



City of Leavenworth

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City Council

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Anne Hessburg – *Mayor Pro Tem*
Zeke Reister
City Administrator - *Vacant*

April 3, 2020

Community Members,

I am going to do something completely different, (some would say it is even totally out of character), and address what the City is actually doing BESIDES trying to manage the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on our community. Hard to believe, but there are actually some things still happening. The biggest one is our Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade. This \$9+ million dollar project will be the largest project that the City has ever undertaken in terms of dollars spent. We held our preconstruction conference yesterday afternoon, and it appears that we will be moving forward. We were concerned what impact the coronavirus pandemic might have on the contractor, both in their ability to have the workforce and subcontractors in place, but just importantly to have all their material suppliers able to deliver what they will need in a timely matter. I was told that the contractor had spoken with each and every one of their suppliers and were given assurance that they would be able to meet the schedule, as long as they could get a letter from the City that this was an essential project. (Which we will gladly do, since this project is being done to satisfy Department of Ecology requirements that we remove phosphorous from our discharge into the river).

Along with the treatment plant, we are also planning to replace a major collector line for the sewer system. This runs from the base of 8th Street by the Post Hotel, along the old Main Street, and down to the sewer plant. This travels through a number of privately held parcels, so cleaning up easements and getting all of our ducks in a row to proceed has taken a good portion of the last year. And as I write this note, the last of those agreements are being filed with the County and we will be moving toward bidding out that project as well. Fun stuff, huh? Maybe not fun, but important.

Another item that we are involved with has to do with the County's decision to change the designation of the Riverstone Ranch Orchard, (formerly part of Prey's Orchard and along the river across from Prey's Fruit Barn), from a designation of Commercial Agriculture to Rural Residential 2.5. This could ultimately lead to as many as 100 homes being built in that 63 acre area. We believe that this is a classic example of sprawl, and something that the State was seeking to avoid when it put the Growth Management Act into practice in 1990. Starting with a letter of opposition sent by my predecessor, Cheri Farivar, last November, we have made several appeals to halt this. After it went through anyway, we drafted a letter asking the State Department of Commerce, which oversees the Growth Management Act and its implementation, to appeal this action by the County to the Growth Management Hearings Board. This letter was sent with the blessings of the Council, who voted unanimously to support this move. Lilith Vespier, our Development Services Manager, and I held a call with several members of the Department of Commerce's Growth Management Division, and were given valuable input as we consider our next steps. We feel that, as one of the entities that has to live by, and abide by, the Growth Management Act, we should expect the same from all jurisdictions in our county, as well as the County itself. We will be discussing next steps with the Council, but I feel this is a big enough issue with big enough impacts on the City, that we should appeal this decision to the Growth Management Hearings Board if we can't get the County to reconsider. Stay tuned.

But while you stay tuned, stay safe!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor

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