



City of Leavenworth

700 Highway 2 / Post Office Box 287
Leavenworth, Washington 98826
(509) 548-5275 / Fax: (509) 548-6429
Web: www.cityofleavenworth.com

City Council
Carl J. Florea - *Mayor*
Carolyn Wilson
Mia Bretz
Sharon Waters
Clint Strand
Jason Lundgren
Anne Hessburg – *Mayor Pro Tem*
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City Administrator - *Vacant*

April 22, 2020

Community Members,

We hear it over and over again. I say it over and over again. I have written it over and over again. “Hang in there.” Yes, it is true. We do, during these difficult and very trying times need to “hang in there”. But I also understand that those are easy words to say, but not always easy words to live. Hanging in there can, at times, feel like we are hanging from our necks. Sometimes hanging in there feels like it is not enough. Sometimes hanging in there feels so empty, so hollow. Sometimes nothing brings much hope or promise, and we don’t know how much longer we can “hang....”

All of those feelings are certainly understandable. And the fact that they won’t go away, also understandable. There are going to be days, and times, for a lot of us, that are so discouraging, so empty. We talk about “the light at the end of the tunnel”. But what if that tunnel is long enough, dark enough, that you cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel? You are just walking blindly along with no light visible. Are we really sure that there is light ahead?

I’ll tell you something that might illustrate why I do believe, even against all visuals to the contrary, that there is light ahead, that we will thrive again, even if not in the same way or form that we have been accustomed to. I have, for many years, enjoyed raising a vegetable garden. There is something about it that is so nurturing, and keeps me in touch with the depths of mystery that pervades life. Because, even though I have done this for years, each spring I plant my seeds as a “skeptical” gardener. Because, even while I am working to prepare the soil, and am carefully planting the seeds, (some so tiny I can barely see them!), I really KNOW that there is NO way that those little, lifeless, dry things are ever going to be able to sprout and grow and actually produce things that I will be able to eat and enjoy! It really can’t happen! Because if it did happen, those little white beans that I plant, that grow up the poles and over the top and hang back down again – all of that material would surely deplete my soil and leave my garden area as nothing but a deep depression in my yard. You can’t harvest that much stuff out for years and years and not see a noticeable difference, can you?

Each spring, after planting those dead seeds, I wait, but not to see them sprout, cause I still don’t believe they can do that. I wait, and then I dig up a few, and they might be kind of swollen at that point. And eventually, they do sprout, they do grow. And once again, I am amazed and carried away because it cannot be! There is no way! And yet it happens! Every year it happens! (Sure, some years are better than others, but there never has been a year when absolutely nothing sprung forth). The skeptical gardener is disproved again. Disproved by the amazing mystery that is life. Life that continually renews and restores itself from what appears dead and dry and absolutely lifeless. Hope springs from that... (Even for a diehard skeptic like me, who has maintained my skepticism, even though disproven annually - I guess I just like surprises, and mysteries...)

When we say that we will get through this together, it does not mean it will all look the same when we do. It does not mean that there will not be changes. Some lives may take a drastic turn, some may look close to the same, but all will be changed by having gone through this. That is a given. And we will write the future together. That future that we can’t yet imagine fully. It will come, and we will welcome it. Even if we are skeptics today.... Take care of yourselves and one another!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor

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cflorea@cityofleavenworth.com