

Hi Puyallup Friends,

Puyallup City Manager Bill McDonald has recommended we *eliminate the Parks and Recreation Director* and *dismantle the P&R Department* and has made and proposes *cuts in sports and recreation/community programs*. I have been opposing these actions on the Council for the past several months, but so far, a majority of the Council has been supporting the City Manager. I do not believe these actions represent the values and interests of our community, so I think it's time for the Council to hear what the citizens of our community think (You!). (*see below for how to voice your view*).

What's most frustrating is that we don't face a budget crisis that calls for such actions. This is a debate about values and the importance of our parks and recreation programs to our community. The City Manager has *already cut* two adult softball leagues, scorekeepers for adult softball games, and the summer wading pool in our downtown park (used by over 3,000 kids/year) and *proposes to eliminate* the Halloween event (formerly the Haunted Hayride), Tuesday's noon concerts downtown, a special recreation program for kids that suffer from sport-related head trauma injuries, teen camp counselors, and Sunday afternoon hours at the Rec Center. All of the above plus some other cuts save the city about \$100,000. We have a \$38 Million general fund budget - there are countless other ways to save \$100,000.

16 out of 17 cities our size (25 - 50,000 pop.) in western Washington have a Parks and Recreation Department and Director, and for good reason. A strong P&R program is well recognized as critical to a healthy and vibrant community that people want to live in and businesses want to invest in. A P&R Director manages all aspects of the Department and works with the community to continually improve parks, facilities (e.g., sport fields), and programs to meet the community's needs. Absent a Director, our P&R program will undoubtedly suffer a slow decline in quality and importance.

But, here is the optimistic news. I believe we can stop this with strong community input. If Council hears from enough people it will make a huge difference. So, I urge you to send an email to the full Council expressing your views. Points to consider are: 1) how important you think Parks and Recreation programs are for the community; 2) it's vital we fill the vacant P&R Director position; and 3) don't cut P&R programs that directly benefit our citizens (noting some programs listed above) - find other ways to save a few bucks.

Email to full Council: council@ci.puyallup.wa.us .
(preferably this week)

Also, you can provide public comment at our City Council meeting this Tuesday (March 19) at 6:30 on the 5th floor of City Hall.

Two things in closing. First, attached you will find a Memo from Councilmember Kent Boyle and myself to City Manager Bill McDonald expressing our views on his actions and proposals regarding the P&R program. Second, you may be asking why is he doing this and why is the majority of the Council supporting it? Especially, since we have a balanced and sound budget. They'll say to save additional money. But, at the expense of the P&R Department? Also, Bill McDonald is a nice enough guy, but he is a short-termer (ends in December), has not and does not live in or near our city, and has only been a city manager in small towns that typically have the parks and recreation function under the Public Works Department. So, after December, he's outta here and we are left with the result.

Please send me an email or call me at 753-8256, if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John Palmer
Puyallup City Council - District 2