

Mayor's Blog

Hello Eatonville citizens and community members!

The first seven months in office have been challenging and rewarding at the same time. We have no shortage of things to do and our list of goals gets longer every day. We are proud to have accomplished the following:

1. We hired a Town Administrator with 30 plus years of public works experience. Welcome aboard to the extremely knowledgeable Mr. Seth Boettcher!
2. We hired a full time Planner (just in time for the required comprehensive plan update!). Welcome to Eatonville Mr. Zack Shields!
3. We have now fully staffed our electrical department. Welcome back Mr. Jesse Carroll!
4. Mr. Seth Boettcher and Mr. Steve McKasson, our Water and Sewer Superintendent, have solved our downtown sewer back up issue.
5. The Washington Avenue streetscape project (in work since 2009) has moved to the production stage and should be complete by January 2023.
6. We have re-established the Airport Commission to address airport growth and improvement issues.
7. Seth Boettcher has developed a comprehensive and detailed Capital Improvement Plan (first in-depth Capital Improvement plan the Town has had in decades!).
8. We motivated renewal of the EMS levy, which did pass (thank you voters!).
9. We have ensured planning and engineering expertise is now available full time at the Town Hall (for permitting and project questions).

Grant opportunities: Our goal is to apply for, and hopefully receive, grant monies to fix the infrastructure challenges we are currently facing rather than borrowing money to fix these issues (we would have to increase utility rates charged to Town citizens to pay any borrowed monies back). By applying for and receiving grants for these projects, we keep the costs charged to Town citizens to a minimum.

Grant successes:

- Town wide street crack sealing \$54,911
- Brushing under the power lines on 161 \$16,000
- Airport crack and fog seal \$64,000 (Thank you Dallas Clement)
- Comprehensive plan update costs \$125,000 (Thank you Zack Shields)
- Comp Plan affordable housing requirements \$75,000 (Thank you Zack Shields)
- Comp plan climate resiliency requirements \$80,000 (Thank you Zack Shields)
- Many other grants applied for and pending

The train: Western Industries Forest Museum (WFIM), a non-profit organization, now owns the Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad and Logging Museum. The members of the Board of Directors for this organization are:

President: David Baublits – Town of Eatonville Mayor

Vice President: Kyle Litzenberger - Town of Eatonville Council Member

Secretary/Treasurer: Seth Boettcher – Town of Eatonville Town Administrator

Brian Wise - Roadmaster

Rich Williams - Eatonville Businessman and train enthusiast

We will be starting with the running of rail bikes in the Eatonville/Elbe area in order to create needed income and will make a decision on when to start running the train as we work through our infrastructure challenges. Our goal is to get the train into Eatonville as soon as possible. In order to make this happen, we need to generate \$1,500,000 to fix the tracks between Elbe and Eatonville and \$1,000,000 to do needed trestle repair work. We will be applying for grants to support these projects so availability of these funds is unknown.

Comprehensive Plan: We have scheduled our kickoff meeting on September 24th from 9:00 till 1:00 at the Visitor's Center to analyze and start the rewrite process for the Town Comprehensive Plan. This is a meeting open to the public. Invitees include the Planning Commission, Airport Commission, Town Council and multiple Town employees. We have several County employees assisting us with the facilitation of this meeting.

Old Eatonville dump cleanup: The plan for cleaning up the old Town dump site on Weyerhaeuser property is moving smoothly through the investigation, planning and permitting phase. The state came through with \$4,000,000 in funding to assist Eatonville with their portion of the costs on this cleanup effort. A big thank you to the Nisqually Tribe and Representative Andrew Barkis for ensuring this funding was included in the budget and eventually approved!

Eatonville Municipal Code: We are continuing our efforts to improve our Municipal Code, as well as write the code in a simpler, more understandable and easier to apply format. We are utilizing volunteers to assist in this endeavor, and they have proven to be extremely productive and successful. Special thanks to Joe Hagen, Bobbi Allison and Bev Wilson for their work on Title 16. These volunteers are speeding up the code change process and it is nice to have input from Town citizens on much needed code changes.

Affordable housing: We have started working closely with Pierce County on developing affordable housing within the Town limits.

Volunteerism: We continue to work towards the development of a comprehensive volunteer network that will maximize all our volunteer efforts. We have created a team of "movers and shakers" in town to assist with guiding town growth and developing and promoting activities that support town goals.

Relationships: We continue to aggressively develop relationships with target individuals and organizations. These include all our political representatives, County officials, the Dept of

Commerce, Puget Sound Regional Council, Pierce County Regional Council, the Nisqually Council, the Nisqually Land Trust and WSDOT.

Special thanks to: Rich and Ruthie Williams for keeping Nevitt Park looking so great. Kirk Heinz for the wonderful mural he is having painted on the side of his building. Miles Pizza, Subway and the Mill Haus for providing free food for numerous Town activities. Dallas Clement for writing Town grant applications on a volunteer basis. I know there are many other volunteers not included here but please know that we greatly appreciate everyone who has volunteered their time and abilities to make our town a better place!!!

Town Hall meetings: For those of you who would like more in depth information or discussion, I have a Town Hall meeting at the Community Center the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00. I would love to see you there!

David Baublits – Mayor

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