

Manager's Update – March 21, 2024

Public Works: We have been planning to address some cottonwood trees along Main Street that have become a potential hazard and maintenance problem. Our current efforts are focused on the trees between the outside basketball courts and Main Street at the Recreation Center. We budgeted for this work in the 2024 budget as normal operating procedure. However, with the recent discussion of trees, I wanted to make the Assembly aware of this work before we begin in April.



Library Update: The library is very excited to announce that, for a second year in a row, it has been awarded another “Libraries Transform Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities” grant from the American Library Association. This will provide us with another \$10,000 over the next year to make the cement sidewalk outside of the library entrance accessible for all.

In programming news, the Tournament of Books is coming to a close, with the finalists announced last week and the final vote and meeting taking place on Sunday, April 7th. All Skagwegians are welcome to read the finalists and vote at the final meeting!

And in planning updates, we're in the thick of preparing this year's Summer Reading Program, the theme of which is “Read, Renew, Repeat.” Our activities will revolve around conservation and green initiatives and will involve as many community partners as possible. So, anyone who might be interested in contributing to this year's summer programming is encouraged to reach out to the library.

Rock Scaling: The scaling and maintenance of the rock slide are continuing and should be ready well in advance of the 2024 cruise season.

Recreation Center: I am excited to announce that the Recreation Center has hired two seasonal recreation attendants. One will focus on kids' programming, and for the first time, the second attendant will be focusing on Senior Programming.

Commercial Property Assessments: I have been notified that commercial property assessments are going to increase significantly. Please see the Attached letter from the Assessor.

March 11, 2024

Brad Ryan, Borough Manager
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RE: Public Announcement regarding Commercial Property Value Increases

SKAGWAY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT:

This public announcement is for the Commercial Property Owners within the Municipality of Skagway. As a courtesy to the owners of commercial property in Skagway, the Assessor would like to notify all commercial property owners of an increase to their properties in the historic downtown Skagway area. The gross overall increase in the downtown commercial area of Skagway is approximately 50%.

The reason for the large increase is to comply with Alaska State Statutes 29.45.110 (a) which states The Assessor shall assess property at its full and true value as of January 1 of the assessment year.

Explanation: When taking on the role of Assessor in January of 2020, I originally noted that Commercial Property values were undervalued based on sales information. In 2020 I valued residential properties in the downtown market area with the intention of updating the commercial property valuations the following year. With the 2020-21 COVID outbreak unexpected economic changes came about. After consulting with the State Assessor and other Alaska Assessor's, it was decided to wait for the economic impact to settle out. Commercial properties have had a couple of years of recovery, and it is time to update commercial values with the most recent market information.

This last September I visited each commercial property in the downtown area. Inspections of these properties included remeasuring buildings, taking detailed notes regarding quality/condition, etc., talking to owners/lessor's/renters regarding issues with the buildings, obtaining rents and mostly discussing differences of income from 2+ years ago. The new assessments for 2024 reflect this.

When the owners of the Commercial Properties receive their assessment notices, they will have 30 days to appeal the new valuations, based on Unequal, Excessive, Improper, or under valuation based on facts that are stated within a written appeal. I am planning on being available for onsite reviews of the property or reviewing of the past 5 years of audited income/expense information for proper valuation of the property.

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