



**ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. BOX 547, ANACORTES, WA 98221
(360) 293-1918 / (360) 293-1928**

Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission

Preliminary Agenda

This meeting will be held via Zoom. Access to the meeting via the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83878246666>

February 9, 2021

6:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order/Go over Zoom format
2. Approve Minutes
3. Public Comments
4. Rotary Club Cap Sante Trail Presentation
5. Department Reports
6. Other Business

If reasonable accommodation due to a disability are needed, please contact Mac Jackson at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date (360-299-1961).

ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION

Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Sarah Nichols, Chairperson
Jo Ann York-Gilmore
Brad Adams
Christine Hansen
Alex Hernandez

December 8, 2020

Members Present: Sarah Nichols, Jo Ann York-Gilmore, Christine Hansen, Alex Hernandez, Brad Adams.

Staff Present: Jonn Lunsford, Bob Vaux, Dustin South, Nicole Johnston, Lea DeVere and Victoria Wong.

Others Present: none.

Called to Order: 6:02 PM

Minutes: February minutes were approved as submitted.

Public Comments: None.

Correspondence/Communications:

- Jonn updated the commission on the Parks Foundation donation of \$5,000 to the new Causland Memorial Wall.
- The City and the Anacortes Parks Foundation are working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Foundation has been a longtime partner of the City and like other foundations that the City works with, this agreement is better defining that relationship.
- There has been an uptick in communication within the Parks and Recreation social media outlets. There has been both gracious and concerned comments and has been answered appropriately.

Washington Park Fee Increase:

- The Washington Park fees has gone up in small increments over the years with some years staying the same and some years with a price jump because of the formula based on the CPI. It was being calculated manually over the years.
- With the update and debut of the new boat launch, utility upgrades and improvements to Loop C, we are looking at an update to reflect the cost of these improvements. Price comparisons with Deception Pass State Park and San Juan Island camping sites reflect that Washington Park has very reasonable and comparable rates. We're looking for a 10% increase across the board on all fees.
- In the new year, we are looking to join the unified fee structure set forth by Finance, and will be updated yearly in relation to inflation. City Council will then review these fee increases accordingly.
- The hiker/biker area as an example does not attract as much business due to its rugged terrain and the infrastructure not being quite up to par. But with the new updated fee, it will have the highest jump in price because of years of extremely low costs.

Moved to approve the fee schedule – so moved by all.

Park impact fee update:

- Berk consulting was the firm that updated the fire impact fee and they help to look at the formula in conjunction of what the State Department of Commerce needs in order for the Parks impact fee updated. Berk Consulting has been selected to help with update. The last update was in 1998.
- Currently, the Parks impact fee is \$616. Based on future park improvements such as the West 6th St park, upgrades to Storvik Park, and trailhead improvements we're looking to have the fee doubled to reflect the park usage upticks and population growth over the years.
- Towns of our size has been looked at for examples of fee range and also commercial impact fees were looked at as well.
- Berk Consulting will have a draft policy for us to update the Capital Facilities Plan and will go to the City Council for approval. Ideal timeline is to have the draft policy circulate and forwarded to Council, Planning, Parks sub committee so we can start public comment that needs 60 days in order for us to update the fee structure itself. We're looking to have this be part of the update in March 2021.

Department Reports:

- Dustin reported that summer and fall programs were planned in hopes for restrictions being lifted, but in the end the programs did not get to run. Travis and Dustin pivoted to help out the parks crew with mowing, being an extra set of hands with the crew, rest room hot spots, garbage collection at the parks. Between helping the parks crew, Travis and Dustin was able to offer a few programs that were successful. Soccer Pods with volunteer parent coaches was able to play a few games at the end of October as some restrictions eased a little. Travis adapted and ran with the idea and eventual execution of Camp Active – a program to get kids out and moving. The first session was offered outdoors. The second session was cut short due to the restrictions being back on in November. The recreation team has teamed up with the Chamber of Commerce to offer the Anacortes Light Show that includes local businesses to light up their own shop with an interactive map for residents to view the lights and vote for their favorite display. Zoom with Santa was also very entertaining and successful with Travis as Santa doing 10-minute Zoom sessions with kids to ask them what they wanted for Christmas. Anacortes Holiday walk/run challenge is the 30-day challenge where you log your mileage and see at the end how far you've gone. In the fall, Dustin offered the Mt. Erie Vertical Challenge to ultimately get people out and moving and was successful.
- Bob gave a report about the uptick of park user numbers in parks and forest lands as the public is increasingly turning to the outdoors to recreate during the pandemic. The loop road holiday decoration policy is in effect. A designated location and time period have been roped off and those participating will be taking their own decorations down. This was prompted because decorations that were up during Thanksgiving weekend were taken down anonymously, and not by Parks staff. The public is appreciative on us trying to work with them to come to an agreement. Lastly, working with the family center and police for the extended stay of those who are homeless at Washington Park has been smooth.
- Nicole gave a report about Pickett Pocket Park and nice Samaritans volunteered to weed the flowerbeds and did ask to put solar lights by the trunk of the trees to give some holiday cheer and was approved. The Parks crew had a great time using the boom truck to put up holiday lights in the Commercial Ave stretch up to 8th St. Congratulations are in order to Steve Phillips for being a certified arborist on the team. Nicola Mitchell also received her certification as a Playground Safety Inspector.
- Lea at the Senior Center reported that we closed the doors in early March in response to the pandemic, but the Meals on Wheels program still runs out of the Center and provides meals to 65 people in the program. Most programs have been converted to being virtual and we're pleased to find seniors adapting to the Zoom platform well. Some programs that have turned virtual are the Seated wellness, Cookbook club, coffee with Laurie, Coffee with Karl, Wellness Committee with mindfulness back in action. The Seniors do say they miss the social interaction, the volunteering and games that gives them

a good sense of purpose. The Center has provided free pick up and drop off of books and puzzles at the front of the center. This summer, a new metal roof was installed at the Center and the kitchen floor was replaced.

Depot Plaza Restroom:

- Under the City Website, a page was created to keep citizens up to date on the progress of this project. The company is currently a little behind and we expected the delivery of the restroom unit in January, but it's been pushed back to mid-February. It still gives us plenty of time to have it ready before spring.

Sailing Partnership:

- We have partnered with the Anacortes Waterfront Alliance to offer sailing classes through them.

Cemetery Expansion Project:

- Poplar trees have been taken down, and is a very different look at the Cemetery. Tiger Construction has been preparing the road for the stormwater detention pond they'll be installing shortly. They're also working on the catch basin and will be hydroseeding at the end of December. They are still on schedule to finish their work by the end of December. Landscaping for the cemetery will come in phase 2 which will hopefully be in 2021. Over 150 trees will be planted along the side bordering St. Mary's church. Planting additional trees is a requirement when trees are being taken down.

Other Business: Four people retired this year. Mary Snyder, Valora Sandstrom, Sally Hill and Heather Brennan. We were unable to provide a proper party for them and hopefully we can do so once things open up again. Very thankful the crew has been able to jump in and fill gaps where necessary. A potential new bike skills course is being looked at by Whistle lake Rd meets Dow Lane where it's in the County, but owned by the City. Looking at possible pump track and equestrian oval combined.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:02.

The **NEXT MEETING** will be held on **Tuesday, February 9, 2021, at 6:00 PM**, virtually.

Respectfully submitted by,

Victoria Wong

Approved: 12/11/2020

Parks and Recreation Update

February 2021

We are happy to be gearing up for our second virtual Parks Commission meeting, to be held Tuesday, February 9th. We will be holding our first virtual Forest Advisory Board meeting on Thursday, March 4th. Meetings will commence at their usual 6PM timeslots. We will work with both groups to determine future meeting schedules.

We did have a fairly quiet holiday season to wrap up 2020, a year that plenty has been spoken of and written about. Our staff was able to take some time off, while coordinating leave schedules to make sure we had office and field coverage each day. I would especially like to thank Washington Park Caretaker Chris Schmaus for his holiday coverage efforts.

The New Year always starts with staff project planning and priority meetings. Our big three projects remain the cemetery expansion, the Washington Park 'A' Loop utility upgrades and the Depot restroom project. All three are currently moving forward in a timely and on budget schedule manner. Updates will be provided in other staff reports. Here is the latest from Washington Park:

Parks Foreperson Brian Tottenham has been working with Jesse/VECA Electrical on planning/executing the trenching for the electrical conduit. We learned in C section that the water lines are fine, and can be left in place. Because of this, we are able to do the water delivery improvements above ground as needed. We are focusing on the electrical work now to better manage the timeline. There will be some pedestal relocation, so it is more timely to work on the water hook ups after conduit and new pedestals are in place. Brian is communicating this to Jim Rains (former Parks maintenance crew member, now with Wastewater Treatment. Our in house welder), and will plan work with him as we figure out just how much will be required.

We are able to add some 50 amp service. Because of permitting limitations and the amount of power required, we can't do this at every pedestal, but maybe 2/3 of them. Once we have this confirmed, we will update our campground maps to reflect the 50 amp service available in both C and A.

It is looking like we will need to upgrade at least one of the large breakers in the utility vault next to the B4 pay station. Once trenching is completed along with conduit in place, Jesse/VECA pulls the new wire and does the actual electrical hook up. Trenching is going well, and we were surprised at how soon the conduit will be arriving.

After enjoying a relatively quiet December, the mid January wind event arrived and presented all of us with several challenges; power outages, roads closed, trails damaged and various parks and the cemetery subjected to significant tree loss, and some infrastructure damage. Our team has been doing a great job cleaning up and getting our parks and trails accessible. I have spent a fair amount of time in the ACFL supporting Steve Phillips' over the past couple of weeks. We are very close to having all of the trails at least passable. We will need to fine tune as time permits.

As the City owns and manages two dams within the ACFL, the Department of Ecology has safety protocol required for each. You may remember the work done at the Little Cranberry dam in the mid 90's. This included tree and vegetation removal, the construction of a spillway and installation of a log boom. We do an annual inspection and send that to DOE.

The earthen dam at Whistle Lake has not been upgraded to these standards, and DOE has reached out to us to explore options for necessary safety upgrades. The dam, just north of Toot Swamp is crossed by trail #205 and is rarely noticed by most forest visitors. We are currently working with a consultant on some options going forward and may have these ready for discussion at the March Forest Board meeting. It should be noted that Whistle Lake is still the backup water supply for the City.

A variety of City departments, including Parks & Recreation, continue work with the Anacortes Family Center and other generous community support groups on the issues surrounding homelessness. The embedded social worker discussion throughout the City Council's 2021 budget deliberations have given us some options we have not previously had. We continue to currently work together delivering services to those in need, while working on updated community protocol. We look forward to having some options to present to Council in the next few weeks.

We did have some minor storm damage on the Guemes Channel Trail as a result of the recent west wind event. We were able to do all repair work in house, and within the parameters of our maintenance permits. I am reconnecting with the Pacific Northwest Trail Association Western Washington Regional Coordinator, Sterling Collins-Hill. He attended one of our "recent" in person Forest Board meetings asking about signage options. He and I are working on some informational signage at #248 and #100 trailheads (off of west end of 23rd Street). He has some grant funding available.

Friends of the Forest Executive Director Asa Deane and I continue our regular meetings every two weeks. We are excited to be putting together an ACFL volunteer project for the end of February. Due to pandemic protocol, pre-registration to limit numbers will be required. Specifics for this will be distributed by Parks & Rec Communications Czar Victoria Wong soon.

Thank you again to the Samish Indian Nation for our monthly connection and ACFL hike with Denise Crowe. Our January trip through the Little Cranberry burn zone was an exciting treasure hunt of native plant renewal power. Denise' sharing of Samish tradition and her years of ACFL presence greatly enriches our approach to ACFL management with every trip.

ACFL Steve and I continue to work with Planning staff on trail repair projects. The windstorm has been a bit of a setback. We will get back on that schedule soon.

Parks Staff will be at City Council on February 8th to talk about Washington Park Fare increases. On February 8th and 22nd we are scheduled to discuss new Parks and Recreation Impact Fees with the Mayor and Council.
Bob Vaux, Assistant Director

Parks Maintenance

Crew Update- Special thanks to the Rec team this winter for helping out. Having Dustin take on the sanitation route 3x a week and Travis being available to help wherever is needed has been helpful. After the January 13th wind storm the crew has spent the rest of January cleaning up trees in the ACFL, the Cemetery, Tursi Park, Washington Park and on the Guemes Channel Trail. We are not completely done with the clean-up, but we are chipping away at it.

Grand View Cemetery Expansion Update- Tiger Construction has spent most of January battling the wet and cold weather on site. We have the opportunity to save expenses and move forward with asphaltting the access road in this phase. The work on the access road requires less excavation than expected so the crew has been prepping the road for asphalt for the work to be done during the week of Feb. 8th. Tiger has tried to work the dirt, but conditions have been wet so we are going to wait until we get a good weather window to hydroseed. Depending on how long we have to wait to hydroseed the dirt, the Parks crew will be prepared to throw down grass seed so that we are meeting the DOE requirements. We have been doing our best to keep the project updates on the expansion here <https://www.anacorteswa.gov/1285/Grand-View-Cemetery-Expansion>

Skatepark Lights- The Skatepark received some new LED lights thanks to Russ Pittis who was able to purchase these for the Parks Department. Public Works was able to install the new light fixtures and now the park is

glowing from dusk until 10pm each night for skaters to work on their backside, grinds or just safely be at the park with lights on!

Tommy Thompson Parkway- As always the TTP is seeing lost of activity this past month. TTP count in January 2020 was a total of 2,776 users and in January 2021 we have had a total of 4,099 users. This is a 32% increase in trail use.

Volunteers- This past month we have added a few new volunteers to our team. Our very own Parks Board member Alex Hernandez has join the TTP sweep team. Alex is the Monday trail sweeper. The Anacortes High School Honor Society Club has scheduled a few litter pick up work parties with me. They have done litter pick up at Washington Park and Storvik Park. Kiwanis Club is going to help with storm clean up. They are starting with Storvik Park and helping pick up branches. As always we appreciate all of our volunteers.

What is next for Parks... Get fields ready for baseball season, work on the Washington Park Utility upgrade, get ready to hire seasonal staff for spring/ summer and do our best to keep our parks and trails looking the best we can.

Nicole Johnston, Parks Manager

Recreation Staff Report:

Youth Basketball: The modified practice only basketball season is scheduled to start up February 1st. Each team has no more than six players and one coach, practices have an emphasis on individual development and skill building. We have 72 children signed up to participate in the six-week program.

Daddy Daughter Date Night: Staff canceled the annual Daddy Daughter Dance due to COVID restrictions. To replace the event the recreation staff is promoting a daddy date night, which is scheduled for February 19th. We are promoting that participants take their child out to a local restaurant and enjoy the evening together. We are providing participants with discounts that have been provided by local restaurants and post dinner activities such as hiking, biking, disk golf, manicure.

Pee Wee Sports: We are checking with the school district to see if there is a need to offer some type of Pee Wee Sports program for the youngest elementary kid. We would like to use a gym if possible. The template would follow the Camp Active model we did last Fall.

Fitness Fun: Staff partnered with the Anacortes Library to offer a virtual fitness program. The program guides you through a four-part video series with options for all fitness levels. The program will premiere on February 3rd at 7pm on our Facebook page and be available to watch on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC38maL3ZWnZGVUBzTmoG65w> the following day.

Depot Plaza Restroom Project: Delivery of the restroom by CXT (manufacturer) takes place on Wednesday, February 3, and final installation and concrete work around the building should be complete by the end of February. Updated pictures of the project can be found here: <https://www.anacorteswa.gov/1282/Depot-Plaza-Restroom>

Senior Center: Staff is partnering with the Senior Center to offer a virtual exercise program (Silver Foxes w/Richard Simmons) for seniors via Zoom. Staff will be facilitating the online programing and sharing the video to the participants in live time. The program begins February 1st and will run Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am-11am. We have also offered some "Zoom Help" sessions for Seniors who would like to learn more about using Zoom. Zoom is helpful in getting the seniors to socialize in a virtual "setting"

Anacortes Waterfront Alliance Partnership: Working to get boats/boats, equipment transferred over to AWA. Equipment has been stored offsite at various City facilities over the past several years so locating and preparing it for transport is somewhat challenging.

Dustin South, Recreation Manager

[Travis Anderson, Recreation Coordinator](#)

[Anacortes Senior Activity Center](#)

[Lea Devere](#)

While we remain closed to the public, we are continuing to provide as many familiar Center classes, activities and resources as we can. Plus we are adding new ones all the time! Please call Lea DeVere at (360) 293-7473 or email her at lindad@cityofanacortes.org if you have any questions or need more information. Stay well and be safe!

NEW PROGRAMS COMING UP

Chef Jackie's Cookbook Club

Try out some new delicious and nutritious recipes that may just end up in an actual cookbook! Chef Jackie will send out two recipes each month that will coincide with free virtual gatherings via Zoom. During these Zoom sessions, you will be able to discuss all aspects of each new recipe with Chef Jackie, as well as report your success with previous recipes. Participants will need to obtain their own ingredients so that they can prepare the recipe. The Zoom meetings will start promptly at 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. The next Zoom meetings will be held at 10.m. on Wednesdays, February 10 and February 24. Meetings will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes depending on the recipes and the number of participants. Email Chef Jackie at chefjackiedavison@gmail.com to receive a Zoom invitation.

Wellness Day: Breath Relaxation, Balance and Hydration

Join Rita Yribar, instructor of the Center's Seated Wellness class, for a virtual presentation at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 23. In this interactive program, Rita will teach you some exercises for using your breath to help you relax. She will also give you some basic techniques you can use to help strengthen your physical balance, and she will give some suggestions on how to keep hydrated. To join this virtual wellness meeting via Zoom, click on this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/99886084882?pwd=WTNBaWtmdzI1OGhuZ2QrWUNhZUIyUT09>.

Zoom Room Help

Do you want to join one of the Center's virtual programs? Would you like to be able to chat with friends and family using this new technology? If you need help joining and participating in Zoom virtual gatherings or if you simply want to sharpen your Zoom skills, join Dustin South from the Anacortes Parks and Recreation Department in his new Zoom Room help sessions. Dustin will be hosting sessions via Zoom at 10 a.m. starting on Thursday, February 11. For more information or to sign-up, email Dustin at the Parks and Recreation Department at dustins@cityofanacortes.org. A meeting invitation weblink will be emailed the day before the virtual meeting.

Aging and Spiritual Wellness

Spaces are still available in a new online discussion group focusing on spirituality which is one of the six dimensions of wellness (physical, emotional, intellectual, occupational, social and spiritual). Spiritual wellness involves values and beliefs that provide a purpose in our lives. Have you ever had an opportunity to talk about what gives your life meaning and to listen with an open mind to what others believe? This group will be facilitated by Pat Buckley who has a Doctorate in Ministry and enjoys group process. If you are interested in this topic-focused, non-denominational monthly Zoom meeting, call Pat at (206) 200-3824 or email her at pbuckl@aol.com by February 15. Date and time to be determined by participants.

Virtual Bridge Games

Some of our Senior Activity Center bridge players are working on restarting games in a virtual format, with the assistance of Center and Parks and Recreation staff. The goal is to be able to play games of bridge using online software while at the same time being in the same “room” together using Zoom so that players can visit and chat. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Lea DeVere at (360) 293-7473 or at lindad@cityofanacortes.org.

Silver Foxes Back Again

The Silver Foxes are back! Join Dustin South and Travis Anderson of Anacortes Parks and Recreation for virtual, interactive Silver Foxes exercise sessions. These will be held at the same time as always, 10 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning starting February 1. There is no charge, but you will need signup in advance to participate in the virtual session. To register, go to <https://anacortesparksandrecreation.sportsites.com/>. Join any time!

You can also access the Silver Foxes videos to exercise on your own by going to the following YouTube links:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmLBBkdiqOI>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQdB6A2CLA8>

Virtual Coffee with Laurie

The Anacortes Senior Activity Center is once again hosting “Coffee with Laurie.” Mayor Gere will be available for a virtual question and answer session from 1:30 to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, February 24. Register in advance for this webinar using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83604257317?pwd=Sk5yZjlBVzdKN3F0QmhxNzZIOTBkQT09>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Once on the webinar, you will need to follow these guidelines:

- When you first enter the webinar:
- join in “listen-only” mode ~ the host will unmute attendees one at a time to speak.
- enter your name, number or other chosen identifier. This will allow the Mayor and other panelists to identify who is speaking.
- You have the ability to virtually raise your hand if you have a comment or question. (NOTE: If you are using a phone to access the Zoom meeting, press *9 to raise your hand.) The host will unmute you and announce your name when it is your turn to speak.
- Attendees will be muted and not audible except during times they are designated to speak. When you are announced, you will be able to unmute yourself.
- For the best sound quality and to decrease background noise, please use headphones or a mic.

MEALS ON WHEELS NEWS

Meals on Wheels Recipients Appreciate Volunteers

- *“They are so precious to us and to God. They don’t have to volunteer but they know the value of giving. The volunteers for Meals on Wheels should be shown appreciation for their time and energy to help this community in a wonderful way. I certainly am nourished and uplifted by their diligent effort. Thank you from my heart!”*
- *“What kind of price can you put on a smile ~ especially on a wet, cold, grey day? The seasonings sprinkled into our meals are the smiles, pleasant and happy conversations during preparations ~ these seasonings go on to touch our days and those we are in contact with during the day. Bless each and every one of them for their care.”*

Meals on Wheels and Pickup Meals

The Meals on Wheels delivery program is still operating out of the Center every Monday through Friday. You can pick up five to ten meals once a week by calling (360) 293-7473. Ask for the Nutrition department. To sign up for Meals on Wheels home delivery, call (360) 416-1500.

STAYING WELL

Wellness Tip: Blood Pressure

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a symptomless “silent killer” that quietly damages blood vessels and leads to serious health problems such as stroke, kidney disease and more. Most of the time there are no symptoms and signs of high blood pressure. Since hypertension is symptomless, the best way to know if your blood pressure is in a healthy or unhealthy range is to get it checked. Using medications as prescribed and making positive lifestyle changes can help enhance your quality of life and reduce your risk of hypertension related health diseases.

Six Dimensions of Wellness: Physical

Physical wellness focuses on maintaining a healthy quality of life that allows you to get through your daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress. To achieve this requires a combination of regular activity, exercise and healthy eating habits. One of the big questions right now is “how do I stay active during Covid-19?” Here are some tips:

- Reduce long periods of time spent sitting. Take a break of three to five minutes every 20 to 30 minutes. Simply stand up and stretch or take a walk around the house.
- Plan a physical activity or an exercise break by yourself or join an online class. Set a time and stick to it.
- Get enough rest at night. A cool, dark room is best. For good physical health, most people need seven to nine hours of sleep per night to function at their best.
- Eat a balanced diet. This means eating a wide variety and the right amount of food.
- Keep yourself hydrated. Drink eight eight-ounce glasses of water each day.
- Take preventative measures against injury. Once a year, review your medications with your doctor and have your vision checked. Find ways to improve your balance and strength. Make changes in your home to help you prevent falls. Remove throw rugs, improve quality of light, and put grab bars in the shower or by the toilet. Use a shower bench in the shower. In the kitchen, move items you use daily to lower shelves. Practice good lifting techniques and wear proper footwear inside and outside.

PROGRAMS

Aging Mastery Alumni Club Meetings

If you have attended the Aging Mastery Program and want to continue learning about new aspects of healthy aging, join the Aging Mastery Alumni Club. Monthly virtual Zoom meetings are usually held from 11 a.m. to 12:15 pm on the 4th Thursday of each month (with exception of holidays). A variety of topics are discussed, and you will have a chance to inspire and support others while continuing on your own path to good physical and mental health. For more information, email Bonnie Nelson, Program Coordinator at amp4alumni@gmail.com.

Coffee with Karl

Join CSO Karl Wolfswinkel with the Anacortes Police Department to discuss police matters affecting our community and nation. The meeting will take place virtually at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 9. Email CSO Wolfswinkel at karlw@cityofanacortes.org or call (360) 293-4684 for a link to the meeting.

Creative Circle

Since it is not possible to meet in person during the pandemic, the Creative Circle has been meeting virtually via Zoom. Virtual meetings are every Monday, starting at 10 a.m. Some of the projects that people work on include beading, knitting, crocheting, felting, jewelry making, polymer clay, egg art and more. New members are welcome! Join us to meet new people and get your projects done. There is no cost; just bring your projects and dial in. To receive an emailed Zoom invitation or for more information on Creative Circle, contact Deborah Francis at (360) 720-2699 or deborahfrancisfinearts@gmail.com.

Aging Mastery Starter Kits

Get your own FREE Aging Mastery Program Starter Kit! (See the flyer at the back of this newsletter for more information.) This self-paced kit can help you take small steps to improve your health and quality of life. It includes a playbook, exercise DVDs, activity cards, and a weekly check-in notepad. The playbook presents the six dimensions of aging:

Gratitude and mindfulness

Health and well-being

Finances and future planning

Learning and creativity

Connections and community

Legacy and purpose

You do not need a computer to use the Starter Kit. If you are interested in receiving a free kit, contact Lea DeVere at the Senior Activity Center by calling (360) 293-7473 or email her at lindad@cityofanacortes.org. A new discussion group is forming for folks who want to work through the kits together, sharing ideas and support. For more information on the Aging Mastery program, watch this great video put together by the National Council on Aging. Click on <https://youtu.be/r0haI8SxijU>.

Fidalgo Book Group

The group meets from 9:30 to 11 a.m. via Zoom on the first Thursday of each month. The next meeting will be on February 4. For that meeting, the group will read *Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead* by Olga Tokarczuk. In a remote Polish village, Janina devotes the dark winter days to studying astrology, translating the poetry of William Blake, and taking care of the summer homes of wealthy Warsaw residents. Her reputation as a crank and a recluse is amplified by her not-so-secret preference for the company of animals over humans. Then a neighbor, Big Foot, turns up dead. Soon other bodies are discovered, in increasingly strange circumstances. As suspicions mount, Janina inserts herself into the investigation, certain that she knows whodunit. If only anyone would pay her mind... A deeply satisfying thriller cum fairy tale. For March, the group will read *The Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver. To receive a Zoom invitation to the meetings, contact Terri Bawden at (509) 670-4412 or at terribawden@hotmail.com.

T'ai Chi Chih Available Online

Joan Roulac, who leads the Center's moving meditation classes, now offers beginning and intermediate T'ai Chi Chih classes online using Zoom. For more information or to sign up, call Joan at (360) 588-4018 or email her at joan@mountaintopmusings.com.

Seated Wellness with Rita Yribar

Rita Yribar is offering a free online chair yoga class via Zoom. These classes will be held every Tuesday from 2 to 3:15 p.m. The class is designed to allow for each person's physical needs. The class is free, but donations to the ASAC are encouraged. If you have any questions, contact Rita at rita.chairclass@gmail.com.

Advance Directives Online Course

Adrienne Douchette who normally teaches a class on advance directives at the Center has let us know that there is a great website program that you can watch to get help doing your own advance care planning. The link to that website is https://cedar.wvu.edu/pci/lectures_events/advance_care_planning/9/.

PC and Android Consultation

Computer assistance volunteer Martin Harris is available for phone consultations from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays to help with PC and Android tablets, and smartphones. He is also available anytime Monday through Friday by prior arrangement. Martin especially wants to help new users connect and use the internet for basic functions such as email, entertainment apps and Zoom conferencing that you can use to connect with friends and family via your smartphone or tablet. Call the Senior Activity Center at (360) 293-7473, and we will connect you with Martin.

Cultured Purls Knitting Guild

Join fellow knitters online for knitting, conversation and occasionally speakers from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is February 2. If you would like to be sent a Zoom invitation, call Pat Buckley at (206) 200-3824.

Communication / Technology Consults

Joel Bergsbaken from the Hearing Speech and Deaf Center in Bellingham is providing free virtual consultations for seniors and their family members. These virtual consultations include live captions you can read! Learn how hearing changes affect communication and techniques that can help you improve how you communicate. Joel can direct you to hearing assistance technology and will give you basic information about hearing aids and hearing tests so you can prepare for an evaluation by an audiologist. Call the Center at (360) 293-7473 if you would like a free consultation with Joel.

Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind

The purpose of Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind is to promote opportunity, equality, and independence for visually impaired and legally blind people. In spite of COVID19 virtual meetings are happening monthly from 1 to 3 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month. To join in this meeting call (857) 799-9325. For information on future meetings or if you have any questions, contact President Andy Arvidson at (425) 218-0190.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Masks Featuring Anacortes Artists

Local artists Al Currier, Ann Schrievogl and Jennifer Bowman have generously donated art to create COVID-19 masks with 100% of the proceeds benefiting Senior Activity Center. These masks have been very popular, and they are selling fast! Many volunteer hands have been busy sewing up these beautiful masks, making sure that we get them into as many hands as possible. The cost is \$25. Place your order online at www.asacfoundation.org and click on "Shop" or contact Michele Pope at popejm@comcast.net.

Offices Closed for Presidents Day

The Center offices will be closed on Monday, February 15, for the Presidents Day holiday. Regular office and meal service will resume on Tuesday, February 16.

Newsletters Available at the Center

There are paper copies of the ASAC newsletter available on the bench outside the front door of the Center. If you have a friend or family member who does not have access to the online version of the newsletter, please pick up a copy for them at the Center. If you would like to take a bunch of newsletters to a group or organization, give us a call at (360) 293-7473 and let us know how many you would like. We will hand them to you through the front door.

No "Trinkets and Treasures" Donations

We are unable to process any donations of physical items at this time, other than puzzles and paperback books. (We welcome monetary donations.) You can take food donations to the food banks listed at the back of this newsletter.

Jigsaw Puzzles and Paperbacks Needed

Our supplies of puzzles and paperbacks are diminishing – we welcome any that you are finished with and would like to pass on. (No hardback books, please.) We have puzzles and books available for free on the carts outside the front door of Center between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday. We would appreciate your donations so that we can keep the exchange going. When you are looking through the puzzles and books, please browse one at a time so that you can maintain social distancing and do wear your mask. If someone is there when you arrive, we ask that you wait until that person has finished.

CLASSES AT ISLAND HOSPITAL

Registration is required. Call (360) 299-4204 or email communityed@islandhospital.org to sign up.

Balance Screening

Island Hospital physical therapists can help determine where your body is vulnerable and help you develop strategies to prevent falls. Appointments are required between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 2, at Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy at Island Hospital. There is no charge.

Living Better with Diabetes

Today diabetes affects one in nine adults in the U.S. To derail that trend, more Americans must commit to lead healthier, more active lives. If you have or are at risk of developing diabetes, there are positive steps you can take to control your health. Join Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator Mary Beth Robinson, MS, RD/LD, CDE from 10 to 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 3, for a virtual discussion on healthy eating, being active, and reducing risks to help manage diabetes. There is no charge.

Medicare 101: Understanding Your Medicare Choices

Do you need help deciphering the Medicare puzzle? Join a virtual presentation from 1 to 2:30 p.m. on Monday, February 8, to learn more about traditional Medicare coverage, Medicare Advantage Plans, Prescription Drug Coverage, gaps, enrollment and fraud protection. There is no charge.

Improving Your Aging Memory

Is your memory not quite what it used to be? Join an Island Hospital speech-language pathologist Libby Lewis (MA, MEd, CCC-SLP) from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. on Wednesday, February 10, for a virtual presentation to learn strategies and activities to improve your memory and keep your mind sharp. There is no charge.

Swallow Screening

Concerned about your swallow? Do you cough or clear your throat frequently when eating or drinking, have wet sounding vocal quality, have congestion with repetitive colds or pneumonia, have difficulty with chewing and/or require multiple swallows with bites or sips? If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms, meet with a speech-language pathologist to determine if you might have a swallowing disorder on Tuesday, February 16. Appointments are available between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. at Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy at Island Hospital. There is no charge.

Nutrition and Osteoporosis

Dietary habits play an important role in your risk of developing osteoporosis. Managing these habits can be particularly important as we age. A diet without enough calcium and vitamin D can contribute to weak bones. Calcium is a key building block for your bones, while vitamin D helps your body to absorb calcium. Join Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator Mary Beth Robinson (MS, RD/LD, CDE) from 10 to 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 17, for a virtual discussion on nutritional tips to help maintain good bone health. There is no charge.

Aging in Place

Join Kären Flint, Community Outreach and Education Specialist from Hospice of the Northwest, from 10 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, February 25, for a virtual program to learn tips and strategies for healthy aging and how to stay in your home longer. There is no charge.

FIDALGO POOL AND FITNESS CENTER

A variety of fitness classes are offered in virtual format that you can access from the comfort of your own home. These are just a few of the classes offered. Pre-registration is required. To register or for more information, call (360) 293-0673 or visit www.fidalgopool.com.

SilverSneakers® Classic

This class meets from 9:15 to 10 a.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays and offers exercises designed to increase muscular strength, range of motion and activities aiding daily living. Hand-held weights, elastic tubing with handles and a ball are all offered for resistance. A chair is used for seated and/or standing support.

Core and More

This class meets from 8 to 8:45 a.m. on Mondays and Fridays and focuses on proper activation of the deep core muscles and how to integrate them into entire body movements to enhance muscular-skeletal health. Stability, mobility and flexibility exercises for the spine will be practiced.

Flow Yoga

This class meets from 10:15 to 11 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays and emphasizes dynamic movement, seamlessly stringing postures together, one to another, connected through breath. It is both supportive and self-paced.

ANACORTES LIBRARY PROGRAMS

All programs are virtual. Visit library.cityofanacortes.org for more information and links to attend.

Stay Fit @ Home

Looking to get fit from home? Join Parks and Recreation Coordinator Travis Anderson at 7 p.m. beginning on Wednesday, February 3, for a low impact, high-rewards at-home workout routine you can do in your living room! Travis will guide you through a four-part video series including beginning exercises, a warmup and a workout each week in February with options for all fitness levels. Grab your water bottle and get ready to have fun!

Author John Hoyte Presents *Persistence of Light*

Join a special live Zoom event at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10, with author John Hoyte as he shares his book *Persistence of Light*. This is the story of John's journey from childhood in China in a Japanese prison camp in World War II, to leading a British expedition over the Alps with an elephant, to being an entrepreneur and inventor in Silicon Valley. John now lives in Bellingham, Washington, with his wife, the poet Luci Shaw.

Trivia Night: 21 Questions for 2021

Do you always solve the puzzle before Vanna reveals all the letters? Are you smarter than those families on Family Feud? Join this live virtual event at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, February 17 and have your chance to show off your smarts! One lucky team, randomly drawn from the list of participants, will win a team prize!

The Sound of a Dry Martini: The 1970s

Join in this virtual Jazz Series program at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 24. The Anacortes Library's jazz series continues with Episode 3 of "The Sound of a Dry Martini: Remembering Paul Desmond," with Brent Jensen. This is the finale of three episodes covering the 1950s through 1970s, sponsored by the Manieri Jazz & Swing Endowment. Visit library.cityofanacortes.org for links to view previous episodes.

Together We Discover

The Anacortes Library has a great selection of short videos for adults presenting interesting people in the Anacortes community who share their passions a wide variety of activities such as bee keeping, fly fishing, rock hounding, acrylic

painting, and much more. To access these videos, go to www.anacorteswa.gov/1083/Adult-Programs to find the Anacortes Library's "Together We Discover" programs.

RESOURCES FOR SENIORS

Ideas for Aging Well

Bonnie Nelson, Coordinator for the Center's Aging Mastery program, each month shares videos and online articles that offer inspiration on aging well. This month learn how starting new tiny habits can bring big positive changes to your life

- Here is a TED Talk about what makes for a happy life, presented by Robert Waldinger and based on a 75-year study: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KkKuTCFvzI&t=3s>
- And this is a TED Talk called "The Power of Deliberate Listening" by Ronnie Polaneczky: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v+A343tlP5iUA>

Benefits CheckUp

Benefits CheckUp is a free service of the National Council on Aging (NCOA) that can assist you connect to resources to meet the costs of basic needs such as medications, food, utilities, legal aid, health care, housing, in-home services, taxes, transportation and employment training. Benefits CheckUp is an online questionnaire that asks you a series of questions and then creates a

personalized report identifying programs that might be useful to you. To access the questionnaire, go to www.benefitscheckup.org.

Aging and Disability Resources

Aging and Disability Resources (ADR) helps people who are age 60 and older, people with disabilities, and family members access a wide variety of community resources, information, services and programs, including medical transport and much more. ADR provides confidential services free of charge and can help you find the information and programs that meet your individual needs. ADR specialists are available to assist you by appointment between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call (360) 428-1309 or e-mail ADRCskagit@dshs.wa.gov.

Mental Health Support Group

NAMI of Skagit holds open support groups online for those living with mental illness, and family members, partners and supportive friends. The group meets from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Call Marti with questions at (360) 770-5666.

Health Insurance Assistance

For health insurance not related to Medicare, Island Hospital's health plan assisters are available by calling (360) 299-4924. For Medicare, phone appointments with a SHIBA volunteer can be made by calling (360) 299-4212. The Health Resource Center and SHIBA continue to be closed to the public until further notice. However, SHIBA volunteers will be checking the SHIBA helpline on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. SHIBA volunteers are accommodating Medicare beneficiaries by providing SHIBA services over the phone and e-mail. Your patience is appreciated while staff works to adjust methods of providing valuable information to the community.

Ensure Available at the Center

The Skagit County Senior Nutrition Program offers liquid meal supplements (Ensure Plus) to seniors for a suggested donation of \$30 per case. Ensure is available at the Center between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. To qualify, you need to:

- Be 60 years of age or older
- Live in Skagit County
- Have a prescription from your physician or registered dietician (a new prescription will be needed every 6-12 months)

There are a variety of flavors available. Contact Amanda Miller at (360) 293-7473 if you have any questions.

TAX ASSISTANCE

Tax Assistance Program

The Skagit County AARP Tax-Aide program is currently awaiting advice from our National AARP Program as to whether or not they will be preparing tax returns next year. If that service is able to return, we will bring you information about it. Watch for details in upcoming newsletter.

Property Tax Reduction

Seniors are not required to file with the IRS to receive the property tax exemption. If you have filed, the Assessor's Office needs to see your tax return to verify your eligibility. For 2021, the Assessor's Office will resume auditing participants. Their service counter is not currently open to the public, although they are hopeful that they will be resuming in-person service. Until that happens there are several ways to provide information to them: mail, non-secure email, fax or by dropping information in the locked drop box in their hallway. They are located at 700 S Second St, Room 204, Mount Vernon, WA 98273. Note: income limits have increased and \$42,390 is the new Combined Disposable Income Limit. In addition, for 2020 the requirement for two witness signatures has been eliminated.

ASSISTANCE GETTING SUPPLIES

Grocery Assistance

- The Market of Anacortes is offering curbside pickup. Call (360) 588-8181 to make arrangements. You can access a shopping list and more information on their website at www.themarketswa.com/anacortes. Shopping in the store is available for at-risk individuals only between the hours of 6 and 7 a.m.
- Safeway has "Golden Hours" that allows shopping for those over 60 between 7 and 9 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They also offer grocery delivery through "Instacart." Details of both programs are on the Safeway website at <https://local.safeway.com/safeway/wa/anacortes/911-11th-st.html> or at <https://delivery.safeway.com/#>.
- Instacart is a service that offers delivery from Safeway, Costco and Fred Meyer. Go to their website at <https://www.instacart.com/>.
- Anacortes Food Coop is offering curbside pickup. Email your order to anacortesfoodcoop@gmail.com or call (360) 299-3562. The Coop will call to confirm your email order. Payment can be made with cash, check or credit card. No debit cards with pins accepted. Fulfillment may take a few hours depending on staff availability.

Volunteer Services Can Help

Due to the pandemic, Community Action's Volunteer Services Program has made some changes to their program, focusing on the immediate needs of the senior and disabled community. Program staff are working hard to reach out to each and every client, assessing their current needs, offering information and referrals for access to food and energy assistance, and offering grocery and prescription delivery wherever possible for those who currently either do not feel safe or are unable to leave their homes at this time. Volunteers from the program can pick up pre-paid grocery orders from local stores that offer call-in and/or online ordering and deliver it to your home. Your order will be left on your porch. You can also order and pre-pay for your medications at a pharmacy of your choice, and the volunteers will pick up and deliver your medications to you. Volunteers are also providing firewood to those clients who depend on wood as their only source of heat, and volunteers can also help with yardwork. If you would like help or know of someone who could use some help, contact Diane Aldridge at (360) 610-0809 to sign up for the program.

Individuals at Risk or in Isolation

If you are an at-risk individual who is on quarantine or in isolation, and you find yourself in need of assistance in getting and/or picking up supplies or food, or if you need help finding out who to call to get supplies or food delivered to you, call the Skagit County Resource Assistance Line at (360) 416-1892 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. daily. Leave a message and wait for a response in about 24 hours.

Food Banks and Other Food Assistance

- Volunteer Services, Community Action of Skagit County ~ (360) 610-0809
- Salvation Army Food Bank – 3001 R Avenue, Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:10 to 3:30 p.m. Call (360) 293-6682.
- Helping Hands Food Bank – 1211 M Avenue, Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call (360) 293-6445. They will do deliveries if someone is unable to leave home.
- Red Bag Pantry is available at the Anacortes Fire Department on 13th Street and the Anacortes Library on 10th Street. Both pantries are just outside the buildings and are available 24 hours a day. They are re-stocked frequently.
- Anacortes Family Center has emergency packs of food. Request via email at Samantha@anacortesfamily.org. Samantha will arrange a time for you to pick up the food.

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS THE CENTER

The ASAC Foundation Financially Supports the Center with the Help of People Like You!

The Foundation raises funds to support the Center, and donations of any size are most welcome and appreciated. The support from our many generous donors helps maintain the Center as a vibrant, fun and inspirational community center. The Foundation's goal is to "Help Seniors Thrive!" It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and all donations are tax deductible. Please visit the Foundation's website at asacfoundationanacortes.org. Below are examples of some of the ways that the Foundation helps:

- Copy machine
- Internet access
- Newsletter
- Furnishings
- Equipment
- Office supplies
- Postage
- Staff support
- Kitchen supplies
- Coffee and tea
- Fundraising expenses
- Special projects
- Building improvements
- Landscaping
- And much more!

BEWARE OF SCAMS

Four Signs That It Is a Scam

Sign #1: Scammers PRETEND to be from an organization you know.

Scammers often pretend to be contacting you on behalf of the government. They might use a real name, like the Social Security Administration, the IRS, or Medicare, or make up a name that sounds official. Some pretend to be from a business you know, like a utility company, a tech company, or even a charity asking for donations.

They use technology to change the phone number that appears on your caller ID. So the name and number you see might not be real.

Sign #2: Scammers say there is a PROBLEM or a PRIZE.

They might say you are in trouble with the government. Or you owe money. Or someone in your family had an emergency. Or that there is a virus on your computer.

Some scammers say there is a problem with one of your accounts and that you need to verify some information.

Others will lie and say you won money in a lottery or sweepstakes but have to pay a fee to get it.

Sign #3: Scammers PRESSURE you to act immediately.

Scammers want you to act before you have time to think. If you are on the phone, they might tell you not to hang up so you cannot check out their story.

They might threaten to arrest you, sue you, take away your driver's or business license, or deport you. They might say your computer is about to be corrupted.

Sign #4: Scammers tell you to PAY in a specific way.

They often insist that you pay by sending money through a money transfer company or by putting money on a gift card and then giving them the number on the back.

Some will send you a check (that will later turn out to be fake), tell you to deposit it, and then send them money.

What You Can Do to Avoid a Scam

- **Block unwanted calls and text messages.** Take steps to block unwanted calls and to filter unwanted text messages.
- **Don't give your personal or financial information in response to a request that you did not expect.** Legitimate organizations will not call, email, or text to ask for your personal information, like your Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers.
- If you get an email or text message from a company you do business with and you think it is real, it is still best not to click on any links. Instead, contact them using a website you know is trustworthy. Or look up their phone number. Don't call a number they gave you or the number from your caller ID.
- **Resist the pressure to act immediately.** Legitimate businesses will give you time to make a decision. Anyone who pressures you to pay or give them your personal information is a scammer.
- **Know how scammers tell you to pay.** Never pay someone who insists you pay with a gift card or by using a money transfer service. And never deposit a check and send money back to someone.
- **Stop and talk to someone you trust.** Before you do anything else, tell someone – a friend, a family member, a neighbor – what happened. Talking about it could help you realize it is a scam.

LATEST INFORMATION ON COVID-19

Vaccines for COVID-19

The COVID-19 vaccines have begun to arrive and are being distributed in Washington State. Two vaccines have been authorized for emergency use by U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and both vaccines have also passed independent review by medical experts in the Scientific Safety Review Workgroup, as part of the Western States Pact. The Washington State Department of Health has information on the new vaccines, how they are made, how they work in your body, and information on the distribution plan in our state. Visit the Department of Health information website at covidvaccinewa.org for more information.

Continue to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

Even as vaccines are beginning to be distributed, it is important to continue practicing social distancing and wearing cloth face coverings in public settings. While wearing a mask may protect you, it is more likely to protect others if you are a carrier of the virus without knowing it. COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or can be inhaled into the lungs. Studies and evidence on infection control report that these droplets usually travel around six feet (about two arm's length). Cloth face coverings provide an extra layer to help prevent the respiratory droplets from traveling in the air and onto other people. Stay well and help the other people around you stay well by wearing a mask.

Sources: CDC, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases, and Washington State Department of Health

More Information on COVID-19

For the latest information on the COVID-19 pandemic, look to these sites for reliable information:

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html

- Washington State: coronavirus.wa.gov
- Skagit County Public Health: www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/HealthDiseases/coronavirus.htm. In addition, Skagit County has set up call lines to answer questions and bring resources to the public. You can call (360) 416-1500 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. 7 days a week.
- City of Anacortes: www.cityofanacortes.org

QUESTIONS?

Call the Center If You Have Questions

If you do not see the resources you need, or cannot access them due to lack of computer, call (360) 293-7473. Staff is in the office Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Fridays from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Please leave a message if you reach the answering machine.