



# Walla Walla County Community Development Department

[www.co.walla-walla.wa.us](http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us)



## From the Director's Desk by Tom Glover, AICP

Summertime, and the livin's easy ....

Welcome to the Summer 2018 edition of our newsletter. It is that time of year when we think about outside grilling and get-togethers and the 4th of July. Page 2 provides you with information about fireworks in the County: dates when they can be sold, and dates when you can light them off. Also, on page 2 our Code Enforcement Officer steps in for Ron, to talk to you about "Zombie Properties." A quick and informative read, but don't wait for the movie.

On page 3 we are sharing information with you about sky lanterns. Just don't do it. Think about the hazards! The hundreds of square miles of wheat out there, drying in the hot summer sun. Don't do it.

On page 4 we invite you to attend at least one of the upcoming public open house events on June 19th and 20th. We will be presenting the draft version of the County's updated comprehensive plan and development regulations. Meetings start at 5:30 p.m. and end around 7:30 p.m. There will be snacks, and good company. Please join us!

On page 5 it's all about those bees, 'bout those bees - no trouble. And on page 6 our Building Official reminds us that the surcharge on building permits that we collect for the State is increasing. The revenue collected goes to the State Building Code Council, which in turn works with the state legislators to develop building codes used in the state.

We welcome your comments and feedback regarding our newsletters, as well as any of the activities we manage. Please contact us any time during regular business hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Wednesdays we close at 3:30 for staff meetings). Our main phone line is: (509) 524-2610. We can also receive inquiries by e-mail at: [commdev@co-walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:commdev@co-walla-walla.wa.us)

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## FIREWORKS IN WALLA WALLA COUNTY

Fireworks season is here. Please make sure that your holiday celebrations are safe and legal.

**Sale:** Fireworks in unincorporated Walla Walla County may be offered for sale only by authorized permit holders. Fireworks may be sold and purchased during the following dates and times:

*July 1 - July 4: 9:00 am-11:00 pm*



Fireworks may be discharged in unincorporated Walla Walla County during the following times:  
*July 1-3: 9AM to 11PM - July 4: 9AM to Midnight.*

For more information: (Below are links to the appropriate webpages)

[Office of the State Fire Marshal](#) – Fireworks in Washington State

[Fireworks Safety in Walla Walla County](#)

[Fireworks Safety in the City of Walla Walla](#)



### Ron's Road Report – “The Zombie Apocalypse” by Nina Baston

Welcome residents of Walla County. Typically, “Ron’s Road Report” goes in this section of the newsletter, but it’s summer and Ron is taking a break. So, you get to hear from me! I am the County’s Code Enforcement and Burn Control Officer. Like Ron, I drive all over the County and see and hear all kinds of wonderful things. While Ron has an affinity for road kill, I am personally fascinated by “Zombies”. No, not the kind you see in movies and TV shows. I see “Zombie Foreclosures.” With a zombie foreclosure the homeowner moves out of a property once a foreclosure has been started, but sometimes, for whatever reason, the foreclosure gets cancelled, and the sale is never held, or the title is never officially transferred to a new owner because it’s caught in legal limbo. As a result, the title remains in the homeowner’s name. Unfortunately, with the home going into foreclosure, the homeowner feels they have “lost” the home, and no longer takes the responsibility for maintaining the property. Frequently the homeowner moves out of the community, often without leaving a forwarding address, and so we can’t find them.

Sometimes it’s difficult to trace down which banks are involved in the foreclosure. Oftentimes the mortgage is sold to another mortgage company, and the bank with the original mortgage may not be the same bank involved with the foreclosure. It’s not unusual to then have to be trying to contact an out of state bank to discuss the maintenance concerns, and since they are located out of the community, do not understand the property maintenance concern, or put the responsibility back to the homeowner ...who likely has already left town. Typically, the banks handling the foreclosure are not eager to assume responsibility for the upkeep of the property and want to save on costs. The foreclosure process can take months, or in some cases, years. Meanwhile, the homes have had their utility services disconnected, but without regular maintenance, they can also have overgrown vegetation, broken windows and/or doors that are boarded up, or are even smashed through, broken, or unhinged. They can be an attractive nuisance in the neighborhood.

So, what can be done about these zombies? In the movies the heroes select some form of dramatic (violent and horrific) means to eliminate the zombie menace. However, in Zombie Foreclosures it is a patience game. It is a tangled legal process which leaves responsibility for the maintenance of the nuisance property unclear.

We have good news! This month, the State of Washington has enacted House Bill 2057. The bill offers local officials new ways to find a middle ground with the banks and property preservation companies to battle “zombie properties” in our state. This is good news for banks, property maintenance companies, code compliance officers, and neighborhoods. The Zombie Apocalypse may have been averted!

## Regulating Sky Lanterns By Davis Abbott from MRSC.org

Washington State is known for its rainfall, but anyone who has lived here can tell you the amazing summers are why you stay. With another beautiful Washington summer ramping up, it is important to remember the dangers of wildfires during dry times, and ensure local governments are notifying Washington citizens of the fire hazard that sky lanterns can pose. Between the Fourth of July, summer weddings, and other celebrations, sky lanterns are becoming an increasingly popular way to celebrate on summer nights. But sky lanterns may not be as innocent as they seem.

Why regulate Sky Lanterns? In 2013, a 36-year old man in Selah, Washington was hoping to enjoy the beauty of launching a candle powered sky lantern and watching it ascend to the heavens, but his lantern did not fly as high as he had hoped and crash landed on a hillside, inadvertently setting fire to 500 acres of Yakima County. The National Association of Fire Marshalls have been raising awareness of the dangers sky lanterns pose for years, and they are still pushing for a nationwide ban. Currently, it is estimated that at least 29 States have banned sky lanterns and floating luminarias. The miniature hot-air balloons may seem innocent and fun, but the damage they can cause is no joke. In addition to fire hazards, the remnants of the balloon can leave wires and bags as litter that is left to sit out in nature.

Are Sky Lanterns Regulated in Washington? There is a lot of misinformation around these mini air balloons that says sky lanterns are not regulated in Washington and encourages people to use them. But the State of Washington has codified laws regulating sky lantern use. Pursuant to RCW 19.27.031 and WAC 51-54A-003, the 2015 International Fire Code (IFC), with some small modifications, is in effect in all counties and cities in Washington State. Relevant here, is section 308.1.6.3, which states that "[a] person shall not release or cause to be released an untethered sky lantern." The IFC defines "person" broadly to include both individuals as well as business entities. Based on these authorities, it appears that it is generally prohibited under state law to release or cause to be released an untethered sky lantern in Washington State.

In addition, RCW 76.04.455 states that during the "closed season," which lasts from April 15–October 15, it is unlawful to release a sky lantern "on or over any forest, brush, range, or grain areas." The same RCW also states that outside of the closed season, it is unlawful to release a sky lantern "on or over any forest, brush, range, or grain areas" unless the person releasing the lantern has either: (1) lawful possession and control of the land in question; or (2) has prior written permission to release the sky lantern from the person who owns the land in question.

*Note that unlike some other jurisdictions, in Walla Walla County there are no codes specifically mentioning Sky Lanterns. However, in County Code "15.04.140 – Adoption - The International Fire Code (IFC) current edition, as adopted, amended or hereafter amended by the state of Washington is adopted."*

## Walla Walla County Open House Events

### 2018 WALLA WALLA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS PERIODIC UPDATE PROCESS, INCLUDING 2018 NON-COUNTY FINAL DOCKET UGA AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS

Walla Walla County is nearing completion of the update to its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, as required by RCW 36.70A. This work includes review of the 2018 non-County sponsored final docket applications for amending the urban growth areas (UGA) of the cities of College Place and Walla Walla. The purpose of a mandatory periodic update under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) is to review and, if needed, revise the plan and regulations to ensure they comply with the GMA; this differs from the annual amendment process. To encourage participation from the residents of the County in the review of the draft documents, two public open house events have been scheduled, one in Burbank, and one in Walla Walla. *These are public open house events, not public hearings.*

- June 19, 2018: Walla Walla Regional Airport  
Conference Room, 45 Terminal Loop  
Walla Walla, WA
- June 20, 2018: Columbia Middle School  
755 Maple St.  
Burbank, WA

*Both meetings will begin at 5:30 p.m. and wrap up around 7:30 p.m.*

The purpose of the meetings is to share with the residents of our County the draft documents completed to date, including UGA amendment applications, and the process for completion, and adoption. County staff and the consultant team will lead the discussion and will be available to talk individually with attendees. Residents will be able to share their comments. A summary of all the comments received at the open houses will be posted on the County's website.



## Honey Bee Control Area in Walla Walla County

It is the time of year again where we begin to get questions and complaints about bees. To clear up any questions here are the bee codes for Walla Walla County. **17.26.020 Bees:**

The number of colonies of bees shall be limited to 1 colony for each 2,000 square feet of open space.

1. During the period from June 1st until September 1st of each year the following regulations will be in effect in the area described below in (2).

- A. Not more than one honey bee colony per acre of property cropped in commercial alfalfa for seed and/or commercial clover for seed that is blossoming is permitted.
- B. Not more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  honey bee colony per acre of property with blossoming bee forage of other types is permitted.
- C. Not more than 50 colonies are permitted in an apiary.
- D. Apiaries must be setback from property lines a distance of four feet per colony.
- E. Apiaries must be separated a distance of 400 feet and must be located within 400 feet of blossoms intended as forage.

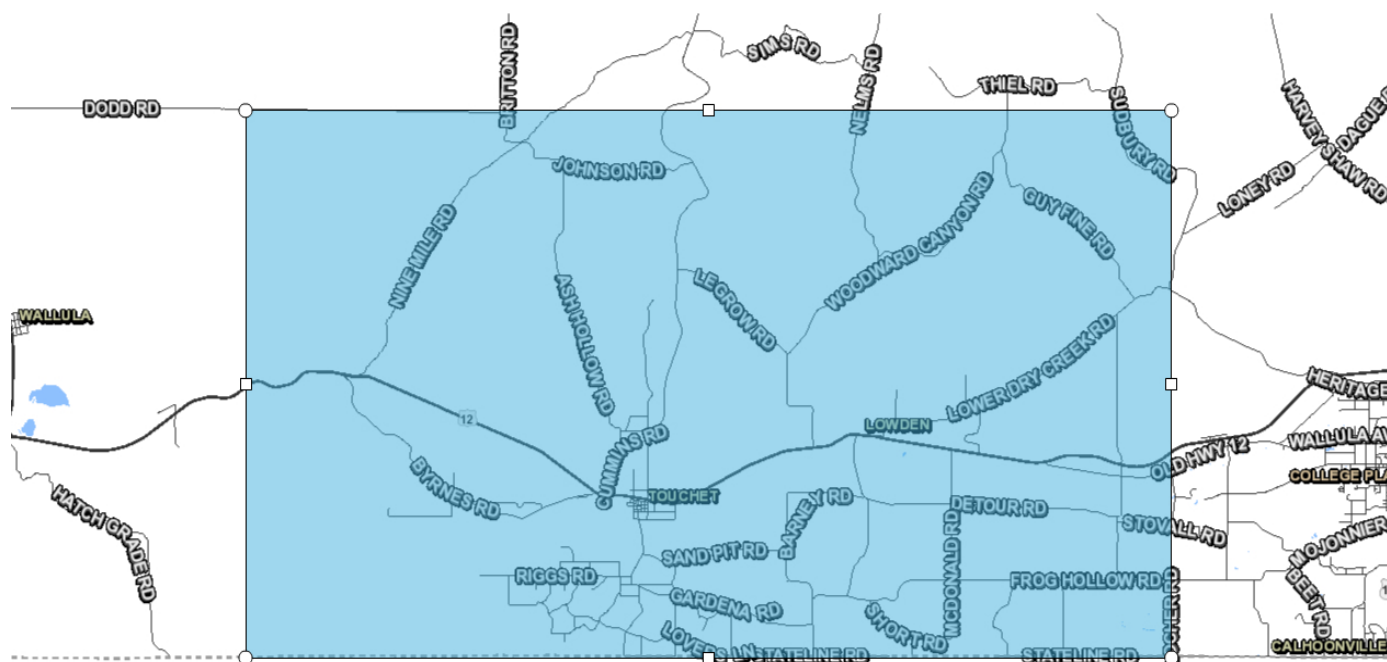
2. *Honey bee control area (June 1st to September 1st).*

If your property is located **outside of the honey bee control area**, then all year long, you are allowed to have 1 colony for each 2,000 square feet of *open* space. For example, an *undeveloped* ten-acre property has 435,600 square feet.  $435,600 / 2000 = 217.8$  colonies allowed. Each box is 1 hive. Each "stack" of 4 hive boxes is considered 1 colony.

If your property is located **inside the honey bee control area**, from September 2 to May 31 each year the same rules apply. During the Honey bee control dates, June 1st to September 1st, however, you are restricted as to the number of colonies. In areas where *you own* alfalfa for seed and/or commercial clover for seed, you are limited to 1 honey bee colony *per acre* of undeveloped property. Each box is 1 hive. Each stack of 4 hives is considered 1 colony. Therefore, if you have 10 acres you could only have 10 "stacks" on that property. If you do not have commercial alfalfa or clover, then you must comply with the codes for all other types of flowering foliage. The code changes to  $\frac{1}{4}$  honey bee colony per acre of property. That same ten acres would allow only 2.5 stacks.

If you own developed property, then you must subtract living space before making any calculations. If you need help figuring out how many bees you can have on your property, please call [509-524-2616](tel:509-524-2616).

HONEY BEE CONTROL AREA MAP:



## State Building Code Council Building Permit Fee Increase

310 W Poplar St Suite 200  
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Main Line 509-524-2610  
[commdev@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:commdev@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Inspection Request Line 509-524-2611

Residential Burn Decision Line  
509-524-2612

Permit/Document Submittals  
[permits@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:permits@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Thomas E. Glover, AICP, Director  
509-524-2621  
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Lauri Withers, Permit Coordinator  
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Todd Blevins, Building Official, Fire Marshal  
509-524-2617  
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Ron Bull, Building Inspector I  
509-524-2615  
[rbull@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:rbull@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Nina Baston, Code Compliance/  
Burn Control Officer II  
509-524-2616  
[nbaston@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:nbaston@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Inspection Hours 7 AM – 4 PM (M – F)  
Office Hours: 8 AM – 4 PM (M, T, Th & F)  
& 8 AM – 3:30 PM (W)

NOW OPEN DURING THE LUNCH HOUR

On March 22, 2018 Governor Jay Inslee signed House Bill (HB) 1622 2017-2018. This bill modifies the fees for the State Building Code Council from building permits. This applies only to the building permit and is in effect as of July 1, 2018. The changes are as follows:

### Fees Prior to July 1, 2018:

- ▶ Dwelling units, Apartments and Motel Rooms: \$4.50 for the first unit and \$2.00 for each unit thereafter.
- ▶ All other building permits: \$4.50

### Fees Effective July 1, 2018:

- ▶ Projects permitted under the International Residential Code (IRC): \$6.50 for the first unit and \$2.00 for each unit thereafter.
- ▶ Projects permitted under the International Building Code (IBC) or the International Existing Building Code (IEBC): \$25.00 for the first unit and \$2.00 for each unit thereafter.

To see HB 1622 2017-2018 as passed:

<http://lawfilesexternal.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2017-18/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/1622-S2.PL.pdf>

