

January 28, 2020 State of the City

Good evening. Thank you all for joining us. I would like to take a moment to welcome our elected officials in attendance:

- Mayor Ron Lucas from the Town of Steilacoom
- Senator Steve O'Ban
- Council Chair Doug Richardson
- Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier
- Representative Andrew Barkis
- Representative Keith Goehner

The good news for you tonight is that I have a limited number of words that I speak each day. When I reach that limit, I am done. The bad news for you is that I have been saving up for a couple days in order to speak tonight. I hope you will find it brief.

Tonight, I am not going to talk about 2019. I am going to look forward to the remainder of our current year 2020. Our staff and department heads will have a complete update of current projects and plans at the next Council Meeting. I want to say that the city staff and department heads have been great help to me this first month. It is a big job to get me up to speed in so many different areas. To the city staff, I say THANK YOU.

2020 is the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage. We will celebrate this anniversary during some of our events this year. The Women's Suffrage Movement began in 1848 at the Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York. It took all those years from 1848 to 1920 for women to achieve the vote. Our nation, our State and our city are so much stronger and better because of the participation of women. In the City of DuPont, I want women and, indeed, everyone to have a full voice in their city government.

In 2020, we will more fully acknowledge our neighbors, the Nisqually Tribe. All of us in DuPont live on historic Nisqually land. The following acknowledgement was written by the Nisqually Tribe.

"We acknowledge that this land and water is the traditional territory of the Squalli-absh people. The Squalli-absh people are of the modern day Nisqually Indian Tribe. The surrounding mountains, valleys,

shorelines and waterways are imbued with their presence. We seek to nurture our relationship with our coast Salish neighbors and our shared responsibilities to this place, their homelands, where we mutually abide.”

Communication, transparency and Customer Service will be a priority for me in 2020. These important elements are instrumental in building mutual trust in our community. We are looking at ways to enhance communication and customer service with multiple platforms like our website, social media, newsletters, email and the Parks and Recreation Guide in addition to the blurb on the Utility Bill. We are all ears for any other ideas you may have.

Finance is an essential element of our city government. The city finance team manages a budget in excess of \$16 million dollars. The finance team works hard to maintain our credit rating and our clean financial audits from the state. Their work makes it possible for the city to operate and prosper. As we move forward, we will be financially conservative in our expenditures and build up our reserves because we need to be prepared for the next financial downturn.

DuPont-Steilacoom Road will be expanded from two lanes to four lanes from Wharf Road to Exit 119. Construction funds were secured in the State’s next biennial budget for \$3.9 million. Currently, I-976 has stalled the funding for this project and we await the court decision or legislative action to proceed forward. I am in contact with our legislators and working to get that money released as part of the next Biennial Budget.

Public Safety is the backbone of security and quality of life in our city. As a result of an aggressive recruiting campaign lead by Chief Doug Newman and Deputy Chief Ted DeHart, the DuPont Police Department has, for the first time in several years, filled all budgeted positions. These new hires are a tremendous asset to our city and our public safety mission. More work needs to be done. Budgeted staffing levels for the police department are still 38 percent below the national and regional average for a city our size.

The DuPont Fire Department provides us with quality emergency and firefighting services. In 2020, DuPont Fire will focus on expanding its capacity with enhanced training in hazardous materials response and wildland firefighting. As we experienced last summer, we are one dry and

breezy day away from a brush fire that could reach our neighborhoods. DuPont Fire is ready. Providing Advanced Life Support services to the city remains an issue of debate. Moving forward, we will continue to evaluate the best way to provide those services. As part of my Mayor's Committee initiative, we will have a new ALS Committee to help find the solutions.

Community Development remains an important issue. In 2020, we will begin the multi-year process of updating our Comprehensive Plan to enhance the community's vision for the city. In order to ensure that all elements of the plan are coordinated, development regulations will also be updated to reflect the comprehensive plan with an emphasis on preservation and protection of historical and cultural sites. The Mayor's Historical Preservation Committee will also be active to provide me advice and research concerning other initiatives that will be necessary to preserve our invaluable historical resources.

Tourism benefits communities big and small and DuPont has much to offer. While our city boasts wonderful trails and historical sites, golfing remains a key tourism draw for the city. Golf attracts nearly 40,000 visitors to DuPont on an annual basis. City staff is actively encouraging national golf organizations to consider DuPont and the Home Course to host tournaments. We are pleased to announce the 2021 NCAA Western Regional Division II Golf Championships and the 2021 USGA Men's Amateur 4 Ball Championship will be hosted at the Home Course.

Quality of life is what brought so many of us to DuPont. Parks and Recreation is an important factor for quality of life. The Parks and Rec Department will continue to enhance the city recreational programs but we are running out of space. We will look at all options to remedy this situation including the use of the current community center in the Historic Village. The city will continue to work with P.A.R.C.S., our local non-profit whose volunteers have already been doing amazing work for the city.

Volunteerism is key for my administration. We have a core of great volunteers who have done wonderful work. There will be more opportunities. During the campaign I discovered that we have many extremely talented and skilled people living right here in DuPont. I need your input and engagement with the city. The city staff and council have

plates that are very full. I am new to city government, so I need the assistance of all the great thinkers in DuPont.

What do some of our historical figures say about volunteering?

Martin Luther King said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?"

Muhammad Ali said, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."

St. Francis of Assisi said, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

I will be offering more opportunities for you to volunteer. That is the reason I am establishing the Mayor's Committees on various subjects like ALS, ethics, economic development and historical preservation. I am working with our city attorney to ensure that these committees are set up appropriately with maximum transparency. These committees will essentially do research to provide advice and recommendations to the mayor. They will find the best practices and I am hopeful for the outcome. I served on such a committee myself under Mayor Jenkins about a decade ago concerning research on Sequelitchew Creek.

The current good news about volunteerism is that many of you have already stepped up. We currently have 5 volunteers for the Planning Commission with just two vacancies to fill. Planning Commission Chair Cory Wright and myself have already interviewed the candidates and we will forward our recommendations shortly. During the interviews, Chair Corey Wright and I were very impressed with the quality of volunteers that have come forward.

In conclusion, my view is that the glass is half full and not half empty. We have a great little city with that small-town feel described in our Comprehensive Plan. I want to keep it that way. We have a Family-Friendly environment. I want to keep that as well. We are next to Puget Sound with miles of wonderful trails. We have great neighbors who care for each other.

Do we have issues? Sure. Do I have all the answers for those issues? Certainly not, but it is my hope that we can all work together to address those issues.

I am now running low on my word count so I want to thank everyone for being here tonight, for listening, and for your participation in city government.

At this time we will have another opportunity for public comments and then we will adjourn for a reception and refreshments.

Thank you and good evening.