

Our City

I was in Boise this last Wednesday but not to speak with the legislature. I had been asked a month or so ago to put together a committee to write the new technical skills assessment for the new Leadership and Communication pathway that will be offered at our high school next year. The pathway also focuses on public speaking, conduct of meetings, business etiquette and ethics, sales and marketing. Going into it I wasn't really sure how you could write a test that assessed leadership and one's ability to communicate; it turns out that you can in a fashion do just that, or rather determine if a particular person at least knows the right answers to questions about leadership and communication. Whether they can actually put knowledge into practice may be a different matter entirely. The world is replete with folks who know the right thing to do. After seven hours and well over 200 questions I headed back to American Falls and a City Council meeting.

While I was driving our City Clerk Robyn Herndon, Building Administrator Jeff Nelson and Attorney Nolan Wittrock were reviewing our City's Building Code to update it to current standards and practices. As I have been present for the entirety for that same process in the rest of our City Code, I can tell you it is no easy task. There remains a bit more within the Building Code to review but we should be done by the end of the month. Once done we will set a public hearing to review the proposed changes. It is my goal to have the changes in place by May.

As I think about the Building Code most folks don't have much issue with it or rather what can be addressed within it. The number one thing I get complaints about and I do mean number one, are property owners who, like those who can pass a leadership test, know the right thing to do but choose not to do it. Private property is a real touchy issue for sure; no one wants to be told what they can or can't do in its regard. Yes, there are building codes that dictate electrical wiring, plumbing, general construction and those types of things which are for everyone's safety or the general good. There is nothing in our Code that prohibits folks from stockpiling their property with what I would call junk, stuff that needs to be properly disposed of. There is nothing in the Code that requires a property owner to maintain their property and grounds so that it doesn't lower the property value of the entire neighborhood. As I work with Herndon, Nelson, Wittrock, Police Chief Wilkinson and Fire Chief Williams I will look for a way to compel those who choose to be property owners to be mindful of their practices and the general appearance of their property. I may not find a way but it won't be for the lack of effort.

If you are a property owner who for whatever reason lacks the means or ability to make your property less of a distraction please contact me. **There are numerous civic and school groups who would be happy to help you and I will do whatever is needed to help make it happen. It is okay to ask for help; please consider it.**

Three things came out of the City Council meeting last Wednesday that many of you will notice in the months to come. First, if you want to reserve a City Park shelter you will need to come to a Council meeting and make that request; otherwise the shelters will be available on a first come first serve basis. This is being done to help minimize the overtime it takes to monitor and clean the shelters every weekend. Second, all youth organized recreation fees are being set at \$35 as a matter of consistency. And third, there will only be City maintained flower baskets on the 200 Block of Idaho Street. Those baskets will be tied into the drip systems that already exist

on that block. Like the shelters this is being done to help minimize overtime on the weekends. That being said, the FFA Chapter is willing to donate baskets, up to 50, to any person or group who would want to place and care for them on any of the compatible light poles throughout our downtown. A number of cities do this. In some it even turns into a competition among the businesses. It's their way of giving a little bit back and making their community a better place to live. I can put you in touch with the FFA Greenhouse manager if you are interested.

Until next week...