

WINTER 2023. VOL 5. ISSUE NO. 9.

CITY SCENE

City of Columbia City

Winter Updates

BY MAYOR RYAN L. DANIEL

I am grateful to the residents for allowing me another four years to lead and guide our community's future. We have a lot of really great projects in the works including Eagle Park Phase 1, the Blue River Trail Extension to CCHS, and numerous utility improvement projects. You should see all of these projects break ground in 2024, with most of them being completed. Our community continues to move forward due to so many residents, businesses, and nonprofits that have joined together to be better today than we were yesterday.

As we head into the winter months, I want to encourage



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Winter Updates

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BY MAYOR RYAN DANIEL



you to take a look at the snow removal guidelines. Our Street Department strives to ensure safe streets no matter the weather. When the snow hits, we are prepared to clear the streets in a professional and efficient manner. Sometimes, however, this means that snow is pushed into driveways or lands on sidewalks. Please know that our staff does not do this on purpose, but instead is working to ensure the streets are cleared of snow and ice. As a reminder, it is against the law to plow, blow, or push snow back into the street. Also keep in mind that we plow City streets first before the alleyways.

Finally, from Thanksgiving and Christmas to Hanukkah and New Years, I want to wish you all very happy holidays. This is my favorite season of the year. I love the lights, the family festivities, the special treats, and the warmth the season brings. I urge you to check out Santa's House in downtown, Christmas around the Courthouse, and our CC Fire Department's over 100-year tradition on Christmas Eve night. These and many other events happen throughout this festive season, which continue to make our community a special place to live. I wish you the merriest holiday season and a fantastic 2024!

Until Next Time...

Trash Reminders

ASHLEY BUCKLES, MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Here are some reminders to ensure that trash pickup runs smoothly for City residents.



- Per our contract with Waste Management, each household may have one trash tote. The lid should be completely closed, and all trash needs to fit inside the tote. No trash may be set outside of the tote, except for blue trash bags purchased at the Utilities Office in City Hall.
- Please do not set your tote behind a parked car; the arms on the garbage truck are unable to reach around cars.
- Trash should be set near the curb by 6:00am on your designated trash day to ensure pickup. Per our contract, Waste Management will only pass each house once.
- Per City ordinance, "solid waste disposal containers and recycling containers intended for collection shall be placed by the owner or occupant of the unit at the collection point no earlier than 7:00 p.m. of the day proceeding the collection. Such containers shall be removed from the collection point after collection by 7:00 p.m. on the day of collection."

Something for Everyone

BY CHIP HILL, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Downtown Columbia City's eateries have borne new life into downtown. From the direct revitalization of downtown restaurants, to staples of Columbia City, each one provides something to the rebirth of Downtown Columbia City. What stands out about eateries around Columbia City is the diversity of flavors and culinary options. Every taste and every dietary restriction can be met with the utmost quality.

Speaking of a restaurant which caters to special dietary needs, Moo-Over bridges the gap between quality standard desserts and treats and consumers who have specific dietary needs and restrictions. If you head down Van Buren Street you'll find The Nook, one of the staples of downtown and a great spot for lunch from hot dogs to amazing chili. Continuing west along Van Buren, the newest addition to downtown is Kitchen and Company - a perfect place for a wide range of possible customers; Kitchen and Co. can do it all. Just a few more blocks down, The Junction Café has taken a new home and continues to serve as a neighborhood café and store where food, friends, and goods meet. Moving towards the courthouse square, Pickles Café provides the homey, home-cooked atmosphere hungry guests want. Near Ohki Alley, both Chapman's and Tokyo provide not only great views of Ohki Alley, but amazing food. Chapman's is great for anyone in the mood for typical bar grub while Tokyo has added a new element to the cuisine of downtown; from Bento Boxes to any sushi you can imagine, it's the best place for Asian dining downtown has to offer. Looking at what's available on Main Street and surrounding downtown, one can visit Old World Café; from new daily specials to made-to-order desserts, Old World Café has it all. In the mood for steak, surf & turf, or anything else? Look no further than The Square. Home to the "\$10 Burger", you can find everything from American cuisine to different daily specials. Feeling like Mexican food? Señor Fajitas is home to the best authentic Mexican food downtown Columbia City has to offer. If seafood is more your thing, swing by the 11th Frame and indulge in amazing fish as well as an amazing atmosphere. Just down the street is Big G's café with a tasty breakfast and filling lunches for any empty stomach.

The rebirth of downtown Columbia City has sparked new eateries within, while maintaining the small-town feel and benefits of being nestled right here, in Columbia City.



The Square



Moo Over

The History of Columbia City's Fire Department

BY TOM LARUE, FIRE CHIEF

The Columbia City Fire Department was established in 1877, and its first fire run was in June of that year. What we know as Columbia City was then just a community and the need for fire protection was clearly identified. A fire department being established before its city is incorporated means that we could also be known as FDCC or Fire Department Columbia City much like FDNY (fire department before the city).

Back during this era, horses were used for transportation and water mains were made of hollow wooden pipes, if they were even available. When a fire would break out, they would dig down to the water main, drill a hole and the dirt hole would fill with water. When they were done, they would plug the hole in the main with a wooden plug (today hydrants are still called plugs).

It was around this time (late 1870's – early 1880's) that our fire department started the annual Christmas Eve candy/orange giveaway that we still do today at the Courthouse from 6-8pm on Christmas Eve. What most people probably don't realize is that at that time sugar and citrus were very expensive and hard to come by. We received a letter from an elderly woman years ago that said when she was a child, they would head to Columbia City early Christmas Eve morning in a covered wagon. They would arrive to get their candy and orange and head back to Warsaw. They would get back to Warsaw early Christmas morning and the candy and orange were their Christmas gifts.

In the early 1900's Columbia City had their first full-time firefighters. These firefighters responded all over the county as most areas were without fire protection. These few brave souls had some time on their hands and would cover the dispatch radio for the police. After decades of this practice, they became dispatchers that drove the firetrucks. After a large downtown fire in the early 1990's, it was recognized that we really needed our firefighters to be dedicated firefighters again. March 18th, 1995, our renewed full-time fire staff was hired with 3 firefighters.

Today our department is still a combination department with 14 full-time and approximately 25 volunteer firefighters. We respond to approximately 800 emergency calls annually. Besides providing all expected fire department functions we are also a Certified BLS (Basic Life Support) ambulance service.

In 2027 our department will celebrate 150 years of service; I encourage everyone to dig into this city's history and let's see what makes us unique from other communities!

“Back during this era, horses were used for transportation and water mains were made of hollow wooden pipes, if they were even available. When a fire would break out, they would dig down to the water main, drill a hole and the dirt hole would fill with water.”



New Parks Office



Park Updates

BY MATT HEIDEN, PARKS SUPERINTENDENT

The Parks Department is very excited to be moving into 400 N. Whitley Street. This location was the former Community Foundation building. We hope to be moved in by the first of November.

We have partnered with one of CCHS's art classes to come out and paint some concrete balls. We have made these for parking deterrents and to have more of a natural look. We thought that this would be a great chance to showcase some of our young talent. The art class will start painting 5 of the concrete balls. They hope to have them finished before colder weather comes our way.

We are restarting the process for the first phase of Eagle Park. The first phase consists of sidewalks, an inground concrete skate park, a three-bay trellis swing set, and four new pickleball courts. This will be a great recreational area once the first phase is complete.

The Parks and Recreation Department will be ready to open Eagle Ice Rink on December 2nd. The synthetic ice rink will be open until February 25th with the following hours:

Fridays 4:00pm-8:00pm
Saturdays 1:00pm-7:00pm
Sundays 1:00pm-5:00pm

Closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day

Christmas Break Hours (December 20th-January 2nd)
Monday-Friday 1:00pm-7:00pm
Saturdays 1:00pm-7:00pm
Sundays 1:00pm-5:00pm

The rink is located next to the aquatics center. The cost of using the rink is \$5/person and includes the rental of the skates.

The annual Father/Daughter Dance will be coming up on February 9th and 10th. Tickets go on sale in the park office, located at 400 N. Whitley Street, on January 3rd. The cost for a ticket will be \$25.00, and the event will once again be held at the Whitley County 4-H Center. We will be selling a total of 800 tickets, and they usually sell out quickly.

Online baseball and softball registration for 2024 will begin on January 29th. Registration in our Park Office will begin on February 13th. If you have questions regarding summer baseball and softball, please visit our website at www.columbiacityparks.us.



Father/Daughter Dance



Eagle Ice Rink

Meet Mark Ellis

BY ASHLEY BUCKLES, MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Mark Ellis is a man who has left his mark on Columbia City in more ways than one. From serving the Columbia City Park Board for over a decade to helping design and build the trails in the woods at Morsches Park, Mark is a man of many talents. With exciting park growth on the horizon, he continues to look to the future and how he can serve Columbia City.

Mark's roots didn't start in Columbia City, but instead in Mishawaka. He then moved to Warsaw in 1990 to work at Biomet. In 1995, with the intention of furthering his career, Mark left Biomet and started working at Micropulse. Shortly after, in 1998, he moved to Columbia City, along with his wife, Shawn, and daughter, Morgan. Two years later, his son, Trevor, was born. Mark currently works at Voss Automotive in Fort Wayne as a toolmaker.

A connection Mark had formed at Micropulse proved to impact him for the next several years. Dan Stauffer, Mark's former Micropulse colleague, approached him in 1999 about building a mountain bike trail in Morsches Park. Mark agreed to take on this tremendous project and they started plotting out the trail for several months. With their design in mind, they brought their idea to the park director, and he agreed that the trails could be built in the woods since they weren't being used for any other purpose. Over the next 3-5 years, Dan, Mark, and several volunteers built and rebuilt sections of the trail until they had approximately 7 miles completed. The trails have been a huge asset to our city, being used by not only mountain bikers, but also hikers, trail runners, and for cross country running events.

Mark's family has been members of New Hope Wesleyan Church since 1998 and he has served in multiple capacities within the church, mostly as the sound tech from 1998 to 2013. His wife, Shawn, is the executive director of Mission 25, right here in Columbia City.

His time on the park board has included several great achievements. The board helped guide the decision-making process for the splash pad in Morsches Park and the Russel and Evelyn Fahl Aquatic Center. Currently, they are working on their biggest project yet – Eagle Park. Despite being a bit overwhelming, Mark knows Eagle Park will be a great addition to the community.

Mark shared the greatest lesson he's learned in life, "Life is indeed short. It's also delicate and precious so be kind to others. No matter what we are going through, there is someone else going through something worse. Slow down too. Life isn't about how fast you get there, it's about the journey." We are thankful for the impact Mark has had on Columbia City and will continue to have for years to come.



MONTHLY CITY MEETINGS

<i>1st Monday of the Month</i>	Col. City Plan Commission 7:00pm Whitley County Government Center
<i>1st Tuesday of the Month</i>	Col. City Arts Commission 5:00pm Council Chambers City Hall
<i>1st Tuesday of the Month</i>	Board of Zoning Appeals 7:00pm Whitley County Government Center
<i>2nd Tuesday of the Month</i>	Redevelopment Commission Noon Council Chambers City Hall
<i>2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the Month</i>	Board of Works 5:00pm Council Chambers City Hall
<i>2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the Month</i>	City Council 6:00pm Council Chambers City Hall
<i>3rd Tuesday of the Month</i>	Housing Authority 5:00pm Council Chambers City Hall
<i>3rd Tuesday of the Month</i>	Tree Board 5:30pm Police Training Room City Hall
<i>4th Monday of the Month</i>	Park Board 6:00pm Council Chambers City Hall

PLEASE CHECK MONTHLY CALENDAR ON THE CITY'S FACEBOOK PAGE FOR ANY CHANGES