

# CityNews...

## Staff Article

### City Council September 4, 2007

#### City Moves to Sell Surplus Twenty Acres...

After a Public Hearing the City Council approved terms for placing a twenty-acre property, previously declared surplus, for sale. During the hearing there were questions raised by both the audience and the council about the process that was used for choosing the realtor for offering the property for sale, and why a local realtor was not chosen. City Administrator M.R. "Dick" Kline explained that the realtor chosen had good market experience and had offered reduced fees. There was also discussion about restrictions that could/could not be placed on development of the property. Mayor Sally Harrison explained that any development would have to go before the City Planning Commission and that all city codes would apply. During deliberations it was agreed that Council accept the fair market value of \$545,000 and place the property for sale. Council and the audience were reminded that the city does not have to accept any offers that are made and that this is a good opportunity to "test the waters" to see what kind of serious interest there might be for the property.

#### Planning Commissioner Criteria Amended...

Council approved a motion that would allow a vacated position on the Planning Commission to be filled by an individual who lives within five miles of the city limits. The current restrictions state that the commission can be made up of six residents and one at-large member. The motion allows that if a position is vacated and remains open for three months, and the city has advertised the position and made efforts to fill it, then the position can be filled by a non-resident to complete the term. Commissioner Heather Lewis stated that it is always preferable to have members of the commission who are part of the community as either residents, tax payers or business owners who are socially and economically invested in the city.

#### Speed Zone Changed in Business District...

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has approved the city's request to change the speed limit through the downtown business district to 20 MPH. After an ODOT investigation was completed, approval was given to change the speed limit

on Bridge Street and Rose Avenue, from Grant Avenue to one hundred feet north of Cougar Street, eliminating the short 25 MPH zone on Rose Avenue. The City accepted these terms, and was notified at the September 17 council meeting that ODOT would begin changing the posted signs in the near future.

#### New Police Vehicles Awaiting Equipment Installation...

Police Chief Mathew Workman reported that the new 2007 Ford Expedition and the 2007 Dodge Charger have arrived and are awaiting installation of equipment that will allow them to be fully functional. At the September 17 Council meeting Chief Workman explained that because of delays in the shipping of the vehicles to Vernonia, scheduling of the equipment installation has been difficult.

### City Council September 17, 2007

#### City Declares a Water Shortage Emergency...

City Council passed an ordinance declaring a "Second Level of Concern" due to low stream flow on Rock Creek. During a Second Level of Concern sprinkling, irrigation and watering may be done by residences West of State Street on even numbered days and East of State Street on odd numbered days. The restrictions will remain in place until water flows exceed twelve cubic feet-per-second. The city recommends citizens consider using water conservation practices to avoid any further restrictions.

#### Waste Water Loan Amount Increased...

Council passed a resolution that would increase the amount that the city is able to borrow from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund when the City begins Phase II of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. The resolution raises the amount the city can borrow in Phase II to \$8.6 million. City Administrator Kline explained that this does not obligate the city in any way to these funds, but makes them available if needed. The resolution also allows the increase of the amount of the required loan reserve should the money be borrowed. Mr. Kline recommended that the city close out Phase I of the project which will trigger reporting and loan repayment requirements. Mr. Kline explained that beginning the repayment process for Phase I will al-

low the city to be better prepared and informed as it considers its options about how to proceed with Phase II.

#### City Signs State Parks Grant Agreement...

Council approved entering into an agreement with Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department for a Local Government Grant in the amount of \$245,600 to assist in the construction of the Vernonia Bicycle Skills Park. The grant agreement states that the city is required to provide matching funds in the amount of \$206,395 which can come from both in-kind donations and city funds. After some questions and discussion about how the city would provide those funds, it was explained that the grant is a reimbursement grant, and that the city has the option of adjusting or downsizing the scale of the project if the city feels it cannot meet the match requirements. After receiving assurances that the project would not proceed beyond the means of the city, Mayor Harrison signed the agreement.

#### City Grants Jefferson Street Easement...

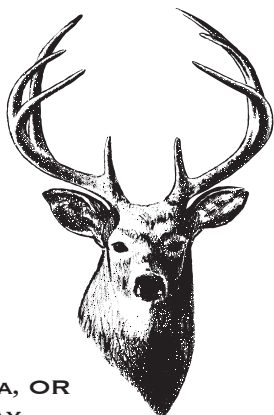
Council voted to grant an extension of Jefferson Street across city owned tax lot 7400, with Planning Commission conditions, allowing Mr. Bill Sword to construct bridge access to his property. Mr. Sword will be responsible for paying for full public improvements and for any costs incurred in the movement of the current bridge that he uses. Access to Mr. Sword's property has been a point of contention between Mr. Sword and the city, as current access requires Mr. Sword to travel through heavily used Anderson Park Campground, sometimes with very large logging equipment. Mr. Sword's offer to move the location of the crossing appears to be a very acceptable solution to all parties involved.

#### Committee Positions Filled...

Mayor Sally Harrison appointed Judith Stefan to the Community Learning Center Committee and Barbara Ward to the Public Library Board. The Mayor thanked these community members for volunteering to serve the community.

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