

Our City

Change. Sometimes it is not quite as straightforward as one might like, which seems to be the nature of the beast. When I stepped into City Hall this past Monday after being gone most of the week prior for FFA, there was no shortage of questions and ideas about how to proceed forward with the City's reorganization of its departmental structure and responsibilities. One of the many things I appreciate about our City Council and City employees is how thoughtfully community minded they all are. Each truly wants what is best for American Falls as they strive to make our community the best place to live.

The Council meeting last Wednesday addressed many of the Council's questions as the logistics of the change were debated. After a healthy discussion the Council did vote to ratify the change made during a special meeting on April 6th. Last Thursday Council President Hammond, Councilwoman Love and I addressed the concerns and questions of the City employees. One question brought to light how truly outdated many of our City codes and ordinances are. Those dealing with the Water, Waste Water, Streets, Sanitation and Public Works departments have not been updated in nearly 20 years; others are still on the books from nearly 50 years ago.

Hmmm? Maybe we should join the 21st century? So, I have asked our Ordinance Officer Judy Fehringer to work with our Administrative Assistant Pat Nelson to review our entire City Code by department while working with the Superintendents for each to identify areas within the code that require updates or deletion, and codes that are not present but needed. These areas will be identified then sent to our attorney for revision, then brought to you in public hearings for adoption. I am not sure how realistic it is; but I would like to have the entire task completed within 12 months.

While the reorganization overall should provide some cost savings or at least be budget neutral specific line items may need to be adjusted within departments to address changes in personnel responsibility. These changes will be addressed as the Council begins the budgeting process for fiscal year 2016 and when the budget is opened later this spring to include the changes that have occurred in Golf. Opening the budget is not a common practice for our city, but as the situation at the Golf course and the reorganization of city services came after the fiscal year started on October 1, 2014 the action is required.

As pointed out by Dan Hammond, and at the employee meeting, action is required by all of us to stay healthy. Dan represents the City on our insurance board and reported that our provider will sponsor a screening for all insured personnel and their family members. In conjunction with the screening Dan has proposed an active health and fitness program for everyone associated with the City. Once established Dan hopes our efforts will foster fitness challenges throughout various groups in our community. For most of us increased activity usually leads to better health, better health leads to better living and lower insurance premiums due to potentially less claims being filed.

Speaking solely for myself, I need to get back into a more active lifestyle. I need to carve out an hour or so a day to begin doing again the regimes I did daily up until three years ago. For some of us that motivation is easier to meet when you know you will be joined by others who

struggle with daily exercise. I like Dan's suggestion a lot. Mentally I am far past ready, physically I know it will be literally and figuratively an uphill climb for a while. Better now than never though!

Many have begun to think that it may never happen, but in fact it will on April 29th at 11:30 am. The Silver Horseshoe sign will finally be dedicated and memorialized. Chief Wilkinson and Jeremy Peirsol are working with the United States Attorney, Bannock and Power County officials and the Historical Commission to plan the dedication. Following the dedication that same evening at 8:30 there will also be a lighting ceremony. The sign will be programmed to illuminate about four hours each night depending on when our nighttime hours start. This effort has taken nearly three years. Its culmination is due to the efforts of many. Please attend one event or the other as your schedule allows and take a moment to thank those who made this historical landmark possible.

This Thursday there will be a Ferry Hollow Trail committee meeting in the City Council Chambers at 4:00 pm. The survey that began at the Open House in February has been completed and the data recorded. Now begins the task of working out the nitty-gritty details. I have walked from Seagull Bay to Eagle Rock and I am truly excited about what this trail and its historical significance can do for our community. Parts of the trail are already open to the public, others will become available over the course of the summer with the entirety of the route completed in the next 12 to 18 months.

Two of the City's strategic goals deal with increasing tourism and commerce along with improving the overall health and well-being of our community. Councilman Hammond's fitness program and the Ferry Hollow Trail can work "foot-in-shoe" to do exactly that. Both provide incentives for each of us to get out more and see the very things that make American Falls truly the best place to live.

Until next week...