



TOWN HALL NEWS

TOWN OF COUPEVILLE

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April 2021

TOWN HALL IS OPEN AGAIN!

We are open Monday thru Thursday, from 8:00 to 4:30. Closed to the public on Fridays. We welcome you with a mask and six-foot distancing, for your safety and ours. Please continue to do as much business by mail, email or phone. If you need to go over applications or drawings with our Building Official or Planners, we encourage you to make an appointment. *Thank you!*

THE GRASS IS GROWING

...when you mow, don't forget your right-of-way. Let the Town know about any vacant lots or parcels in town with grass and weeds higher than one foot. We will contact the owners to get it taken care of. Let's be ready for summer and keep our town fire proof.

WELCOME New Assistant Planner

Please give a warm welcome to **Jewel Hamilton**, our new Assistant Planner. Jewel lived in Oak Harbor for many years, went to school in Bellingham and is excited to get back to the island and specifically to Coupeville. Jewel will be assisting with permit reviews, design review, code enforcement, updating maps, updating plans and many more important responsibilities of the planning department. We are happy to have her on the Town Team!
assistantplanner@townofcoupeville.org

FENCES

While we understand the frustration of the deer eating up your landscaping, unpermitted fences are popping up all over town. Please call the Town Planning Department before installing a fence. We would much rather work with the homeowner before installation than require the fence be taken down after. While every parcel must be looked at individually, there are few rules that are universal:

- No fences allowed in the public right of way.
- Fences may be constructed on the property line of the back and side yard.
- Fences cannot be higher than 42" in the front yard and may be constructed on the property line.
- Any fence higher than 42" in the front yard must have a 25' set back.
- **ALL fences require approval from the Planning Director.** Fences over 6' also require approval from the Historic Preservation Commission.
- If a fence is over 7' tall it will also require a building permit.
- Chain link fences are not allowed in town.
- All fences must meet Ebey's Historic Reserve Design Guidelines. "See through" or deer fences are encouraged.

COUPEVILLE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Attention Coupeville gardeners – there are only 15 spots left in the Community Garden! 45 of our organic, perma-culture garden plots have already been rented. It's not too late to get your spot. You can find an application on the town website. Each spot is \$30 for the year and includes water. Send you application and payment to Allison and she will get back to you with your assigned spot. utilityclerk@townofcoupeville.org Dig in the dirt, grow your own food and flowers, meet your neighbors, get out in the fresh air, gardening is fun!

APRIL - National Volunteer Appreciation Month

April is National Volunteer Appreciation month and this year, more than ever, we are grateful for all the work that is done in our community by volunteers. Whether it's working at the food bank or holding a food drive, helping Prairie Center make grocery deliveries, working at one of the vaccination sites, organizing fundraisers for our restaurants, feeding front line workers, helping make vaccination appointments, providing child care, helping with transportation, keeping our streets clean and our parks beautiful, volunteers have come to the rescue. Whether you are a member of a nonprofit or have just pitched in during this past year, please know you are valued, you are appreciated, and your contributions have not gone unnoticed. **THANK YOU!!!!**

UTILITY AND STREET WORK

We will be doing some utility work this spring before the streets are overlaid this summer. Water and sewer lines will be replaced on Perkins before the street will be overlaid. Sewer repairs and overlays will be made on other residential streets in town. As the details are finalized, we will be notifying homeowners and will post a map of the work to be completed on our website. Stay tuned, we are taking care of your infrastructure!

WHAT'S CANCELLED

Coupeville Memorial Day Parade

WHAT'S HAPPENING

May 1st • *Hearts and Hammers Work Day*
www.cwheartsandhammers.org

DEER, DEER, DEER, AND MORE DEER

“Complaints about deer are, by far, the most common complaint the Town Council and I get.”

Whether it’s a complaint about feeding, landscape destruction, aggressive behavior, automobile damage, injury to pets, or the loss of use of land because of unsanitary conditions caused by large herds of deer, we have heard it all. We seem to be at a tipping point. The complaints against deer outnumber the pro-deer folks five to one. Residents send us suggestions on how to decrease the heard all the time. I have spent hours researching ideas and the results are not good. Let me share what I have found out.

- There is no possibility of relocating our deer. They are not endangered and no one wants them. WA State Fish and Wildlife (WSFW) will not relocate them. People have offered to donate to have them relocated. It is not a matter of money, there are no programs for relocation.
- Birth control is not available for public use. There have been pilot projects on the east coast in ‘closed’ environments such as wildlife reserves or zoos or small islands. Birth control appears to work, but the results cannot be seen for several years. And it is not successful in open environments. Birth control for deer is not approved or used in WA State. WSFW confirms this and knows Coupeville is interested if a pilot study becomes available.
- Sterilization is dangerous and expensive. Sterilization involves tranquilizing the deer, transporting it to a location for surgery, surgically removing reproductive parts, transporting it back and injecting another drug to wake the deer up. There is a 50% fatality rate due to infections in the incision and cost is around \$6,000 per deer.
- Bow and arrow hunting is not a humane option. Many people have suggested culling the herd with bow hunting. While this sounds safer, many strikes do not result in immediate death. We are not interested in a slow and painful death for the deer and do not believe the community would want to be exposed to deer with arrows running around town.
- Controlled hunting is an option, but only with the landowner’s cooperation. WSFW does manage a hunting program for non-traditional locations such as urban areas. Hunting is done by experienced hunters and the venison does not go to waste. The landowner determines the specific rules for hunting on their property. There are several parcels of land in Town that are large enough to participate in this special WSFW program. Please contact me if you are interested in finding out more about it.

Thank you for your concern and input ~ Mayor Molly

DEER 101

A little about our deer!

- Coupeville is over-populated with Blacktail Deer. Deer typically feed in open habitats such as meadows and clearcuts and retreat to more secure areas such as thickets and forests to rest. Deer are most active near dawn and dusk. Blacktail deer normally reside within a ½ to 3 square-mile area from where they were born. Because of our mild weather, they do not migrate in the winter.
- Deer breed during a rutting season, usually in November and December. Bucks may breed with several females and may get aggressive during this time. Bucks take no part in raising their offspring. Does are pregnant for 180 to 200 days. Young does give birth to one fawn, while older, healthy does often have twins. Does need a lot of energy in order to nurse their young. They will often leave a newborn for hours at a time to forage for food. The fawn has not been abandoned. Say away from the fawn, does can be dangerous when protecting their young.
- Some fawns are killed by coyotes; however, most deaths are a result of a traffic accident. With no natural enemies on the island, deer can easily and quickly become overpopulated. Most deer live to five years and it is very unusual for a deer to live to ten years.

ORDINANCE 764

Prohibiting the Feeding of Wildlife and Feral Animals – Effective April 8, 2021

After years of complaints about people in town feeding the deer, the town took action at the last Council meeting. Two opportunities for public input and a Public Hearing were held and the Town Council approved a new ordinance prohibiting the feeding of wildlife and feral animals. This Ordinance is not intended to, nor will it, reduce the number of deer in town. The Ordinance can be viewed on the town website but the highlights of what is intended are:

- Stop large gatherings of deer at feeding stations where deer and humans can become aggressive.
- Stop large groups of deer from standing in the road waiting to be fed and causing a traffic hazard.
- Stop the large groups of deer from causing damage to the neighbor’s property.
- Lessen the unsanitary conditions caused by large gatherings of deer.
- When you stop feeding deer you also stop feeding racoons, mice, rats and other rodents.
- Stop the gathering and breeding of feral cats in town.
- Stop the domestication of wildlife and their dependance on food from humans.
- Stop feeding food that is not healthy for the wildlife and can endanger their life.
- Enforce a \$150 fine for every infraction of this new code.
- Wild birds ARE NOT included in this Ordinance.