate in the vetting processes.

**Public safety:** the City Council boosted the Police Department budget this year so that we can hire a 10<sup>th</sup> police officer. It's quite challenging to provide 24/7 coverage with 9 officers, and while we have had the goal of adding a position for years we had to wait to make sure our operating budget could sustain it. We feel we have finally reached that point.

Also, we recently used some of our federal COVID-relief funds to provide retention incentives to our police officers, and a signing bonus to new officers. It's a hyper competitive labor market in law enforcement, and we want to make sure our officers feel valued.

**Parks and Recreation:** With financial assistance from state grants, we plan to make major improvements to some amenities at Fircrest Park: resurfacing the tennis courts and making upgrades to the sports field's turf and lighting. We also need to replace the old storage garage next to the playground. These aren't sexy projects that result in ribbon-cutting ceremonies – but they are necessary maintenance needs that improve park usage and prolong the life of our assets.

Another park project that I am particularly excited about is working with the community to update the Whittier Park master plan. We weren't able to get to this in 2022, so it carries over to our 2023 work plan. Stay tuned for announcements about how to participate.

**New staff members:** Besides a new city manager and police chief, we have hired friendly new faces in every department in recent months. I hope you get a chance to meet them all!

### Public Works

#### Utility Rate Increase

This is a friendly reminder that on November 22, 2022 the City Council adopted a 2% water, sewer, and storm drain rate increases. The rate adjustment will assist in making the utilities sustainable, support the operation and maintenance of the utilities and provide funding for capital improvements to repair and replace existing worn and outdated infrastructure. The new rates will be effective 2/1/2023 and you will notice the increase on your April 2023 utility bill.



#### What can you expect?

The water base (ready to serve charge) will increase \$0.75/bi-monthly billing cycle

Current Bi-Monthly Billing Rate \$37.74

New Bi-Monthly Billing Rate \$38.49

Water usage tiers will increase as follows:

Tier 1: 1 – 1,000 from \$0.0111 to \$0.0113 /cf (cubic feet)

Tier 2: 1,001 – 4,000 from \$0.0166 to \$0.0169 /cf

Tier 3: 4,001+ from \$0.0282 to \$0.0288 /cf

Sewer Base fee will increase \$1.67 (\$83.40 to \$85.07)

Sewer Treatment will increase \$1.36 (\$67.80 to \$69.16)

Storm Drain fee will increase \$0.69 (\$34.50 to \$35.19)

All associated rate schedules can be found in Fircrest Municipal Code 21.04, 20.12, and 20.16. For more information, please call the Public Works Department at 253-564-8900.

# Serving the Community Since 1925

## Fircrest Parks and Recreation

### 2023 Community Events

Daddy Daughter Dance	February 10
Medallion Madness	March 17
Easter Egg Hunt	April 8
Mother and Son Dance	May 5
Community-Wide Yard Sale	June 17
Strawberry Festival	June 25
Rod Run & Picnic	July 2
Fircrest FUN DAYS	July 21-22
Furry 4K	July 22
Concert, Market & Picnic	August 10 & August 24
Haunted Trails	October 19
FIRfest	November 4
Annual Tree Lighting	December 3
Lights of Fircrest	December 2023

### New Winter Classes for Adults

- Introduction to Yin Yoga + Meditation Thursdays
- Healthy Eating on a Budget

### Programs for Kids

- Pee Wee Indoor Soccer (Pre-K, Ages 4 & 5)
- Creative Movement Ballet (Ages 3-6)

### New Parks & Recreation ID/Membership Cards

The Parks & Recreation Staff are preparing to implement photo ID/Membership Cards. We are encouraging all Fircrest Residents to get an ID/Membership card this winter. Due to the high volume of visitors to the pool last season, we are implementing an express check-in station where Fircrest Resident season pass holders with active membership cards will be able to check in more efficiently and accurately by scanning their individual cards through a separate express entrance. Please give us a call or visit our webpage to discover how to get your Parks & Recreation ID/Membership Card!



Visit our Parks & Recreation webpage for up-to-date information on all of our programs, events, and facility rentals. <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/government/parks-and-recreation/>

Roy H. Murphy Community Center Phone: 253-564-8177

**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.**



# Serving the Community Since 1925

## Planning and Building

### Code Compliance

We now have a code compliance form on our website. This new submission form makes it easier for our community members to report a concern without having to download forms and find email addresses. Whether your concern is an unkept yard, junk vehicles, or unpermitted construction, you may now report violations with a few clicks of a mouse. Keep in mind that we work with our community to resolve the matter at the lowest level possible and our goal is compliance, not fees and legal action. Most concerns take time to resolve as we work through our department processes. You may visit <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/report-a-problem/> for more information.

### Inspections

Much like the Code Compliance form, you or your contractor can now schedule your permit inspection online. Previously, the only option to schedule an inspection was to call and leave a voicemail. We conduct inspections on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10 am and 2 pm. For more information visit: <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/inspections/>

### Home Improvement Projects

If you plan to do any repairs or improvements to your home, there is a good chance a permit is needed. 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 completed.

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 licensed contractors. Construction permits would still be needed in most cases to ensure all work meets the minimum standards in the International Residential Code.

Registered contractors may be hired to complete the work. They must maintain a surety bond, have liability insurance, have a Washington business license, and a City of Fircrest business license, which helps protect the property owner.

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. Find out more information about hiring a contractor at [ProtectMyHome.net](http://ProtectMyHome.net).

Discussions with City staff are free – email [permits@cityoffircrest.net](mailto:permits@cityoffircrest.net), call 253-564-8902, or stop by for a visit



# Serving the Community Since 1925

## Police

Many auto thefts are crimes of "opportunity". Leaving the keys in your car (even a "hidden" spare key) greatly increases your chances of having your car stolen. More than two thirds of all auto thefts occur at night. An expert auto thief can break into and steal a car in less than a minute. An unoccupied car, with its engine running, can be taken in seconds. Pierce County has the second-highest number of reported vehicle thefts in the state. In 2022, more than 8,600 vehicles have been stolen in Pierce County. The City of Fircrest alone accounted for 41 of those thefts. More than double the amount of 2021 (18). With the sharp rise of motor vehicle thefts in the area, we hope these tips will be of use to our Fircrest residents.

### How to Protect Your Car

- Don't leave your keys in your car.
- Don't leave valuables and packages in your car.
- Close your windows and lock your doors whenever you leave your car.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Keep your car in a garage if you have one.
- Use an anti-theft devices such as The Club whenever you leave your car.
- When parking your car, turn your wheels toward the curb to make it more difficult for a thief to "tow" your car.
- Use your emergency brake when you park.
- Immediately report any suspicious activity by calling (911).

### When You Are in Your Car

- Keep your doors and windows locked, no matter how short the distance or how safe you feel in the neighborhood.
- When you're coming to a stop, leave enough space to maneuver around other cars. If you sense trouble, this will allow you the room needed to get away.
- If a suspicious-looking person approaches your car, drive away carefully.
- Don't stop to assist a stranger whose car has broken down. Instead, help by driving to the nearest phone or using your cell phone to call the police for help.

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. By working together, we will keep Fircrest the wonderful place it has always been.

Chief John Cheesman



## Small Business Spotlight: SPRING LAKE CAFE

Spring Lake Café is a small family-owned restaurant located in the heart of Fircrest at 616 Regents Blvd. Spring Lake was originally opened in 2002 until 2007 when Scott Clement decided to pursue his culinary career endeavors elsewhere. Although things were doing well, his dream remained in Fircrest where his grandparents and parents had lived their entire lives. In March 2011 he bought the café again with his other half Ivy Lee. Ivy had previously worked at Viafore's Deli and loved being able to join the Fircrest community again, even though she wasn't originally from the city. Together they have created a homey café where neighbors meet. They want to thank the Fircrest community for supporting them through the pandemic, without it they would not have been able to keep their doors open. Chicken Fried Steak, Homemade soups, or the Prime Rib dinner that comes with soup/salad and dessert for only \$25 are all favorites from the small business. The café will be celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Follow them on Facebook for any updates, and the nightly dinner specials. You can also catch Scott and Ivy serving their homemade clam chowder at Fircrest National Night Out each year.

Hours:

8am-2pm Mon & Tues

8am-7pm Wed-Fri

7am-2pm Sat & Sun

