

# Duvall City Council News

## City business gets a slow start in new year

By Carol Ladwig

The Duvall City Council ended 2008 with a cancelled meeting (Dec. 25), started 2009 with another cancellation (Jan. 8), and for its first meeting of the year, had to defer most of its actions until the Feb. 12 meeting.

Votes to adopt the Riverview School District's school impact fee, the city's new parks, trails and open spaces plan, and the comprehensive plan updates were all postponed, on the recommendation of city staff and council members, after hearing public testimony.

Each of these issues was the subject of public hearings that evening, and most of the speakers had the same concern – whether the documents' population projections and accompanying impact fees were feasible in the current economy.

Lynn Eshelin of Pacific Ridge Homes said the parks plan in particular (see "Parks Plan Unveiled") was too aggressive, considering the stall in construction, and had no solid funding. "The responsible thing to do tonight is not to pass this plan," she added.

Several other builders, an attorney representing them, and David Hoffman of the Master Builder's Association all commented on the aggressive nature of the parks plan and the economic situation. Hoffman also noted that other government bodies are trying to work with builders, while the city seemed to exclude them from the parks planning process, only inviting their feedback in November.

Ty Waude also addressed the council, saying he liked parks, and needed them to sell the homes he built. However, he said, the parks plan did not include any recommendations for partnering with builders for mutual benefit.

Feedback was similar for the proposed comprehensive plan amendments, and council member Gary Gill brought up that point, since it was the same concern the city had about adopting the school impact fee.

"I've been asking the school if their growth projections are accurate, and these guys (builders) are asking me the same thing," he said.

Regarding the school's Capital Facilities Plan, which included a new impact fee, the council took testimony, but did not discuss it further, since only one representative of the school board was present, Dan Pflugrath, and he did not speak.

Senior Planner Lara Thomas recommended that the council postpone action on all three of these items until the next meeting. This will give the staff time to gather additional information to address the council's concerns.

Thomas and City Engineer Boyd Benson had earlier in the meeting presented information on the city's permit fee structure. The council had asked to review it, in response to complaints from local builders who felt the fees were too high.

Mayor Will Ibershof stressed, however, that the council should consider how the fees were calculated, compare them to other jurisdictions, and consider the impact to the city of reducing or partially deferring fees. He asked them not to assume more builders would apply for permits if the fees were reduced, because "Really what they need is a customer, a willing customer to buy their product."

Thomas added that a developer had recently told her he wouldn't apply for a permit right now, even if the city dropped all of its fees.

Currently, the city collects some \$27,000 in fees and impact fees for organizations such as the schools and parks. If the parks plan, school capital facilities plan and comp plan changes are all approved as-is, the fee total will increase by about \$5,000. These are fees collected only on permits for new construction.

Possibilities for deferring fees included collection only partial fees at application and the reminder at the final plat phase

In their analysis, Benson said they found that "For cities the size of ours, we're in the ballpark."

### In other business:

Council members and staff discussed the city's response to the December snowstorms and their options for clearing the roads and improving the process should it happen again. See Sidebar for more information.

Construction on the connection of NE 145<sup>th</sup> is essentially complete, although there is still some minor maintenance tasks and striping work to do on the street before it can be opened to the public, reported Public Works Director Steve Leniszewski. Cold weather has delayed the striping work, so the city may consider temporary striping until the weather warms up.

The city is preparing to advertise for proposals on use of the Dougherty Farm and the old Railroad Depot buildings. Groups are invited to submit proposals on how they might use the buildings in a relationship with the city.

Work has begun on the selection of a volunteer Duvall Days coordinator, according to the Economic Development committee, which will meet again soon on this subject. The next council meeting will be Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m. in the Duvall Fire Hall, 15600 1 Ave. NE.

## Parks Plan Unveiled

By Carol Ladwig

An updated and ambitious parks plan was presented to the Duvall City Council Jan. 22. This plan, produced by consultant EDAW, with a \$75,000 grant from the state department of Commerce, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) took more than a year to create, and is the first update to the parks element since 1990.

Duvall Senior Planner Lara Thomas and Sarah Daniels of EDAW presented the 20-year plan, and the process of gathering community feedback.

To achieve the level of service recommended by the state Recreation and Conservation Office, the city must add three neighborhood and two community parks, and improve current parks and trails.

The work was broken into three phases, starting with building two new neighborhood parks in the next six years, gradual improvements and, eventually, a feasibility study for a swimming pool.

Recommendations for funding the plan included recalculating the city's park impact fee – one of the primary reasons the city authorized the creation of the new plan – capitalizing on grants and other external funding sources, and considering a park improvement tax, which nearly 75 percent of the public response would support.

The plan is posted on the city's Web site. Visit [www.duvallwa.gov](http://www.duvallwa.gov), click Government Services/Applications, Forms and Publications/Planning – Maps and Publications. The file is PTOS Plan – Exhibit 2a under the heading of January 22, 2009 City Council Packet.

## Main Street sidewalks being replaced

By Carol Ladwig

Pedestrians in Duvall last week had a challenge if they wanted to get to some of the businesses on the west side of Main Street. There were no sidewalks from Stella to Stewart Street, not even the gravel walkways that have been in place for most of the Main Street construction work.

## Broadstripe files for bankruptcy

By Carol Ladwig

Broadstripe, cable provider for the city of Duvall, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy Jan. 2 in Delaware court. The company formerly known as Millenium Digital Media, is the sole cable provider in Duvall, but it does not have an exclusive franchise.

How this action will affect Duvall is not clear yet. According to the company, the bankruptcy proceeding will enable Broadstripe to restructure financially while continuing normal operations.

There was no information about the filing on the company's Web site ([www.broadstripe.com](http://www.broadstripe.com)) and city staff members noticed nothing unusual about their communications with Broadstripe executives last week. The company has hired a consulting agency, FTI Consulting, to manage its turnaround.

In addition to Washington, Broadstripe serves communities in Maryland, Michigan, and Oregon.

Instead, there was wet concrete, the new sidewalks curing in the cold weather.

The new concrete, like the city seemed to be "victims of the weather," Main Street project manager Shaun Tozer said. Work on the sidewalks and a handicapped-accessible ramp for the Duvall Library started last Monday, because the library is closed on Mondays.

"A lot of the time you can pour them and people can walk on them within two days," Tozer said, but the recent cold weather lengthened the cure time to Monday, Jan. 26.

The east-side sidewalks remain open while the west-side work is done.



Publisher..... Bill Falcon  
 General Manager..... Laura Falcon  
 Editor..... Carol Ladwig  
 Features Writers..... Jennifer Heger, Jack Ballard

Sports Writer..... Lori Oviatt  
 Contributing Photographers..... Shaun McWhinney, Kristi Dranginis  
 Graphics/Webmaster..... Brigita Sandlin

Emerald Falcon Publishing • PO Box 561 • Duvall, Washington  
 98019 • 1-888-364-5088  
 FAX 1-866-659-9105 • editor@rivercurrentnews.com  
 www.rivercurrentnews.com

## Real Estate, Real Answers

We have taken a transfer and must sell. Please talk to us again about the best things to address in getting our home ready to go on the market.

Thank you DS

There are definitely things to do that are better than others in terms of spending your money and recovering expenses.

The 2008 Cost vs. Value Report was just released by "Remodeling Magazine" in cooperation with "Realtor Magazine." The report states that home-owners can expect to recoup a national average of 67.3 percent of their investment. This number is down from a national average in 2005 of 86.7 percent.

The Seattle area recorded the best payback on remodeling by a wide margin, as we did in 2007; we average a recoup value of 14.8 percent higher than the rest of the country. Specifically, "outdoor living rooms"; extending/improving deck areas (covered, out here, is of course the best route!) ranks high in desirability and cost recovery.

An upgraded kitchen ranks highest and can net 83 percent or more of your cost.

Energy-efficient new windows average an 81 percent return.

Bathroom upgrades, like countertops and new fixtures provide approximately 75 percent return.

Any additional living space adds huge appeal for most buyers and has a direct, profitable impact on your home if you are in a position that requires you to sell.

Call with any additional questions ~ Thanks



Mary Wilhelm  
Windermere Real Estate  
206.718.MARY (6279)  
[www.marywilhelm.com](http://www.marywilhelm.com)  
mwilhelm@windermere.com