

Local

IAMP issues heard in joint meeting



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

A mix of City Council and County Commissioners met. L-R: Rosemary Abell, Richard Langrell, Mack Augenfeld, Bill Harvey, Kim Mosier, Sandy Lewis, Jack Thomas and Mark Bennett.

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A joint meeting between the Baker City Council and the Baker County Commissioners was held Tuesday evening to give both entities information about the proposed Interchange Area Management Plan project.

All City Council members were present for the meeting with exception of Councilor Downing.

Commission Chair Bill Harvey and Commissioner Bennett were also present. Commissioner Kerns was not at the meeting due to recovery from surgery.

Mayor Mosier opened the meeting by stating, “We are here tonight to hear the recommendations of the Planning Commission regarding the Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP). I’d like to welcome the County Commissioners. Thank you for coming to City Hall for this joint meeting.”

Commissioner Harvey said, “I’d like to thank you all for coming out tonight. I’m sure you had other things to do—other than come listen to us.”

Mosier read a statement opening a public hearing and the meeting began with Planning Department Director Holly Kerns addressing both the Commissioners and the Council with a summary about the plan that was before them.

Kerns began by introducing and identifying herself as the planning director for both the City and County Planning Departments. “This Inter-

change Area Management Plan has been a joint effort between the City, County and ODOT. This plan has been over 10 years in the making and I recognize that there are a number of folks here that have participated the entire time throughout this process that can speak to you about the interest they have in the plan and some of the concerns they’ve raised. We have made a real effort to try and make sure those concerns have been alleviated not all concerns have been alleviated but all of the major concerns.”

Kerns noted issues that were extremely problematic have been addressed and cited those reason as why the plan was not adopted in 2005 when first proposed.

Kerns advised that there were code language amendments, development code changes and zoning ordinance changes that were needed to make the project consistent across the City and the County and ensure the IAMP is implemented in a careful and fair way for all involved including the City and the County who have some overlapping interests in the areas.

She turned over the presentation to Nick Foster of Kittleson and Associates, the firm hired to help in the development of the plan. Foster gave a brief highlight to Commissioners and Council.

He advised that there have been three public meetings regarding the plan—the first in January highlighting the existing plan with a few minor

changes and updates, the second in April that presented some alternatives based on feedback received from the January meeting, and the third in May with some responses to what was heard in April.

Each meeting gave the planners information that was used to fine tune the plan and that is what it ultimately in the plan that is in front of Council and Commissioners for adoption.

The IAMP addresses three major concerns: the first, spacing of accesses (driveways and intersections) along OR 86 through the interchange. ODOT said it has a certain standard for those to maintain safety and operational capacity.

The second issue is improving traffic safety and operations at the exit 302 ramp including adjusting guard rails to improve sightlines in the area.

The third issue is the Cedar Street and Hughes Lane intersection addressing current and future traffic there.

He quickly walked them through a few points of the plan including the plans with Airport Road that currently is closer than what ODOT recommends in their guidelines for an access road near an interchange.

This particular change has been the hot button issue for many as the plan affects Lindley Road, Hudson Road and properties in that area.

Karen Yeakley testified, “I can understand future development and planning, and what we are trying to

do. I want to see us protect the rural nature of which we live in Baker County. Within the last week we had cattle come out onto highway 86 over the 84 bridge moving cattle, and those are the kind of things that are unique and I want to see maintained. We also have wetlands that we need to protect out there too and I respect that if you approve this zoning, that we also remember that it’s rural out there and we incorporate that into the plan.”

Both the Council and Commissioners agreed more public hearings and research to understand the proposed IAMP were needed. City Council intends to have at least three more opportunities at City Council meetings for concerns to be heard before an ordinance could be passed and the County Commissioners spoke of at least two future meetings in which the matter would be discussed before any decisions are made on their part.

Further questions can be addressed to Holly Kerns at the Planning department. Future meetings regarding the plan will be announced.

One interested party stormed out of the meeting at its conclusion yelling and cussing that she was not able to hear anything at the meeting. She stated she had no idea what went on.

Commissioner Harvey offered her as much information as she would like in an effort to assist.

Mayor Mosier then adjourned the meeting.

Soroptimist award deadline approaches

The Soroptimist Live your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women is a cash award given to assist women who provide the primary source of financial support for their families by giving them the resources they need to improve their education, skills and employment prospects. The award amount is \$1,000. The application deadline is November 15, 2015. Qualified applicants may send request for Soroptimist Live your Dream application to jmacy@otecc.com. Women who plan to achieve their GED certificate at a community college are eligible to apply for the Award.

The Violet Richardson Award is for young women between the ages of 14 to 17 who exhibit leadership qualities as a volunteer in their community or school. The cash award is in recognition of young women leaders who make the community and world a better place through volunteer efforts. The program offers a \$150 award to the recipient and to \$250 the organization for which they volunteer. The application deadline is December 1, 2015. Qualified applicants may send request for Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award application to jmacy@otecc.com.

The Soroptimist Ruby Award honors women who are working to improve the lives of women and girls through their personal or volunteer efforts, or through professional avenues. The award recipient receives a \$200 donation to the charitable organization of her choice. The application deadline is December 1, 2015. Qualified applicants may send request for Soroptimist Ruby Award application to jmacy@otecc.com.

The Live your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women, the Violet Richardson Award, and the Soroptimist Ruby Award are projects of Soroptimist International of the Americas. Soroptimist International of Baker County is one of nearly 1,400 clubs that make up Soroptimist International of the Americas. Each year Soroptimists in the 19 countries and territories of our Federation assist women in overcoming personal difficulties and improving the lives through education and skills training.

Baker County FBI crime stats incorrect

Baker County Consolidated Dispatch has looked into the 2014 FBI uniform crime report released earlier this year. The FBI uses the OUCRs (Oregon Unified Crime Reports) that are submitted to the state from the dispatch center to create their report.

After reviewing the 2014 data there was a reporting error which, if corrected, would change the results to match the numbers that Baker City Chief Lohner stated (11 reports of aggravated assaults, with seven reports actually taken).

According to manager Jason Yencopal, Dispatch contacted the state to update the numbers, which they were willing to do, but informed the County that it would not change the 2014 report as the FBI would not use the updated data.

Changes have been made to ensure the accuracy of the OUCRs that are submitted to the state for future reports.

Vivan Crawford scholarships awarded

Two Baker Girls have received \$500 Vivan Crawford Memorial Scholarships from Chapter CJ, P.E.O.

Anna Payton is a freshman at Gordon College at Wrentham, Massachusetts.

Annika Andersen is a freshman at the Oregon Institute of Technology at Klamath Falls, Oregon.

The Vivan Crawford Memorial Scholarship was established by Ken Crawford, Vivan’s P.E.O. sisters and friends. An excellent, enthusiastic teacher for 25 years, Vivan was always interested in promoting education.

\$2.3K raised for Special Olympics

Last week the local Fire Department was waiting tables at Barley Browns to earn tips for Special Olympics of Baker County. They raised \$2,290 plus the donation from Barleys of \$600 with the highest total so far of \$2,890.

There is a wonderful competition between the local Police Department’s “Tip-A-Cop” and local Fire Department’s “Serve It Up Hot” to earn the highest number.

In the past three years of competition, the firemen have finally taken the lead.

To support local Special Olympics, donate to Chapter 511 at PO Box 508 or call Stephanie Tweit at 541-523-6767.

USFS

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Terry George said he heard some misleading comments at the previous USFS-hosted meeting of this type, held at the La Grande Armory on November 2, and then said, “Now, Tom has turned around tonight and said his hands are bound on different subjects that we’re going to be talking about. 80% of us were better for talking about road access. Why are we even here discussing it, if the hands are tied, and the decisions have already been made?”

Montoya responded about opportunities to shape the Forest Plan in terms of access and management areas, and

chances for the public to provide dialogue.

Sumpter City Councilman Bob Armbruster spoke about issues with wildfires and the effects on business in Sumpter, designated routes, and lack of feedback, and he said, “I don’t have anything against the Forest Service personnel. I respect them all. It’s obvious that we have an issue with Washington, D.C., and local issues...”

Gary Logan said, “I resent having to be here tonight to defend my right to those mountains.” The comment was followed by another “here, here” from an attendee.

“I resent the loss of jobs. Ellingson’s Lumber was three blocks from my house,” he said. In reference to the cause of loss of jobs, and the misplaced blame, he said, “In truth, the supply was cut off.”

Frank Mason said, “Hopefully, the Forest Service learned something from the spotted owl. Don’t trust the universities, because somebody made up the (scientific) data for the spotted owl...”

Mason asked Montoya if the best science had been referenced for the current plan.

Montoya replied, “I can say our specialists have used the best science that they had available. If you have other science which you believe is better, we’d like to see that.”

Mason used that opportunity to suggest to the attendees that they provide any science they may have available to the USFS.

John and Ramona Creighton, representing Forest Access For All (FAFA), addressed the issue of handicapped access. “It’s one I care

deeply about,” John said. “This, my friends, is a minor annoyance,” he said, displaying his right arm, which is missing a hand, but, explained that for many people, mobility is better on some days, worse on others.

Both Creightons explained the importance of keeping the roads open, and being able to use ATVs as a form of wheelchair if necessary, and that Baker County includes many elderly individuals with mobility issues.

Other speakers included Ron Nash, Ed Hardt, Art Sappington, Ken Anderson, Jake Brown, Tork and Wanda Ballard, Dick Fleming, Kody Justus, Bill and Lorrie Harvey, and Don Williams, discussing a range of issues with the plan, and the USFS’s management practices.