



DATE: May 22, 2020
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Ryan Mahoney, Town Manager
RE: Weekly Update
CC: Department Heads

Town staff has been in touch with the Roaring Fork School District regarding the use of parking at the Basalt elementary school. We have forwarded them a map that depicts the area we are requesting to use as well as the walking route along the Swinging Bridge trail. Town staff is also looking into different low-level lighting options for greater visibility along the trail. The goal would be to choose a lighting option that would be non-intrusive for the neighboring properties along the trail.

Staff met with representatives from TACAW and the Chamber regarding summer events. We have a concept for a mobile weekly concert series, and the kickoff would be timed the roll out of the Basalt Bucks program. Initial thoughts include a weekly Wednesday concert series that would go from June through August. We are designing the series to compliment the public health orders while allowing restaurant and store patrons the opportunity to engage in some great summertime music offerings. Staff will present the details of the Basalt Bucks program at the Tuesday meeting with more details on the events coming later.

Following the cancellation of the purchase contract for the expanded public works facility, staff sent a notice of cancellation and has received the earnest money back.

Staff sent out a communication to restaurant owners with liquor licenses regarding the state's temporary amendments to the liquor laws. This amendment would allow restaurants to temporarily expand their licensed premises to accommodate more outdoor dining. We have begun to receive applications and will get those processed and passed along to the state for their approval. Staff is requesting that the Council approve a Resolution on Tuesday evening allowing administrative approval of the licenses and encroachment licenses.

Town staff and the Chamber have continued their work on the economic recovery planning. We are also working with regional partners to address the economic challenges at a regional level. The Vail Valley Partnership has released a marketing campaign aimed at second homeowners, inviting them back to the community. Here is a short excerpt from that campaign:

EAGLE COUNTY, Colo. — May 20, 2020 – Local towns and Eagle County community organizations are coming together to launch a new marketing campaign aimed at inviting second-home owners to relocate to the area.

As a community dependent on tourism, Eagle County has been severely impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly half of the local workforce provides services for the tourism industry. While it's unknown when tourists will return to the area, it's clear there needs to be a thoughtful strategy to quickly bring much-needed revenue into the community.

Enter the Welcome Home campaign, which invites second-home owners to “come here, live here, stay here.” By law, second-home owners enjoy the same rights and privileges as local residents, and it is a wonderful time of year for all residents to live in Eagle County.

Some of the materials from this campaign can be useful for this part of Eagle County. The Chamber is working on those details and will have more information to share soon.

Additionally, the Chamber and Town are involved with three different groups with an aim toward regional cooperation. As you know, the Town is split in two different counties and is therefore spread out among these different efforts. These include:

- Aspen to Parachute Economic Development group
- Eagle County Economic Recovery Team
- Statewide, interagency COVID-19 Rural Economic Adaptation and Futures Committee

It’s important to keep in mind that this is still an ongoing incident, we have not recovered from the public health threats and therefore it is difficult to have concrete plans beyond the immediate needs. The good news is that there is communication among organizations, and Basalt has been able to provide local response and benefitted many local residents. The summer opening, with events, Basalt Bucks and marketing is a tangible accomplishment that will assist with the economic fallout while we are still dealing with the public health uncertainties. Before that, the Town responded directly to the community with contributions to the following organizations:

- Family Resource Center of the Roaring Fork School District – helping students and their families
- Valley Settlement – helping immigrant families
- Mountain Family Health Center, Basalt Clinic – helping low income clients
- Focused Kids – helping immigrant families
- A Little Help – helping seniors
- Aspen Hope Center
- Food Bank of the Rockies

Police

We continue to assist at the weekly food distribution site. 9000 pounds of food was distributed to 288 families. Food distribution is scheduled to continue through June.

The police department is working with the middle and high schools to coordinate graduation ceremonies. The high school will host a drive-in graduation on May 30th followed by a vehicle parade through Town. The middle school will have their annual run from the middle school to the high school. The run will take place on June 1st. We will have multiple officers at each event to assist the schools.

Our newest police officers, Xavier Portillo and Justin Clayton, attended two different mandatory trainings. They attended Intoxilyzer 5000 (DUI detection) and patrol rifle training. Both passed the trainings and are now certified to use this equipment.

The Eagle County Public Health Order, Phase Two variance has been approved by the state and will go into effect on May 25th at 12:01 a.m. The police department has begun educating our Eagle County businesses and residents about the changes.

Planning

Willits Town Center – Considerable time this week was spent working on construction related items, such as parking by construction workers, building permit reviews for TACAW and Block 11 North. The Block 11 North full building permit was issued this week. Staff also conducted several pre-application conferences through Zoom meetings.

Other Development Review/Applications – Work continues on other development applications, such as 112 E. Hillside Drive, 710 Sopris Drive, and the automated car-wash application in Southside.

Basalt Public Arts Commission (BPAC) – After Town Council’s approval of BPAC’s grant recommendations and proposal for a new Artist Relief Program, Staff has begun working on contracts for the grantees and preparing to launch the relief fund.

Basalt Sunday Market – Staff is continuing to work with Eagle County on a plan for the 2020 Basalt Sunday Market to create several zones for the vendor locations with the purpose of better disbursing attendees. Zach Smith, who was the 2019 Market Manager, will continue in the role for the 2020 Basalt Sunday Market.

2020 Census – The Census Bureau has begun field operations in Basalt. This is important because a sizable portion of the Town does not get official invitations to participate in the mail from the Bureau, but instead has invitations with the personalized code delivered to their door during field operations.

Other – Staff worked with the building official to prepare information requested by the State on Basalt building activity for the State’s use in updating population estimates. Staff also worked on several special events including the car parade after High School Graduation, and outdoor seating for restaurants with the Town Manager and other Town Staff.

Recreation

The Recreation Department has been working towards opening Arbaney Park Pool. Phase 2 of the Eagle County Public Health Order will be effective on Monday May 25th. This Order will have new guidelines for recreation throughout the County. We have submitted a proposal to the County, seeking feedback regarding best operational practices for our specific pool. It is our understanding that the phase two guidelines will allow public pools to open with up to 50% of occupancy. These updates are new as just ten days ago only lap swim was being contemplated. We will continue to stay up to date and open as quickly as possible keeping the safety of the community as the top priority.

A new handicap assist lift has been installed at the pool. This replaces the mobile cart that is no longer in compliance with ADA regulations. The battery is charged by a solar cell on a small post contained in the unit. Occasional AC electric charging may need to be used to ensure proper battery health.

Youth sports during Covid-19 are also a hot topic across the State. Some recreation departments are offering a modified version of their programs, and some have cancelled completely. We are looking into the feasibility of offering some programming and will be using the Phase two guidelines of the Public Health Order for direction. Basalt Recreation would potentially offer Tennis and Baseball/Softball, with modifications.

We have also been working with Garry Pfaffmann on getting his summer day camp up and running. He is subcontracted through Basalt Recreation for these weekly themed offerings. Together we have a very strong plan with many modifications to ensure the safety of all participants.