

Local

Public Arts Commission meets

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It is obvious that the members of the Public Arts Commission are passionate about providing this community with the enrichment public art can provide.

The Public Arts Commission is made up of community volunteers Ann Mehaffy, Corrine Vegter, Brian Vegter, Derek Hosler and Terri Axness.

City Councilman Mack Augenfeld sits on the commission as the City Council representative and City Manager Mike Kee represents City staff to round out the commission. The Public Arts Commission was created in April 2014 by City ordinance 3332.

Meetings are public and community members are invited and encouraged to attend any regular scheduled meeting, generally held the first Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

A schedule can be found at bakercity.com as well as minutes and agendas from past meetings.

As the meeting began the commission looked over and approved minutes from the last meeting.

Ann Mehaffy then had the commission sign thank you cards to a small group of citizens who contributed a total of \$300 toward acquisition of two Alyssa Peterson paintings that can be found on display in the lobby of City Hall. The thank you cards all featured artwork from local artists.

The commission is currently working on several projects including the repurposing of the merry-go-round that was removed from Geiser-Pollman Park when the park received a makeover including new playground equipment in May 2014.

Plans include making the repurposed merry-go-round into an art piece that will be a focal point in Central Park along the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway that will ultimately overlook Resort Street and Court Plaza.

Two proposals for turning the merry-go-round into public art were submitted to the commission



L-R Mike Kee, Terri Axness, Mack Augenfeld, Brian Vegter, Ann Mehaffy, and Derek Hosler.

by Shawn V. Peterson and Tammy Wisdom.

The commission all agreed that there were elements of both proposals that they liked and others that they didn't think would work well for the overall vision the commission has.

The commission directed City Manager Mike Kee to write letters to both of the artists inviting them to the next Public Arts Commission meeting with the goal being collaboration and incorporation of some of the committee's ideas as well to create the art piece.

"There was similarity enough in both of their submissions that we thought neither one was strong its own but the collection of the two is what we thought worked well," Brian Vegter summed up.

Another idea tossed out was to sell commemorative boards similar to commemorative bricks, on the seat of the merry-go-round. On the commemorative boards families could share memories or simply note family member names, there were a lot of possibilities with this idea.

"That merry-go-round was in the park for years, generations. I'm sure many arms were broken and tons of memories made on it," said Vegter with a smile bringing validation to the idea.

The commission moved forward to discuss another project they are currently involved in: The Leo Adler Parkway expansion project.

Michelle Owen, Baker City Public Works Director has secured a grant that

will allow for a project expanding the current parkway at Resort Street and Wade Williams Park. This expansion will include a parking lot and the need for other fixtures.

The Public Arts Commission has been sought out to help with design elements for the additional fixtures such as a trash receptacle, light post and bench.

"I still need to get with Behlen to see what designs, colors etc. they can provide," said City Manager Kee.

Behlen and Natural Structures, two local companies, have been contacted to provide some additional input to the project.

"I think two or three of us need to go to Natural Structures and meet with them, get some quotes," Kee added.

A discussion that revolved around vandalism ensued. That discussion included possible ideas of designing the bench, for example, to look somewhat like it had graffiti already on it. Tasteful looking graffiti of course.

Kee also explained to the commission that it was his understanding that Behlens had many bright colors they could utilize that may deter would be vandals as well as a finish that also discouraged graffiti by not allowing foreign substances much exposure.

The commission also discussed projects that they would like to see put into place in our community in the future.

One such project is something that commission

members saw first-hand on a "field trip to view public art" to Boise.

Many of Boise's City utility boxes have been "wrapped" with art from local artists—artists who are from Boise and surrounding areas or Idaho in general. The concept is that any art piece can become a "wrap," even sculptures can have a photograph taken and be placed on vinyl to create and showcase the art and artist. This unique art form can be easily utilized to add beauty to unattractive utility boxes that are a necessity while giving the artist and their work exposure.

City Manager Mike Kee advised the commission that it would probably be a really good idea to begin development of a master plan, giving not only the committee itself but city council and the community a good idea what the long term visions, goals, strategies and intentions include.

"Having a plan in place is a great way to secure funding, you can present your vision to the budget board and it will make grant writing a lot easier and more successful too," he said.

The committee has expressed interest in using inmates from the prison for construction purposes on projects as well.

A luncheon meeting was discussed and is in the works to talk with the coordinator of inmate work crews about the possibility.

More information regarding that venture should be available at the next Public Arts Commission meeting.

Burnt River FFA competes

On February 11, members of the Burnt River Future Farmers of America (FFA) club traveled to Crane to compete in the annual Leadership Contest.

Ben Kamin placed second in the co-op quiz and will compete at the State convention March 20-23.

Cody Belveal placed third in the co-op quiz.

The Beginning Parliamentary Procedure Team—Daniel Isenberger, Daniel Andersen, Oscar Heinrich, Shea Swindlehurst, Syndey Palmer, and Kobe Cantrell—took third place in that category.

OTEC conducts member survey

OTEC contracted with Northwest based DHM (Davis, Hibbitts, & Midghall, Inc.) Research to perform a formal member survey. The member survey took place in early February and randomly sampled members from the four counties within OTEC's service territory (Baker, Grant, Harney and Union).

Overall feedback was positive with a majority of those members surveyed selecting electric as being the highest value utility. Members also gave high marks for reliability, response time to outages, and helpful and knowledgeable employees.

"We are constantly looking for and encouraging feedback from our member-owners, this survey is one of the tools we utilize to ensure we are delivering the electrical service that our members want to pay for," said OTEC's General Manager Werner Buehler. "One of the great things about the co-op business model is local democratic control. OTEC members elect the Board of Directors from our membership to set policies and make decisions for our electric co-op."

- Top 5 highlights from the survey include:
- Members feel that electricity is the utility that provides the best value for the money.
 - Members gave OTEC's Board of Directors high marks for transparent leadership.
 - A majority would like OTEC to be at the table during economic development discussions, though there is little support to raise rates to fund development efforts.
 - While members have heard of OTEC's energy efficiency programs, a majority did not want their rates to increase to expand Energy Efficiency (EE) programs
 - The majority of members are not interested in a community solar project, with a minority interested if the project would provide a return on their investments.

Each year OTEC's annual meeting takes place in one of the four counties we serve. Members elect 3 of the 9 Board of Director positions and hear from OTEC staff and Board of Directors on the state of their electronic co-op. Ballots will be mailed to all members in April. Voting is done by mail or can be delivered in person at the annual meeting.

OTEC's annual meeting will be held in John Day at the John Day County Fairgrounds, 411 Northwest Bridge Street, on Saturday, May 2, 2015. All members are invited to attend.

Prescribe burn areas listed

Areas targeted for USFA prescribed spring burning have been announced.

- Whitman Ranger District (WRD) – (Baker, Halfway, and Unity). The WRD plans to conduct prescribed burning on 5,000 acres this spring, which may include:
- Foothills (250 acres) - in the Baker City Watershed 3 mile west of Baker City ,OR
 - Deer and Union Miners (800 acres) - in the Sumpter Valley
 - Dry Creek and Barnard (800 acres) - in the Pine Valley near Halfway, OR
 - Mile 9(700 acres) – 5 miles west of Unity, OR
 - Moonshine (450 acres) - 12 miles south of Baker City, OR
 - Goose (1200 acres) - 6 miles northwest of Sparta, OR
 - Sundry (1400) - Mill Cr./Cornet Cr./Pine Cr.-16 miles south of Baker City
 - Pine Valley (500 acres) 7 miles northwest of Halfway, OR

- The Wallowa Fire Zone (WFZ) - (Wallowa Valley Ranger District, Hells Canyon NRA and Eagle Cap Ranger District). The WFZ plans to conduct prescribed burning of up to 3,000 acres this spring:
- Spooner (900 acres) - Harl Butte area.
 - Muddy Sled (750 acres) - 20 miles north of Enterprise, OR
 - Chesnimnus RMEF (750 acres) - Zumwalt Prairie 18 miles NE of Enterprise, OR
 - Arroz (500 acres) - 24 miles NE of Enterprise in the Summit Ridge Area.
 - B-Vine (1200 acres) - North east of Enterprise near Billy Meadows

The Grande Ronde Fire Zone (GRFZ) – (La Grande Ranger District). The GRFZ plans to conduct prescribed burning on up to 900 acres this spring:

- Rooster (300 acres) – 20 miles southwest of La Grande, OR
- Blue Fly (400 acres) – Tony Vey Meadows 18 miles southwest of La Grande, OR
- Bird Track(1100 acres) - Grand Ronde River 11 miles west of La Grande, OR.

Kindergarten screening ahead

The Baker School District will be conducting individual assessments for children planning to enroll as kindergarten students in August, 2015. This screening is offered to assist parents and teachers in determining the readiness skills of pre-school children for kindergarten entry in the fall. Children must be 5 years of age by September 1, 2015, to be eligible.

The assessment covers three main areas of child development: motor skills, concepts and language. Children participate for about 45 minutes, one-on-one, with an adult in a variety of activities at four separate stations. Upon completion, the coordinator will share the results with parents and discuss any potential areas of concern or interest.

Most children who are currently enrolled in a pre-school will be screened at

their pre-school. Children who are NOT enrolled in a pre-school will be screened at the Baker School District Office, 2090 Fourth Street, Baker City on April 8th, 9th and 10th between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Please contact Ellen Dentinger at 524-2260 to schedule an appointment, allowing 45 minutes to an hour to include consultation.

During the assessment, parents will be asked to pre-register their child to assist the school district in planning for the next school year. The child's birth certificate (or a copy) will be recorded at that time. Other pre-registration forms and information will also be available.

Even if the child is unable to participate in the actual screening, it is important to complete the pre-registration portion at the District Office and

have a copy of the birth certificate made. All students will, however, need to be officially registered in August with an updated immunization record.

Screening Details. The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3) is given each spring to assist parents and teachers in determining the readiness skills of pre-school children for kindergarten entry in the fall. Children must be 5 years of age by September 1, 2015, to be eligible.

The (DIAL-3) assessment covers three main areas of development: motor skills, concepts and language. Children participate one-on-one with an adult in a variety of activities at three separate stations. Upon completion (approximately 45 minutes time) the coordinator will share the results with parents and discuss any potential areas

of concern or interest. Parents also will be asked to pre-register their child at this time to assist District 5J in planning for the next school year. We will need the child's birth certificate (or a copy). Pre-registration forms will be available at the screening. It is important to register your child at the District Office if your child is unable to participate in the actual screening or if you have not completed a pre-registration form at the local daycare or pre-school where your child is enrolled.

- Dates.**
- Wednesday, April 8th, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 - Thursday, April 9th, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 - Friday, April 10th, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Please call Ellen Dentinger at 524-2260 for an appointment. Screening are held at the Baker School District Office