



Living by the Nooksack

A Quarterly Newsletter from the City of Ferndale

Winter 2020

What is This?

While many of our residents follow us on social media and check our website, we know that plenty of you don't have time for that.

This quarterly newsletter is our latest effort to help you understand what is going on in your city.

Inside this article, you will find:

- New ways to explore what is being built in your neighborhood
- Details on the North Whatcom Poverty Task Force
- An update on the downtown catalyst projects
- Insight into your utility bill

... and more!

If you have thoughts about this newsletter, please call Communications Officer Riley Sweeney at (360) 685-2353 or email him at Rileysweeney@Cityofferndale.org

Accessible online at www.cityofferndale.org/newsletter



From left to right, Councilmembers Paul Shuey, Ryan O'Larey, Herb Porter, Erin Gunter, Kate Bishop, Mayor Greg Hansen, Councilmembers Ali Hawkinson, Ramon Llanos

New Council and Mayor Begin Work for 2020

"Ferndale's future looks bright," declared Mayor Greg Hansen at his first council meeting of the year in January after winning the election in November. He joined six other new councilmembers who were sworn in at the beginning of the year.

"I'm optimistic," said Councilmember Bishop, the sole remaining councilmember from the previous year, "we have a great group of leaders here and we are ready to get to work."

With big projects already set in motion for 2020 such as the expansion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the activation of our new well, the beginning of the downtown Catalyst projects and of course, the ongoing work on the Thornton Overpass, the council will turn its attention to some of the longer range challenges facing the city, including the location and design of a new city hall/courthouse facility.

"Ferndale is at a crossroads and I'm honored and humbled to have this opportunity to serve during this time," said Mayor Hansen.

Ferndale City Council meets the first and third Monday of the month at the City Annex (5694 Second Ave) at 6:00pm. Council committee meetings are held at City Hall (2095 Main St.) the preceding Wednesday before a council meeting from 8:00am-11:00am. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. Agendas available at www.cityofferndale.org.

New Utility Rates and Rate Assistance Program

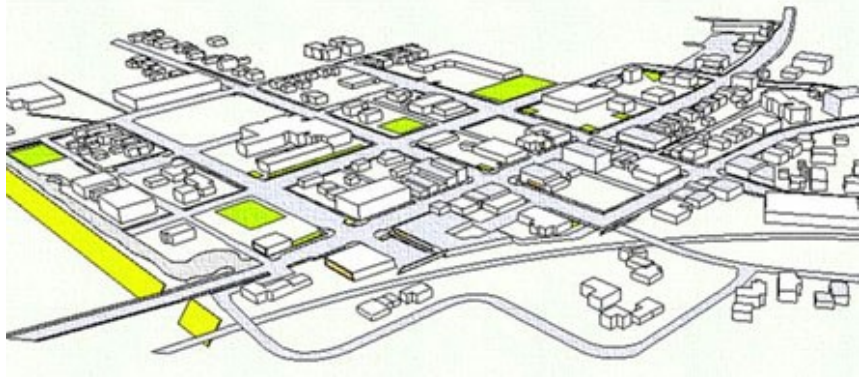
The utility bill included with this newsletter is the first bill with our new utility rate structure. Last year, the City spent a year examining how we fund our water projects and rebalancing our rate structure to make them more fair. Residents may notice their total cost went up, down or little change. More information about the new utility rates is available at www.cityofferndale.org/ratestudy. If there are questions about a specific utility bill, please call our utility clerk at (360) 384-4269.

If a resident has difficulty paying, there is a rate assistance program for low-income customers. It needs to be renewed each year and is based on their income,. If they qualify, the City will offer a 25% reduction in rates. An application is included in this utility billing.

What's Being Built in My Neighborhood?

Curious what is really happening on that construction site in your neighborhood? Now the answers are only a click away.

The City has built an interactive map showing all the private development projects currently approved. You can access it on the city website here: www.cityofferndale.org/privatedevelopmentprojects. There you can find out who owns the development, what is being built and where to get more information.



The City updates its private development map with project details on a monthly basis prior to the first City Council meeting each month. For more information on private development in the City of Ferndale, please call Patti Gearhart, Planning Coordinator at (360) 685-2359.

See Something? Say Something

From 2018 to 2019, Ferndale saw a decrease in assaults, burglaries, domestic violence and theft. However, the City did see an uptick in vehicle prowls. The Ferndale Police Department requests that everyone take these simple steps to stop vehicle prowls.

- Take valuables out of your car, and lock vehicle when not in use. Most vehicle prowls target unlocked vehicles.
- Close and lock garage doors.
- If you see something suspicious, call 911. Better to contact the authorities than let it go unreported.

For more information from your Ferndale Police Department, check out FerndalePolice.com.



Coming to Ferndale in 2020



① Fountain looking at art area



② Plaza view

Catalyst Project Update

In December 2019, the Ferndale City Council approved all three projects being considered for the downtown catalyst program. The program is targeted at spurring housing and commercial development in our downtown core.

The projects are to be located at the Centennial Riverwalk (1985 Main Street, pictured above), 2130 Main St, and on the corner of Alder and Fourth Avenue.

All three projects have submitted plans to the city for technical review and are looking to break ground within the next year.

BUSINESS LICENSES

Starting in June 2020, Washington State will be managing all applications for local business licenses, rather than the City of Ferndale.

We will still be involved in the process but all applications will run through the state Department of Revenue. This will make it easier for businesses that operate in multiple cities to obtain the licenses they need. More information will be available as this change is implemented.



New Police Hires

The Ferndale Police Department is proud to welcome our newest officers Colin Sutton and Shelby Brown to the team. We look forward to seeing them on the road after they complete their training at the academy.





Ferndale Elected Officials Travel to Olympia

In January, Councilmembers Herb Porter and Kate Bishop joined Mayor Greg Hansen and City Administrator Jori Burnett in Olympia for Association of Washington Cities City Action Days. They met with the 42nd Legislative delegation (Reps. Sharon Shewmake, Luanne Van Werven and Sen. Doug Ericksen) as well as other interested legislators and state staff to advocate for Ferndale's priorities.

The State legislature is in the middle of their short session—only 60 days long - where they work on essential bills needed for 2021. Next year will be a long session with a bigger focus on budget.

In the last couple of years, thanks to Ferndale's advocacy down in Olympia, the State has provided complete funding for the Thornton Road Overpass, contributed millions to our water treatment plant upgrade and funded ADA pathways in Pioneer Park.

Poverty Task Force Delivers Recommendations



Last year, the City Council appointed the North Whatcom Poverty Task Force to explore the impacts of poverty and income inequality in our community and draft a list of recommendations. The task force is comprised of social service providers, business and community representatives, and those who have experienced homelessness themselves. Over the last year, the task force has met with experts working on homelessness,

transportation, housing, hunger, youth in crisis, emergency management and employment.

In the month of March, the task force will be presenting their recommendations to the City Council. They cover steps that can be taken immediately and in the long-term to mitigate the impacts of poverty for residents of Ferndale.

"There's no silver bullet for poverty," said Councilmember Ali Hawkinson who serves on the Task Force, "but there are some very real, concrete steps we can take to help our friends and neighbors who are having a difficult time getting by."

For more information and to see the recommendations, please visit www.cityofferndale.org/poverty.

Poverty in Whatcom County at a Glance

- There are approximately 700 people experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County
- Thousands of residents in Whatcom County report being "housing insecure," being one paycheck away from losing their home
- 2/3rds of the local homeless population report their last stable address as in Whatcom County
- 1 in 6 residents regularly use the Food Bank
- The number one cause of poverty is rising housing costs
- The Ferndale School District reports that approximately 3.5% of their students experience a housing crisis each year.
- According to research, the most effective way to solve poverty is to add to the supply of affordable housing.