

# Vernonia City News...

## At the October 3, 2011 City Council Meeting:

**Council Approves Contract With Union**--Council entered into Executives Session at the end of the Council meeting per ORS 192.660 (2)(d) Labor Negotiator Consultations; (e) Real Property Transactions; (h) Legal Council. Council returned and approved the collecting bargaining agreement with AFSCME, the union which represents city employees, and authorized City Administrator Bill Haack to sign the contract.

Mayor Josette Mitchell, with consensus from Council, also instructed City Administrator Haack to continue land acquisition negotiations with West Oregon Electric Cooperative.

**Council Expresses Condolences to Barlow Family**--Speaking on behalf of the entire Vernonia City Council, Mayor Josette Mitchell expressed condolences to the family and friends of St. Helens City Councilor Phillip Barlow who

passed away on September 24, 2011 at the age of 39. Barlow died of a heart attack while in Thailand.

**Council Discusses Floodplain Enforcement**--City Administrator Bill Haack provided Council with a letter the City is prepared to send to one resident family that is not in compliance with the city floodplain ordinance. Both the National Flood Insurance Program and FEMA require the City of Vernonia to manage floodplain enforcement. According to the letter homes not in compliance could be subject to a fine of up to \$500 per day. The home in question has been declared Substantially Damaged after the 2007 Flood; the home owner is required to either lift or remove the home. Dan Brown from Columbia County Flood Recovery explained that grant funds have been secured to assist the family in question become compliant.

**Council Approves Contracts for Geotechnical Services**--City Council approved two contracts to complete

specific geotechnical engineering services of soils and related substrata to support plans for the Wastewater Facility Update Plan. Council authorized the City Administrator to sign a contract with KLS Surveying to establish survey points for the report and with Shannon & Wilson, Inc. to add additional data to a report they completed in August 2005. The work will be paid for with an EPA and Tribal Assistance grant the City had previously secured.

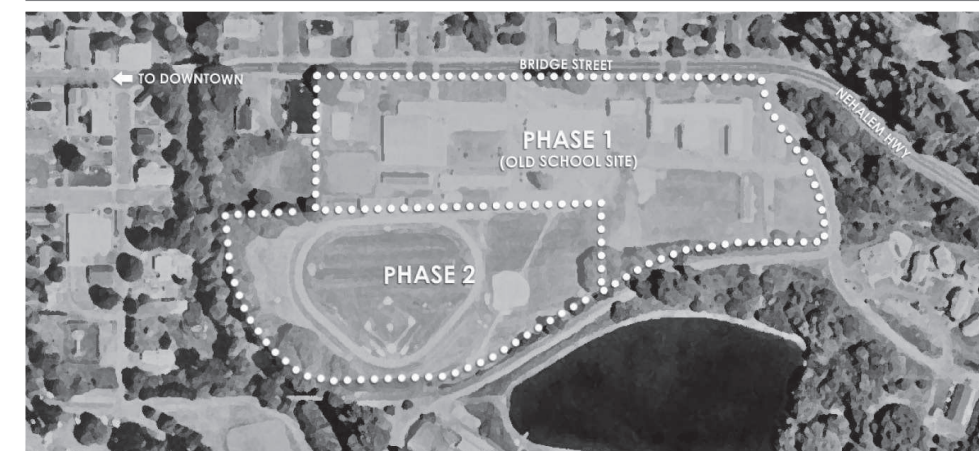
**Council Approves Contract for GIS Services**--Council approved a contract with Triangle GIS, LLC for Data Access and GIS Project Consulting. Triangle GIS will provide the City with support for the continued development of their "Vernonia Explorer" system, which includes searches, mapping, report generation, data input and data editing for city related data. The Vernonia Explorer system had the potential to assist the City with Flood Plain Management, Utility Management, and other Land Management projects.

**Haack Gives Update on Projects**--City Administrator Bill Haack provided a written update on numerous priority projects he is working on and discussed in detail the sewer repair project the Public Works Department performed; gave an update on the Vernonia School District wetlands mitigation project; discussed the idea of doing an inventory for standing timber on all city owned property; updated the ODOT Missouri Avenue project; and discussed the Rock Creek Hydrology Report which provides some options for creating better flow during high water events.

**Mayor Proclaims Fire Prevention Week**--Mayor Josette Mitchell read a proclamation, declaring the week of October 9-15, 2011 as National Fire Prevention Week, encouraging all citizens to protect their families from fire and take steps needed to protect their homes from families safe from fire.

## HELP PLAN THE NEW SPENCER PARK

The City of Vernonia is moving forward with an exciting new park project at the old K-12 school site!



### Get Involved!

We want to hear your ideas regarding the design of the new Spencer Park. This is a great opportunity to make a difference in your community! Please, fill out the attached questionnaire located on the back page of this newsletter. This information will be used to craft several design options that will be presented at the first public meeting. Thank you!

### Building a Park within a Floodplain

Because the new Spencer Park will be located within a floodplain, there are certain restrictions that go along with any construction for the new park. These restrictions are set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and are meant to ensure the site is prepared for flood conditions.

Generally, the park is allowed to have sport fields and some site amenities, but they must meet certain criteria in order to comply with FEMA. This means no new structures with walls or any fencing that could potentially restrict the flow of water during flood events.

### Required Park Amenities

The new park is required by the National Park Service to include the same amenities that were at the old Spencer Park. These amenities include:

- Full size baseball field with backstop, dugouts, and benches
- Restroom facility
- Children's play area
- (2) Soccer fields
- (2) Parking areas
- ADA accessible path system within park

### Q&A: Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Can any of the old school buildings remain?

**Answer:** Unfortunately no. FEMA open space land use requirements do not allow retention of pre-existing structures unless all walls are removed. However, measures are being taken to reuse some of the historic architectural features at both the new park and at the new school to satisfy the Historic Preservation requirements.

**Question:** Will FEMA allow any new structures to be built in the park?

**Answer:** Public shelters, pavilions, and gazebos are allowed, provided that the structure does not contain walls. Public restrooms will be allowed to contain walls; however, all other walled structures are not permitted.

**Question:** Why are you separating the project into two phases?

**Answer:** The School District is obligated to fund certain park improvements as part of the first phase development. However, it is important to think holistically about the entire park site. The master planning process will provide a blueprint for future phasing of park development.

**Question:** What is the project timeline?

**Answer:** Design of the park master plan will continue through the end of 2011. The Tot Lot construction will begin in Spring 2012, the deconstruction of the existing school buildings will begin in Summer 2012 and the dedication of the new Spencer Park will take place the following Summer, in 2013.

### Why Build a New Park?

As a result of the new K-12 school, the old Spencer Park was converted from park and open space land into school property. The design and development of a new Spencer Park and Tot Lot is required by National Park Services to replace the converted park and open space land.

### Project Goals

The School District has hired design consultants to work with Vernonia residents on a park master plan for the new Spencer Park and Tot Lot.

Some of the project goals include:

- Preserve historic features on

the buildings before deconstruction.

- Provide sport fields and amenities at the new Spencer Park that are similar to the old Spencer Park.

- Work with Vernonia residents to create a park that can be enjoyed by all age groups.

### The Master Planning Process

The City of Vernonia views the entire park master plan as a 10 year process. Phase 1 of the master plan includes the planning of the new 11.82 acre Spencer Park and a 0.2 acre Tot Lot located next to the new school. Phase 1 planning will continue through the end of 2011.

### NEW SPENCER PARK QUESTIONNAIRE

- While there are certain programmatic requirements for the First Phase of the park development, we are interested in hearing how you envision the overall character of the park. Please check one or more of the following park elements that you feel are important:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Maximize Sports/Active Areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure/Passive Oriented Spaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking Trails and Benches	<input type="checkbox"/> Picnic Shelters
<input type="checkbox"/> Open Areas for Community Events	<input type="checkbox"/> Skate Park or Youth Oriented Areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Play Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education Areas
- Are there other amenities or features that you would like to see in the new park?
- If you were to visit the new park, would you walk, drive, bike, or skateboard?
- Are you a member of a recreational team or organization that would use the new Spencer Park for games or special events?
- Are there any issues or concerns that should be specifically addressed in the new Spencer Park master plan (i.e. safety issues, parking issues)? Use additional sheets of paper as necessary.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SHEET TO THE VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICE BY OCTOBER 18th

### How does this Questionnaire end up in the Right Hands?

- Find the questionnaire online at: <http://www.vernonia.k12.or.us/> and submit by e-mail
- Print the questionnaire and give it to your child to hand-in to their teachers at school
- Mail or drop-off the questionnaire to the School District Office at: 475 Bridge Street Vernonia, OR 97064

Please send your responses to the District by October 18, 2011

### 2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

Save the Date!

Public Meeting 1  
Presentation of Concept Plan Options  
**Thursday, October 20th** 7 - 8:30pm  
249 Bridge Street, Vernonia, Oregon

Public Meeting 2  
Discussion of Final Concept Plan  
**Tuesday, December 6th** 7 - 8:30pm  
249 Bridge Street, Vernonia, Oregon