

Local / Sports

Crossroads holds expansion meeting for public input

BY GINA K. SWARTZ
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An idea is being tossed around to expand the Crossroads Art Center.

Crossroads has received grant funding from the National Endowment for the Arts Challenge, America Grant and the Ford Family Foundation to do a feasibility study on the neighboring Welch Building as a possibility for any future expansion.

Crossroads is not planning to leave the current location in the Carnegie Library, which was recently restored—a process that in itself took six years to complete. “The Carnegie Library is limited in teaching space which is a core of our mission and Crossroads has been looking at options,” said Crossroads Executive Director Ginger Savage.

The Welch Building is one of those options. “Crossroads Board of Directors is committed to a careful and systematic process, which has always included a great deal of community input,” added Savage.

A series of public outreach meetings is being held to gain input from the community and assist in the feasibility study for the expansion and prospect of the Welch property.

That property is directly across Auburn Street from where the Arts Center is currently located.

The first of the series was held Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. at Crossroads and facilitated by architect Larry Abell, who is also President of Historic Baker City and Crossroads Executive Director Ginger Savage.

A handful of Baker City residents with interest in the center, including YMCA Executive Director Heidi Dalton, attended the meeting.

Abell gave a brief presentation highlighting the expansion to the Welch Building. Some construction in the building has occurred already but turning the 3,000 square-foot property would be a major undertaking.

It is a prospect that



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Historic Baker City’s Larry Abell at left, and Crossroads Executive Director Ginger Savage speak to a small group about possible Crossroads expansion.

Savage and Abell find exciting, and acquiring the property and expanding would double the space Crossroads already has and provide critical storage capacity that they say is desperately needed.

Abell gave a brief slide presentation that included photos of the inside of the Welch building and outlined Crossroads mission statement, “Our mission is to create opportunities for the entire community to be engaged, inspired, and transformed by the arts through participation in classes, workshops, exhibits, mentorships, and partnerships. A welcoming place where people meet and the arts speak.”

He then asked for the group to share ideas as to what types of things would be beneficial to the mission statement and expand the scope of the Arts Center.

Ideas were tossed out that included things like making a media center that might include a place to do voice overs or create “commercials” or perhaps produce radio endeavors.

This idea envisioned encompassing students in one or more roles giving skills that could inspire for a lifetime and even added a revenue generating aspect to the idea as well. The

question was asked if there was the possibility of living space that could foster tenants providing for an artist in residence aspect.

Dalton, because of her involvement with youth in our community through the YMCA had several ideas, and envisioned connecting with the community. She recently toured YMCA and Community Facilities in other areas like Chicago, and while by no means was she trying to compare this small community to a metropolis such as Chicago with their needs and resources, she was impressed with some of the ideas they were utilizing.

Everyone at the meeting agreed that flexibility was of the utmost importance in and space. Savage expressed also that of any space she needed to be mindful of how it was used.

She indicated that currently she has four-year-olds who attend the center for dance classes and has art displays geared toward adults that those children must pass to use the restroom. So the potential was there for a problem. Moving dance classes to expanded property would both eliminate that problem and potentially provide better, larger space

for those classes.

Other ideas expressed included expanding outdoor venues that might lend to more how-to type exhibits and the addition of a bistro that could cultivate culinary classes.

Dalton added to that idea the possibility of adding a rooftop garden, which those involved with culinary programs could use. Partnering with online schooling in the arts was also mentioned as something that may go in well with the media center.

More public outreach meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, November 17 at 8:00 a.m. and Thursday November 19 at 6:00 p.m. both at the crossroads art center.

Crossroads also invites community members to stay after the public input sessions and share any stories or remembrances of Welch Building—as known to some as the old Baker Clinic or the old KBKR Building.

The feasibility study must be done by December 31, 2015, and at that time the Crossroads Board of Directors will take the time to review all options.

For more information, please contact Crossroads at 541-523-5369.

Swimmers host Spooktacular

La Grande Swim Club hosted their Spooktacular swim meet on November 7 & 8. There were a total of 166 athletes representing 7 teams from Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Of the swimmers for La Grande, two competing are from Baker City, Jared Miller(16) and Riana Scott(13). The following are their results:

- Jared Miller
- 15 & over 50 Free 1st
- 15 & over 100 Free 1st
- 15 & over 200 Free 1st
- 15 & over 500 Free 1st
- 15 & over 100 Back 1st
- 15 & over 200 back 1st
- 15 & over high point 3rd
- Riana Scott
- 13-14 50 Free 2nd
- 13-14 100 Free 3rd
- 13-14 100 Breast 2nd
- 13-14 200 Breast 2nd
- 13-14 100 Back 2nd
- 13-14 200 Back 2nd
- 13-14 100 Fly 5th
- 13-14 400 IM 1st
- 13-14 high point 2nd

The next meet for these swimmers is the Boise Y Thanksgiving Invitational, November 20-22.

Wrestling tournament



Submitted Photos Courtesy of Dan Batchelor.

Baker Mat Club had 13 first-place wins, 9 second-place wins, and 11 third-place wins at last Saturday’s tournament held in Baker City. The match was attended by wrestlers from Walla Walla, La Grande, Hermiston, Union, Enterprise, Irrigon, Pendleton, and Baker. The next match will be hosted by Pendleton on November 14, 2015. Approximately 50 wrestlers are members of the Baker Mat Club team.

Public Works talks wastewater

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Thursday at noon in Council Chambers at City Hall the Public Works Advisory Committee met for the first time since May. Public Works Director Michelle Owen facilitated the meeting with City Engineer Doug Schwin assisting her.

Committee members Gary Carter, Myrna Morgan, Allen McDaniel and John Wickert were in attendance with Milo Pope and Jim Bruce absent.

The meeting was called to order and the committee voted to accept the minutes from the May 7, 2015 meeting.

Review of Projects

Owen began by stating that in January and February of each year she tries to gather together ideas that need to go into the next fiscal year’s capital plan.

She likes to have that

plan together by March, “which really isn’t that far off,” she said, so she knows what to approach the Budget Board for when they are working on the City Budget for the next fiscal year.

Owen gave an overview of projects the Public Works Department is working on or has completed for this year. She spoke of the Auburn Street waterline that had been replaced this past summer.

She said, “That has been in and out of the Capital plan for at least a decade. But we finally got that taken care of.”

She cited reasons for the delay of the project being issues like chip seal or overlay projects and just not wanting to destroy work that had just been done to the street.

She noted, “It was a challenge for traffic in the area but overall went very

well.” Owen mentioned chip seal projects that were very successful. “We’ve gotten it down to a science, I think we are good at doing our short blocks.”

Fog Seal projects were not without some issue, the City used a product they had not used before and unfortunately the salesperson misrepresented drying time for the product therefore not all projects were able to be completed.

Owen said, “It wasn’t a complete success, or a complete disaster. It looks great and has worked well. The Fog Seal was applied to Resort Street, L Street and E Street but E Street was right in front of the High School and we were right in the middle of the fires and had all of the firefighters at the high school so there were some challenges with that.”

Schwin added, “I don’t think it was a failure at all it is just that the curing

time was not what they had represented.”

City Council member Jim Thomas asked, “Was it because it was just a bad mix?”

Owen and Schwin advised that the product is a good product and they have been happy with it they both just felt that the salesman just didn’t understand the drying process and time it would require. The driver that was applying the product seemed surprised the salesman had represented it as curing so quickly and seemed a lot more knowledgeable about the product.

Owen advised the committee of a water leak and sink hole that had occurred on Valley that required unexpected attention. It was a significant leak about 2000 gallons per minute. “It ran for 40 minutes,” Owen said.

SEE PUBLIC WORKS
PAGE 12