



City of Des Moines

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
21630 11TH AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE A
DES MOINES, WASHINGTON 98198-6398
(206) 878-4595 T.D.D.: (206) 824-6024 FAX: (206) 870-6540



City Manager Weekly Report February 16, 2024

Tribute to a Friend

It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing this week of the City's longtime Building Official Lawrence "Larry" Pickard after a battle with cancer. Larry worked for the City for over 26 years and was an icon at City Hall, both for his extensive knowledge about all things building and construction, but also for his approachability and kind heart. He was an advocate for his co-workers and a caretaker, both at the office and in his family life. A fond memory I have of Larry is that every year he would take his birthday week off work. I loved that, when so many try to avoid thinking about aging; he would celebrate it for a full week with his family.

When my wife and I were looking to buy our first home in Tacoma a few years back, Larry did the inspection for us on a Saturday. When I showed up at noon, his truck was the only car on the quiet street, and his trademark orange cones were strategically placed at each bumper. He came around the side of the house covered in dirt with kneepads on. He had been there four hours already and he told me, "Tim, it's rough, but it has good bones." He documented 35 pages of repairs we needed done, some were so small, but that's the kind of person he was. He was thorough, dedicated and he recognized the great responsibility he had to the families that were going to live in the homes he inspected.

Larry retired in 2021 at a well-attended outdoor ceremony at the City's Beach Park. Although he could have retired earlier, he stayed on so he could lead the Building Department through a tumultuous first year and a half of the Pandemic, and he refused to leave before he could mentor and train to his satisfaction the next generation of inspectors and Building Official. He left the department better than he found it, and his imprint will remain for generations.

Being so close to Seattle, Des Moines may feel like a big city at times, but at City Hall, we only have about 40 employees. We spend 5 days a week together every week of the year (except for Larry's birthday week). We celebrate life events together; birthdays, weddings, babies and grand babies and we mourn our losses together. Larry was a big part of that for so many years and he will be missed. Rest easy my friend.

Marina Steps Public Meeting Materials

The Marina Steps Project public meeting was held on Tuesday night at the Beach Park Auditorium. Over 100 residents attended to hear the latest on the Project. The presentation materials can be viewed [here](#). Additional updates will be provided as the Project progresses towards anticipated construction in early 2025.

Visual Artists Needed!

Calling all artists! The City of Des Moines Arts Commission is seeking artists to create imagery for utility boxes located in various locations around the City. This opportunity is open to visual artists, residing in our region, working in any medium, as long as the final artwork can be translated and digitally reproduced on a 2-dimensional vinyl wrap. Check [here](#) for more information.

Staff Recognition

I am proud to announce that last Friday, Peyton Murphy (Land Use Planner II) passed the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) test and received her certification. The Association of State Floodplain Managers national certified floodplain manager program was established to create a baseline testing of professional competence in floodplain management. The role of the nation's floodplain managers is expanding due to increases in disaster losses, the emphasis on mitigation to alleviate the cycle of damage-rebuild-damage, and a recognized need for professionals to adequately address these issues. This certification program lays the foundation for ensuring that highly qualified individuals are available to meet the challenge of breaking the damage/rebuild cycle on the nation's human, financial and natural resources.

The Waterland City

This is a worthy accomplishment and having a planner on staff with this certification is a great asset to the City!

Meetings of Interest

In addition to day-to-day administrative duties, this week I met with Mayor Buxton to discuss upcoming City issues and Council items. I attended the Marina Steps Project public meeting on Tuesday night. I met with Councilmember Harris to discuss topics of interest to him. I met with representatives from Consor, the City's communications consultant, to prepare for our upcoming Council Study Session on communication (March 7). I met with the City's Executive Leadership team to discuss current and upcoming City issues. I also met with the Marina Steps Project team to debrief from this week's public meeting.

City Council Meeting Summary

No Council meeting or Council Committee meetings this week as the Council does not generally meet on the third Thursday of the month. The next City Council meeting will be a Regular Meeting on February 22nd at 6pm. The Municipal Facilities Committee will meet at 4pm on the 22nd and the Economic Development Committee will meet at 5pm. Agendas and materials for all three meetings can be found [here](#).

Sports Update

And with that, the 2023 season comes to an end (cue Coldplay song). The 49ers put up a good fight but of course Taylor Swift's team came out on top. Congratulations to her the rest of the Chiefs on another Super Bowl championship. Us Seahawk fans are left to wonder what could have been if DK Metcalf had asked Ms. Swift out before Travis. Now that football is officially over, we have entered the "dark time;" the long and cold days between the last football game of the season and the first pitch of Major League Baseball. Be safe out there. In-season hockey and basketball continue this weekend. 8 days until the first Mariner Spring Training game.



Have a great weekend!
Tim George
Interim City Manager