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CITY SCENE

City of Columbia City

The Role of Mayor

BY MAYOR RYAN L. DANIEL

Welcome to fall in Columbia City! As many of you may know, this is my favorite season. From spooky decor and cooler temps to the changing fall colors and tastes of apple and pumpkin, I look forward to this season every year. Granted, I may be biased as this season also includes my birthday.

For this article, I think it makes sense for me to touch on the actual role of Mayor, which I've had the honor of holding in our community for the past 15 years. This role is one that has tremendous responsibility, authority, and power. Yet, it is also one that should be approached with humility, vision, and inclusiveness. State statute lays out the responsibilities of the mayor to include: enforcing city ordinances, providing a State of the City Address to the city council once a year, appointing department heads, appointing board and commission members, suspending or removing officers or employees, preparing an annual budget, presiding over City Council and Board of Works meetings, fixing salaries of all appointed officials (subject to council reductions), recommending actions to the council in writing, calling special meetings, supervising city staff members, ensuring efficient government, filling city office vacancies, signing bonds, deeds, and contracts, approving or vetoing ordinances, and marrying residents within the county.



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The Role of Mayor

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BY MAYOR RYAN DANIEL

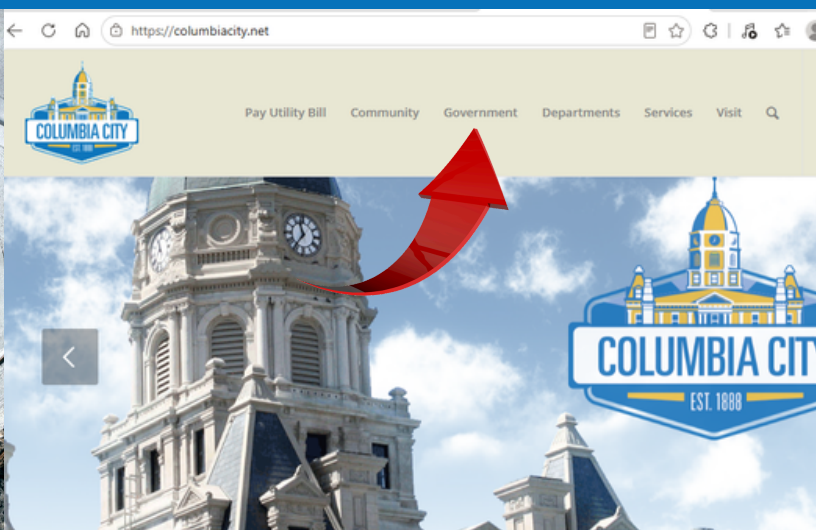
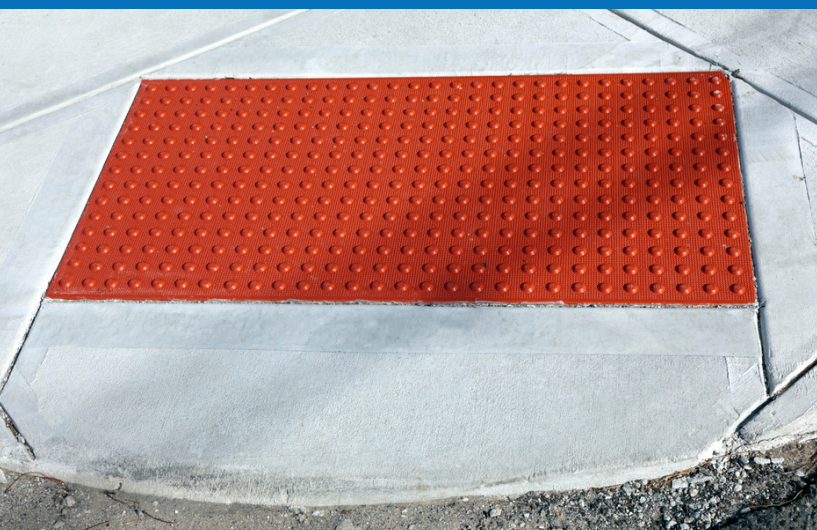
In a nutshell, my job is to run the day-to-day operations of the City of Columbia City (with the help of the Clerk-Treasurer), be responsive to residents, be a cheerleader for the community, and set the vision for the future. These four basic roles weigh heavy on me as we navigate legislative, societal, financial, and relational changes.

You see, cities are not stagnant creatures. They change, evolve, shrink, grow, age, expand, and contract. Neighborhoods change, demographics shift, the economy advances, and the needs of residents' fluctuate. Being Mayor, I work very hard to stay attuned to these changes in our community. At a time when that majority of the state is losing population, our community continues to grow and, in many ways, thrive. This isn't a pat on my back, but rather a recognition that our community is truly in this together. You – me – WE set the course for our future. Without your support, growth, and investment in our city, we would be declining like many rural communities across the state.

I take my role as your mayor seriously. It is a part of who I am. It is a true passion of mine. While it is bittersweet for me to walk away from the position in 16 months, I take great pride in the progress that we continue to make in ensuring stagnation and decline never set in for our beloved Columbia City. We have many more things to accomplish and share in the coming months, which makes me excited for our city's future. I am thankful for your partnership in progress as we build a future together!

Until Next Time....





City of Columbia City ADA Transition Plan

BY BETH IGNEY, HR DIRECTOR/ADA & TITLE VI COORDINATOR

You might have noticed the continued work on our City streets that involves new or revamped curb cuts. This work is being done in order for the City to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. With this federal law in place, we continue to update and add these curb cuts as indicated in our ADA Transition Plan, located on the City's website under the "Government" link. We depend on our citizens to let us know where there might be barriers for those citizens with disabilities, both physical and non-physical.

You can find ADA updates and the ADA map on our website at columbiacity.net under the "Government" link and then under "Ordinance and Forms." The map shows the areas where the curb cuts have been completed and where future curb cuts will be done. The ADA Updates link also indicates the areas where the Street Department will be working to make our streets accessible. You will also find a complaint form that can be used if needed.

The City is committed to ensuring that community involvement and outreach are done in a respectful and inclusive manner that will allow for diverse involvement. Public meetings, programs, and activities will provide equitable opportunities for participation. City Council meetings are open to the public. All public meetings are held in locations accessible to individuals with disabilities. Upon request, assistance and translation services may be made available to individuals in need of such services as soon as possible, but no later than 48 business hours before the scheduled meeting, by contacting Beth Igney, ADA/Title VI Coordinator, at 260-248-5109.

Stormwater vs. Wastewater

BY MIKE COOK, WATER POLLUTION CONTROL SUPERINTENDENT

Potable water consumed by people does not contain high levels of compounds that can cause sickness or disease. Water that is consumed or used and then rejected or contaminated with biological, organic, or inorganic materials becomes wastewater (sewage). Other terms used to describe wastewater include graywater and blackwater.

Graywater is made up of water from bathtubs, showers, wash basins, and clothes washers. Blackwater (wastewater) contains contaminants, including sewage from toilets and sanitary fixtures. Domestic or sanitary sewage are terms used to identify the majority of residential household and human waste.

Stormwater is a combination of rainfall or snowmelt that comes into contact with impervious surfaces such as streets, roofs, and parking lots. Stormwater runoff is not naturally absorbed into the ground. More developed areas, including those with larger paved surfaces, will have greater stormwater collection needs. Stormwater can pick up many pollutants from these surfaces, including debris, oils, animal waste, fertilizers, and pesticides.

As a result, stormwater may require treatment similar to wastewater before being discharged back into the environment. A combined sewer system collects both wastewater and stormwater and transports them for treatment together. These types of sewer collection systems are no longer designed for new collection systems; however, many older combined sewer systems are still in use today. Treatment of wastewater is required to avoid adverse effects on the environment, humans, and animals that depend on water to survive. Wastewater is collected and put through preliminary, secondary, and tertiary treatment processes to create wastewater effluent, which is nonpotable but safe for discharge into the environment.

“Stormwater is a combination of rainfall or snowmelt that comes into contact with impervious surfaces such as streets, roofs, and parking lots. Stormwater runoff is not naturally absorbed into the ground.”



Fall Savings Start at Home

BY SHAWN LICKEY, ELECTRIC SUPERINTENDANT

As temperatures cool, now is the perfect time to lower your energy bill. Replace or clean your HVAC filter to help your system run more efficiently, seal drafts around windows and doors, and adjust your thermostat a few degrees lower when you're asleep or away. Take advantage of natural sunlight during the day, and close curtains at night to keep warm air inside. Unplug electronics when they aren't in use to reduce unnecessary energy consumption. Small seasonal changes can add up to meaningful savings, helping you stay comfortable while keeping more money in your pocket throughout the fall months.



Columbia City's Leaf Pickup Begins Soon

BY KELLY CEARBAUGH, STREET/SEWER SUPERINTENDENT

The Columbia City Street Department is announcing that its annual leaf pickup will begin on Monday, October 26, 2026. The crews will be following the same routes as last year. The City has two leaf vacuums. The City will be divided in half, down Main Street, with one machine and a crew on each half working at the same time. This leaf pickup is curbside only. Our vacuum equipment will not fit in the alleys.

This is "one pass only" per week for seven weeks. The Street Department asks that you have your leaves raked and ready before the Monday of each week. Please rake leaves up to the curb, not into the street. Leaves in the street cause many problems in bad weather by plugging storm sewers. This pickup is specifically for leaves, so please do not put limbs on the leaf piles. (Limb pickup will be done for the year after the week of October 5.)

If possible, try not to have cars parked in front of the leaf piles, as this hinders our ability to pick them up. Leaves will not be raked from behind parked cars due to time restraints, allowing the crews to get through the City each week. The leaves will be ground into mulch next spring, which will be available for residents to get for free. Thank you for helping us make this year's leaf pickup a success.



A Message from the Chief: Staying Safe this Fall

BY GARY PARRETT, CHIEF OF POLICE

As we welcome the arrival of fall, our community begins to enjoy many of the season's traditions: football games, harvest festivals, Halloween celebrations, and the return of cooler weather. While this is a wonderful time of year, it also brings unique public safety concerns. I encourage everyone to take a few simple precautions to help keep our neighborhoods safe.

1. Stay Alert During the Busy Fall Season

With school back in session and more community events taking place, our streets become much busier. Drivers should slow down in school zones, watch carefully for children crossing the street, and always stop for school buses displaying their stop arm. As daylight hours become shorter, pedestrians and cyclists become harder to see. If you're walking in the evening, wear light-colored or reflective clothing and use sidewalks whenever possible. Drivers should reduce speed after dark and remain alert for people crossing the road. Safety is a shared responsibility, and your attention behind the wheel can save lives.

2. Protect Your Home and Your Property

As many families travel during fall weekends or begin preparing for the holidays, criminals may see opportunities to commit theft. Help protect your home by:

- Locking all doors and windows, even when you're home.
- Keeping vehicles locked and removing valuables from plain sight.
- Using outdoor lighting or motion-activated lights around your property.
- Collecting mail and packages promptly or asking a trusted neighbor to help if you're away.
- Reporting suspicious activity immediately rather than assuming someone else will.

Our officers rely on observant residents who are willing to speak up when something doesn't seem right. Working together is one of the most effective ways to prevent crime.

3. Celebrate Halloween Safely

Halloween is one of the highlights of the fall season, especially for our youngest residents. With a little planning, everyone can enjoy a fun and safe evening.

Parents should accompany young children while trick-or-treating whenever possible, use flashlights or glow sticks, and make sure costumes do not block vision or create tripping hazards. Motorists should expect increased pedestrian traffic, drive well below the speed limit in residential neighborhoods, and remain especially cautious near intersections and parked vehicles where children may suddenly appear.

Please remember that impaired driving is never acceptable. If your celebration includes alcohol, designate a sober driver or arrange for a safe ride home.

On behalf of the Columbia City Police Department, thank you for your partnership in making our community a safe place to live, work, and raise a family. We appreciate your support and encourage you to stay connected with us throughout the season. If you see suspicious activity or have concerns about public safety, don't hesitate to contact the Columbia City Police Department. Together, we can ensure everyone enjoys a safe, enjoyable, and memorable fall.

A Friendly Face to Everyone: Rodney Tripcony

BY ASHLEY BUCKLES, MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

If you shop at the Kroger in Columbia City regularly, then Rodney Tripcony is certainly a person you've met. From his everlasting smile to his long list of jokes, Rodney brings joy to everyone he speaks to. While his positive spirit is definitely an inherent part of who he is, Rodney is also intentional in the way he treats those around him.

Coming from a family of five boys, Rodney jokingly shared, "My parents were trying to raise a basketball team!" Rodney was raised in Columbia City and was the youngest of his siblings. He has stayed in Columbia City his entire life, except for his time at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. He has been working at Kroger for over 11 years and enjoys the social interaction with customers immensely. He has watched children throughout the community grow and shared that he loves children, just as Jesus did.

During Rodney's free time, he enjoys following the play-by-play of the Cincinnati Reds on ESPN, especially to help keep a friend updated on how the team is doing. He also enjoys singing, mostly karaoke-style, because it helps him remember the lyrics! His musical passion doesn't end with singing--Rodney plays the piano at Thorncreek Bethel Church of God and has also taught piano lessons for over five years. Finally, he loves texting and staying close with some of his friends, which include Greg Fahl, Justin Hierholzer, and Bobby Jo.

Rodney's positivity radiates from him, and he said Romans 5:5 is the reason he is kind to everyone. He shared that in September of 1997 he gave his life to the Lord, and he tries to emulate Him by being kind to everyone he comes across. "I want people to think about Jesus when they see me and to think there is a God and savior," Rodney shared emphatically.

The person who has influenced Rodney the most was Ron Beague Sr. He helped guide Rodney through heavy times and introduced him to Christ. He said they were good friends and enjoyed eating together. "Ron would always patiently answer my questions."

Rodney shared that his biggest accomplishment in life is his music. He took private lessons in college to learn how to play the piano and shares that knowledge through the piano lessons he teaches today.

Rodney's ability to spread kindness to everyone he meets helps make Columbia City a better place for all. The next time you see Rodney at Kroger, don't forget to ask him for a joke and let his joy improve your day!



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 the City of Columbia City's Facebook page or columbiacity.net for meeting changes.

Meetings can be viewed live on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@cityofcolumbiacityindiana