

SPRING 2024. VOL 5. ISSUE NO. 10.

CITY SCENE

City of Columbia City

Investing in Ourselves

BY MAYOR RYAN L. DANIEL

For those of you who have been around a while, you know that I am always focused on our residents' quality of life. The projects, programs, and investments we make are focused on how to make Columbia City better today than it was yesterday. These choices are made for not only current residents, but also future residents of our city. The Common Council, Clerk-Treasurer Coyle, and I continue working hard to be good stewards of the resources we are given, while also ensuring that our community is attractive, welcoming, and growing.

This year is going to be full of projects that are aimed at bettering the quality of life for residents. I'm so excited that we are finally moving forward on projects that have been on the chalkboard for some time. This starts with the first phase of Eagle Park (the former CCHS property on North Street and N Whitley Street). As you may know, this project was shelved for a year due to a higher-than-expected price tag during last year's construction bidding process. After the new bids were received and recently awarded, I'm happy to say that construction will soon be taking place on a new skatepark, pickleball courts, and a swing structure. Some additional parking lot work and some sidewalks will also be constructed. We did have to down-scale the project a little bit, but I am happy that these major thematic elements are able to be constructed for the community. A little under half of this project was funded by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources through the Land and Water Conservation program.



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Investing in Ourselves

From Page 1

BY MAYOR RYAN DANIEL



The second major project this year will be the second phase of the Westgate Subdivision Reconstruction Project. This project will overhaul Lawrence Street and Buddale Drive, their infrastructure, and stormwater management. As I've mentioned in the past, these improvements should have been provided to these residents when the area was annexed into the City over 30 years ago. Yet, we are happy to make this investment in their neighborhood, making it walkable and beautifying it for many years to come. Over half of this project was funded by the Community Crossing Matching Grant Program from the Indiana Department of Transportation.

The third major project this year will be the extension of the Blue River Trail (BRT). The project will construct a trail extension connecting a two-block stretch from Main Street to Vine Street, as well as extending the trail from South Line Street to the new Columbia City High School campus. This trail will (finally) provide a safe and enjoyable pathway for many students to walk or bike to CCHS, ISMS, or Little Turtle Elementary. This project has been in the works for years and will create safe crossings over the railroad tracks, State Road 205 (Radio Road), and the Blue River. We appreciate the generous support of many individuals, as well as the Next Level Trails program which is funding over half of this project.

So, as you can see, we are going to have a BIG year of investing in ourselves. All three of these projects bring your tax dollars back from the State and Federal Governments, investing in making our community better today than it was yesterday. Of course, this doesn't account for so many other projects that are taking place by organizations, volunteer groups, and businesses. I'm thankful to have a community that is continually thinking about the future and I'm proud to partner with so many of you to improve our great city. Let's keep investing in ourselves and building a future together!

One last note, please sign up for the Rave Notification System below. It is an easy way to stay up with meetings, events, and community emergencies, without the need for social media!

Until Next Time...

Rave Notification System

ASHLEY BUCKLES, MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



Public officials in Columbia City are excited to announce that notifications via RAVE are now available to all our residents. RAVE is a free service that allows individuals to sign up for notifications sent from the City of Columbia City. With the implementation of RAVE, residents can be informed regarding public meetings, special events, sports sign-ups, utility disconnect days, emergencies, and much more. RAVE allows residents to be alerted via text, email, or voice message about topics they are interested in, while opting out of topics that are not of interest. Once an account is created, these selections can be changed at any time.

Columbia City residents can sign up for notifications of interest for free at <https://shorturl.at/fiMR5>. Once registered, they will receive timely alerts straight to their phone or email. Not only will RAVE provide alerts regarding potentially lifesaving actions or emergencies, but it will also enable all residents to "be in the know" regarding what is happening right here in Columbia City. The plethora of opt-in choices is vast and allows all residents to be notified about what topics interest them.

 <https://shorturl.at/fiMR5>

2024 Limb Pickup Program

BY KELLY CEARBAUGH, STREET & SEWER SUPERINTENDENT

The City of Columbia City would like to announce that our limb pick-up program is beginning soon. This program has been initiated to dispose of limbs and branches from storm-related events and small pruning projects. Dates for this year are as follows:

April 1st
May 6th
June 3rd
July 1st
August 5th
September 3rd
October 7th

Program Guidelines:

Limbs are to be placed along the curb in front of your property. Do not place in roadway.

This is curbside pickup only! We do not pick up in alleys.

The limb-pick up program is limited to City limits only. There will be one pass only per area. Please have your limbs out and ready for pick up by 7:00 A.M. on the dates listed above so you will not be missed. The City reserves the right to refuse pick-up for those properties it considers not fitting within the guidelines of the program.

Acceptable:

- Piles that do not exceed a pickup truck size load
- Limbs and branches up to 4" in diameter
- Bushes (without roots)

Not Acceptable:

- Piles that exceed a pickup truck size load
- Brush from fence-row clearing
- Whole trees, logs and limbs cut by contractor or homeowner
- Branches left from contractor-provided tree removal
- Bushes with roots attached
- Grass clippings, leaves and garden debris
- Alley pickup
- Businesses

If you have any questions regarding the acceptability of your materials, please contact Kelly Cearbaugh, Street Superintendent at 248-5131 or 248-5115 ext. 2721



Progress and Growth

BY MIKE COOK, WPCF SUPERINTENDENT

As we head into spring, I would like to share a bit of the City's history, along with information on an upcoming project. In December of 1945, the Stream Pollution Control Board of the state of Indiana issued a final order to cease polluting streams and watercourses around the City of Columbia City and provide sewage works sufficient to correct or eliminate such pollution. Boyd E. Phelps, Inc., Engineers were employed to prepare the necessary plans, specifications, and documents for construction bids. In November of 1956, the City applied for a federal grant for the project. In September of 1958, the City authorized the engineer to proceed with construction drawings and specifications. In April and June of 1959, the City awarded construction contracts for three new lift stations and a sewage treatment facility with a design flow of one million gallons per day for a total project cost of \$1,050,000.

Today the city operates a multimillion-dollar facility with a daily maximum flow of seven million gallons per day. We started with three lift stations and now have twenty-five in operation with our newest under construction. We have since replaced the original three lift stations, two of which the city was able to get fifty years of service from. It is now time to replace the failing force mains serving the Main Street and Jefferson Street lift stations. These force mains have been in continuous service since 1959, sixty-five years after their installation, and now are having failures and the pipe will be upgraded to plastic from ductile iron. Each station will also receive a pump upgrade as well. This project will be in the East Jefferson Street and South Main Street areas, and both projects will increase the longevity and pumping capacity of both stations. We appreciate your patience during this project.

“April and June of 1959 are when the city awarded construction contracts for three new lift stations and a sewage treatment facility with a design flow of one million gallons per day for a total project cost of \$1,050,000.00.”



WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT, COLUMBIA CITY, INDIANA

PHOTO COURTESY OF JON



Spring Electrical Safety

BY SHAWN LICKEY, ELECTRIC SUPERINTENDENT

As we step into the spring season, it's crucial to ensure that our homes and workplaces are safe from electrical hazards. There are dozens of spring season electric safety tips and here are some of the best tips to keep in mind:

1. **Inspection and Maintenance:** With the changing seasons, it's wise to inspect electrical outlets, cords, and appliances for any signs of wear or damage. Loose outlets, frayed wires, or overheating appliances could pose significant risks.
2. **Outdoor Precautions:** As outdoor activities increase during the spring months, remember to exercise caution when using electrical equipment outside. Ensure that all outdoor outlets are covered and protected from rain and moisture. Avoid overloading circuits with excessive outdoor lighting or power tools. Consider utilizing power strips with surge protectors and avoid running extension cords under carpets or in areas where they can be damaged.
3. **Spring Cleaning Safety:** During spring cleaning, take care around electrical outlets and appliances. Unplug devices before cleaning them and never use water or liquid cleaners near electrical outlets or devices to prevent electrical shocks. Be very careful of outdoor electrical outlets when pressure washing siding or outdoor furniture.
4. **Child Safety Measures:** If you have children at home, install safety caps on electrical outlets to prevent accidental insertions of objects. Educate children about electrical safety to ensure they understand the dangers associated with electricity.
5. **Lighting and Energy Efficiency:** Consider upgrading to energy-efficient lighting options such as LED bulbs, which not only save energy but also generate less heat, reducing the risk of fires.
6. **Professional Assistance:** For complex electrical work or upgrades, always consult a licensed electrician. DIY electrical projects can be dangerous and might not comply with safety standards, Columbia City has several qualified electricians willing to lend you a hand.

Let's make this a safe spring!

Eagle Ice Rink

Smart Home Tech You Should Adopt

BY TERRY WHERRY, IT DIRECTOR

Adopt: Smart Lighting Systems

Smart lighting systems have proven to be both energy-efficient and convenient. They allow you to control the ambiance of your home, as well as schedule lights to go on and off. You can even change colors to match your mood.

Adopt: Smart Thermostats

Smart thermostats learn your habits. They adjust your home's temperature accordingly. They contribute significantly to energy savings. They do this by optimizing heating and cooling based on occupancy patterns.

Adopt: Smart Home Hubs

Smart home hubs are popular. They give you one place to manage all your smart devices and enable seamless communication between them. Investing in a compatible hub ensures a harmonious smart home experience.

Adopt: Smart Home Security Cameras

Smart security cameras provide real-time monitoring and remote access. They also enhance the safety of your home. Look for cameras with features like motion detection, two-way audio, and cloud storage.

Things to avoid:

- Cheap Unbranded Smart Devices
- Overcomplicated Security Systems
- Ignoring Privacy Concerns
- Impulse Buying Without Research

Provided by Preferred IT



Our Newest Councilwoman: Leslee Robinson

BY ASHLEY BUCKLES, MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

The City of Columbia City's Common Council started off 2024 with a new face: Leslee Robinson. While Leslee may be new to the Common Council, she isn't new to Columbia City and her roots run deep within our small city. Her passion for our city continues to grow and she is eager to make an impact as a council member.

Leslee grew up in Columbia City and one of her goals is for not only her own family, but for other families to choose to stay in Columbia City too. She loves our city and believes in progression while also keeping our "small city" feel. Some of the reasons she loves Columbia City is the family-focused community, our City events, and our parks. She also loves how our community rallies together for families in need, which shows how much our residents truly care.

As a former young, single mother, Leslee's greatest accomplishment in life was raising her daughter on her own and buying a house at the age of 21. She was passionate about breaking the "single mom" stigma and proved that she was a force to be reckoned with early on. She is currently married to her husband, Josh, and she has three children and two stepchildren. Some of her favorite pastimes are camping, watching her son drag race, and watching her other children at sporting events. Leslee is also the Director of Sales and Customer Service (Internal Accounts) at Oberlin Marketing. She loves helping people, so they can focus on their health instead of worrying about their health care benefits.

When asked what her most memorable moment was, Leslee said it was receiving her bachelor's degree in business administration with a human resources concentration from Indiana Tech in 2019. Despite taking several years and a lot of dedication to complete, while working full-time and raising a family, her degree has paid off and helps her daily in her career when dealing with the CEO, CFOs, and HR managers. Leslee also shared that her dad is the most influential person in her life. He has always been a hard worker and told her to dream big, never fear failure, be compassionate, and work hard. Finally, Leslee said the biggest lesson she's learned in life is to "treat others the way you want to be treated".

The City of Columbia City is excited to have Leslee as part of our Common Council and looks forward to working with her for the next four years. Leslee serves the Northeast District and can be contacted at lrobinson@columbiacity.net.



MONTHLY CITY MEETINGS

1st Monday of the Month

Plan Commission | 7:00pm
Whitley County Government Center

1st Tuesday of the Month

Arts Commission | 5:00pm
Council Chambers | City Hall

1st Tuesday of the Month

Board of Zoning Appeals | 7:00pm
Whitley County Government Center

2nd Tuesday of the Month

Redevelopment Commission | Noon
Council Chambers | City Hall

2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the Month

Board of Works | 5:00pm
Council Chambers | City Hall

2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the Month

Common Council | 6:00pm
Council Chambers | City Hall

3rd Tuesday of the Month

Housing Authority | 5:00pm
Council Chambers | City Hall

3rd Tuesday of the Month

Tree Board | 6:00pm
Council Chambers | City Hall

4th Monday of the Month

Park Board | 6:00pm
Park Office | Whitley Street

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