

Odds and Ends
by Mayor Dave Earling

When I delivered the State of the City Speech last March, I spent a portion of the speech describing ways in which we would improve communication with the public. One new idea I mentioned is to have Town Hall meetings on a quarterly basis, moving the event to different areas of the city. We will begin that effort on June 12, 6:30 p.m. at the Corner Coffee Bar & Café in Perrinville.

At the Town Hall meeting, I will give a brief overview of the city, followed by each of the Department Directors, reporting on major efforts in their departments. The balance of the evening will be an opportunity for questions, answers and conversation. The intent of course, is to let the public know where the city is headed and at the same time hear feedback from local neighborhoods.

As many of you know, our former Community Services and Economic Development Director, Stephen Clifton resigned to take a position with Snohomish County. We have been advertising for his position for the past several weeks and have attracted several applicants. While some of the applicants had strong points, none matched up well with what we are seeking. Because of that, we will continue to advertise and expand the venues in which we are seeking applicants.

One of Stephen's major efforts was to move the council approved Strategic Plan forward. To that end, we have hired a half-time consultant, also approved as part of this year's budget, to continue the energy initiated by Mr. Clifton and others. We have hired Cynthia Berne to spearhead and coordinate the project. She has enthusiastically grabbed ahold of the plan and is moving forward, making contact with major stakeholders and working on several initiatives.

A second initiative we will be embarking on this year is about communication and marketing. We will be hiring a consultant to analyze and make recommendations on how the city might broaden communication with the public. In addition, the goal will be to follow up on the successful Arts Summit held last year to see how we might further unify the arts community and enhance our reputation as an arts destination.

Another exciting opportunity we are exploring is the potential to purchase Civic Playfield from the Edmonds School District. We have leased the site for many years for \$1 a year and in exchange, we schedule, maintain, and use the property daily and for special events. This property has enormous potential as a community asset. The Edmonds Boys and Girls Club is interested in partnering with the City to maintain their presence in the downtown core. Stay tuned as we are currently under appraisal and have submitted a grant request to the state. An agreement has not been reached, but we have an interested buyer and seller.

Finally, the staff and I are beginning the budget process for 2015. The process is complex and will take several months. We need to establish revenue trends, identify maintenance needs, employee health care and union costs, capital project costs, and any upgrades needed, for example IT costs that may be needed. Just so you know, our general fund budget this year is \$41,017,923 and our overall budget, combining all of our programs is 95,004,314.

We are headed toward the Annual Arts Festival on Father's Day week-end at the Anderson Center. I hope you will stop to see the artwork and enjoy the festive atmosphere. And, by the way, Happy Father's Day to all the Dads.