



MONROE THIS WEEK

February 17, 2017 806 W. Main St., Monroe WA, 98272 Volume 3/Edition 7
Ph-360-794-7400



GREETINGS FROM MAYOR THOMAS

Hello! Thank you for reading my weekly newsletter. I am grateful to serve the Monroe community and look forward to hearing from you. If you have any suggestions, questions, or comments for "Monroe This Week" or the articles included, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at gthomas@monroewa.gov. Thank you!

Yours in Service,

Mayor Geoffrey Thomas



Mayor Happenings

Responding to Homelessness, Encampments, and Abandoned Property

The City has been actively working on, and working with, property owners to have material cleaned up in Monroe City Parks, the US2 Bypass, BNSF Railroad property, and other private properties within City limits. This is work that the City routinely does, but despite past clean ups, material has accumulated again on various properties within the City limits of Monroe. For public health, safety, and general welfare, it is important that material not accumulate again, and that people encamped on these properties accept help made available to them to find shelter and to receive assistance or treatment for conditions that contribute to being homeless.

Monroe Police Department Response - I thank our Police Department for the work they have been doing to connect homeless people with organizations and agencies that can provide assistance. I also thank them for working with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Snohomish Health District, BNSF Railroad, our City Parks and Recreation Department, and private property owners, to resolve issues of encampments and abandoned material in Monroe. **The Monroe Police Department will visit these properties on a weekly basis to address these issues as they arise.**

Monroe Parks Department Response - While our Police Department will continue visiting properties, **our Parks Department will monitor and clean up City properties on a weekly basis.** This monitoring will include checking trails on City property that the City does not maintain for encampments and abandoned material. I thank our Interim City Administrator David Moseley, Parks Director Mike Farrell, and our Parks and Public Works Department crews for the work they are doing to ensure our parks stay clean and safe.

EVENT HAPPENINGS

02/20	President's Day, City Hall Closed
02/21	City Council P4 Committee Mtg, City Hall, 6PM City Council Regular Business Meeting, City Hall, Council Chambers, 7PM
02/23	Park Board Mtg, Fryelands Elementary School, 15286 Fryelands Blvd., 7PM

Appointment Openings
 Planning Commissioner
 Salary Commissioner
 Ethics Boardmember (3)
www.monroewa.gov/vacancies
Job Openings
 Building/Code Official
 Lateral Police Officer
www.monroewa.gov/jobs

Mayor
 Geoffrey Thomas
gthomas@monroewa.gov
Councilmembers
 Jeff Rasmussen, Mayor Pro Tem
 Kirk Scarboro
 Patsy Cudaback
 Kevin Hanford
 Ed Davis
 Jim Kamp
 Jason Gamble
councilmembers@monroewa.gov

City of Monroe
Year-to-Date Comparisons

Sales Tax Revenues

'16 to 01/31/16: \$308,703

'17 to 01/31/17: \$371,743

UP \$63,040 or 20.42%

Real Estate Excise Tax

'16 to 01/31/16: \$74,152

'17 to 01/31/17: \$59,971

DOWN \$14,181 or -19.12%

Lodging Tax Revenues

'16 to 01/31/16: \$5,407

'17 to 01/31/17: \$4,581

Down \$826 or -15.28%

Business License Fees

'16 to 01/31/16: \$5,229

'17 to 01/31/17: \$4,108

DOWN \$1,121 or -21.43%

Building Permit Revenues

'16 to 01/31/16: \$16,374

'17 to 01/31/17: \$39,220

UP \$22,846 or 139.52%

Planning Fee Revenues

'16 to 01/31/16: \$1,700

'17 to 01/31/17: \$625

DOWN \$1,075 or -63.24%

New House Permits

'16 to 01/31/16: 2

'17 to 01/31/17: 10

UP 8 units or 400.0%

Multi-Family Permits (# units)

'16 to 01/31/16: 2

'17 to 01/31/17: 0

DOWN 2 units or -100.0%

Building Division Inspections

'16 to 01/31/16: 131

'17 to 01/31/17: 242

UP 111 or 84.73%

WSDOT and Railroad Response - Over the last week, crews from Washington State Department of Transportation and the BNSF Railroad have responded and removed abandoned material from their properties. The BNSF Railroad has even responded to concerns the City has brought to the attention of BNSF with its own railroad law enforcement officers. As of now, there is still some material in the vicinity of Goodwill. We have been notified this area is WSDOT property and we will be contacting them for the clean-up. **Going forward, City staff will stay in contact with the Department of Transportation, BNSF Railroad, and other property owners to address encampments and material on these properties as they develop.** I thank the WSDOT, WSDOT crews, our representatives in Olympia, and the BNSF Railroad for the work you have done to clean up these properties.

We Want to Hear From You - **Our response benefits from hearing from you by email or phone.** Unfortunately government officials and agencies in the State of Washington are limited in how we can use social media, including Facebook and Twitter. **If you see an encampment, material on these properties, or just have other concerns, please contact us by email, phone, or private message (PM) through an official City of Monroe email account or official City of Monroe Facebook page.** I can be reached on Facebook at "Mayor Geoffrey Thomas," via email at GThomas@MonroeWA.gov, or 360.926.6718 (voice or text). Our Interim City Administrator, David Mosely, can be reached at DMoseley@MonroeWA.gov or 360.863.4500 (voice only). And, as always, for emergencies call 911.

Next Steps - Beginning in March, the City of Monroe and the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office will share in the hire of an embedded social worker to work with our Monroe Police Department and Sheriff's Office. The embedded social worker will support law enforcement when working with people who are homeless – connecting them with organizations and agencies that can provide them with assistance. The goal of this program will be to reduce the number of chronically homeless people in our community. I thank Monroe Police Chief Tim Quenzer, Deputy Chief Ginnard, and Sergeant Ryan Irving for following through to make this program a reality. I also thank Sheriff Trenary, County Executive Somers, County Councilmember Low, and our Monroe City Council for supporting the interlocal agreement that will make this happen. This is not just good for Monroe, it is good for the broader Sky Valley community – thank you.

Addressing this issue long term – This is not just a Monroe issue; this is a region-wide issue. The City Council and I have been lobbying our state and federal representatives to remind them that resources should not be cut, but should be expanded to support programs that will address the homelessness issue and also issues that contribute to homelessness. I encourage you to contact your City, County, State, and Federal representatives and ask them to support these programs.

Olympia Update

Councilmembers Cudaback, Davis, Scarboro, and I visited with our legislators in Olympia this week. We met with Senator Kirk Pearson, Representative Dan Kristiansen, and Representative John Koster. We talked with them about SR522, synthetic turf fields at Lake Tye, program and funding needs to address issues related to homelessness, the importance of maintaining State funds that the City of Monroe currently receives, and the importance of ensuring that the City of Monroe can continue its ban on marijuana sales without penalties.

Olympia Update (continued) On SR522, in addition to recognizing the work our legislators are doing to advocate for the next phase of improvements to SR522, it is important for our community to recognize and thank other elected officials including Representative Palumbo, Snohomish County Councilmember Sam Low, and Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers who have been advocating for the next phase of improvements to SR522. This is not just a Monroe issue, this is a Monroe-Sky Valley-Maltby issue and an issue that affects people and freight mobility between the Seattle metropolitan and Eastern Washington. I thank everyone for their continued efforts and work.

During our visit, we delivered letters of support from a number of organizations and agencies in support of SR522 and funding for the turf fields at Lake Tye. We thanked each of our legislators for their service, support on SR522, and support recently in resolving encampments and material in the SR522 and US2 State rights of way in Monroe. It is still early in this legislative session – we will monitor bills in Olympia and will continue to advocate for our community. We will keep you informed when there are specific opportunities to send comments to our legislators.

SR522 Open House

I am pleased to announce that the City of Monroe will host an SR522 Community Open House meeting at Monroe High School on March 8th from 7PM – 8:30PM. This will be an opportunity for you to talk with engineering staff from Washington State Department of Transportation and to learn about different options to construct the remaining phases of SR522. I will be inviting people, including City and County officials, from the Sky Valley, Maltby, Monroe, and north Snoqualmie Valley area. I hope to see you there.



Bond Rating

The City recently received a credit rating of ‘AA’ from S&P Global Ratings (S&P) for our Water and Sewer Revenue Bonds issued in December and for our upcoming sale of Water and Sewer Revenue Refunding Bonds, if market conditions allow for meeting a targeted savings threshold in refinancing our existing bonds..

Thank you to Finance Director Dianne Nelson, who led the efforts to obtain this strong credit rating in advance of our successful sale of \$5.59 million of Revenue Bonds, which closed in mid-December. The 2016 bonds will finance construction of a public works shop, lunch room, locker room and emergency operations center, among other improvements to the City’s stormwater system.

S&P updated and affirmed its credit opinion on February 10th so the City is ready to sell refunding bonds and lock in future debt service savings if the bond market conditions remain favorable. If pricing meets our targeted savings threshold, we plan on refinancing portions of the bonds we issued in 2009 and 2011 to capture these savings for our utility rate payers

S&P stated that the rating reflects their view of our water and sewer system’s essential role in the community, extremely strong finances, and good operational management practices. We are pleased that S&P has recognized the progress we have made over the past few years in building healthy reserves while investing on our infrastructure and maintaining prudent and fair rates for utility customers. Much credit goes to Dianne Nelson for her strong management.

Bond Rating (*continued*) The AA revenue bond rating means that, in S&P's opinion, the City's capacity to meet our financial commitments is very strong. We believe this not only applies to the City's ability to repay our bonds, but also reflects our credit quality as a partner in economic development initiatives. And a strong credit rating means less expensive borrowing costs if and when the City's operations requires the use of bond financing.

New Garbage Billing Process Q&A

Many of you have recently received your first billing from Republic Services for garbage, recycling, and yard waste services. Effective with your services for January 1, 2017, and forward, Republic will bill you directly for garbage, recycling, and yard waste. Republic has been the City's service provider for these services for many years. This change removes the City of Monroe as the billing middle man which should help contain your costs in the long run and should provide you with a more expedited customer service experience.

As with any transition, there are a few common questions which came up with this change. The following are the more frequently asked of those questions:

Q: Why did the City change service providers?

A: The City has used Republic Services to provide its garbage/recycling/yard waste services for almost seven years. This change did not change who does our pick up and does not change when your garbage/recycling/yard waste is picked up. What has changed is who does the billing for these services. In the past, the City of Monroe was the middle man for customer service requests. We would receive the requests, then call Republic, then call back our citizen, which slowed down the process. By removing ourselves from the middle of the process, our citizens will be able to call the provider directly with all their customer service needs.

Q: My bill for garbage/recycling/yard waste seems to have gone up. I thought this change should help save money?

A: The bill you received from Republic Services covers three (3) months of service. Where the City billed monthly in the past, Republic will bill quarterly. For most of Monroe's citizens, if you divide the bill by three and then compare it to your garbage/recycling/yard waste portion of your prior bills from the City, you should see a slight decrease.

Q: I still received a bill from the City in January that included garbage/recycling/yard waste? I thought that portion is now being billed by Republic?

A: The bill sent out by the City in January was for December services, which still included garbage/recycling/yard waste. Republic's bill covers services for January, February, and March. The City's bills going forward will no longer include garbage/recycling/yard waste.

Q: Who do I call if I have a question regarding my bills?

A: For garbage/recycling/yard waste, you would call Republic directly at 800-942-5965. You may also reach them through their web site at republicservices.com. For questions regarding water, sewer, or stormwater, call the City at 360-794-7400.

Q: I am scheduled for a monthly pick up on my garbage services, but it looks like my Republic bill has me on a weekly schedule? What changed?

A: Republic Services offers a monthly pick up option on garbage services only. It does not have a monthly option for recycling or yard waste. To clarify your monthly pick up option, call Republic customer service at 800-942-5965.

Q: I received a senior discounted rate for my garbage/recycling/yard waste services. Will I continue to receive this discount?

A: For customers who have already qualified for a low-income senior or low-income disability discount, your discount should have carried over from the City's billing system to Republic's. If it appears that it did not carry over, call either Republic at 800-942-5965 or the City at 360-794-7400.

Q: How do I find out if I qualify for a low-income senior or low-income disability discount on my services? And if I do qualify, how do I apply to receive this discount?

A: For further information regarding qualification criteria for the low-income discounts, please visit the City of Monroe's web site at www.monroewa.gov. On the home page, click on the Government icon, then the Services link, then the Utilities link. Toward the bottom of that page is the form for Low Income Senior Citizen or Disability Persons Discount which has both the qualifying criteria and the form to use for the application. Once completed, return your application to the City of Monroe utility department at City Hall (806 W. Main Street). Application decisions are determined by City Staff and not Republic Services. Once an application is approved, City staff will notify Republic Services to being the discount.

Thank you for your patience as we transition our garbage/recycling/yard waste billing from the City to Republic Services.

COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

On the Tuesday, February 21, 2017, City Council Meeting, upcoming agenda items include a confirmation of appointment for a Community Development Director, a discussion of the Snohomish Health District Potential Rucker Building Financial Interest, and a discussion of the 191st Ave SE Extension review of the Open House comments. For additional agenda items, click [here](#).

EVENT HAPPENINGS

The public is invited to attend a Park Board special meeting at 7:00pm Thursday, February 23, 2017, 7:00pm, in the performing stage area of Fryelands Elementary School, located at 15286 Fryelands Blvd. A special presentation will be made during the meeting showing and explaining features of a new replacement playground for Lake Tye Park. This exciting new Parks Capital Improvement Project is funded for this year and anticipated to be completed before the end of May.

SAFETY HAPPENINGS

Fraud Alert

The police department has received complaints from victims that have received communication that they are the recipients of a large grant or other form of cash award. The victim is usually asked to send money or purchased gift cards in order to receive the cash. After the victim sends the money; all communications stop and they do not receive any type of cash in return. Please be careful in responding to any type of request like this.