

Vernonia City News...

At the July 16, 2012 City Council Meeting:

Council Holds Hearing, Discusses Parking Changes—Council held a Public Hearing to consider recommended changes from the Planning Commission to amend existing parking standards in the City of Vernonia and to create a funding mechanism for downtown parking lots.

Council chose to make no decision on the recommendations from the Planning Commission until they have additional information and Mayor Josette Mitchell recessed the Hearing so it could be continued at a later date. (See full story on page 5)

Daughtry Makes Presentation to City—Vernonia citizen Shirlee Daughtry presented the City with a gift of a framed pen and ink sketch of Bridge Street by artist Mason Parker. The art was framed locally by Grey Dawn Gallery. Parker's art work was featured in the January 10, 2012 issue of *Vernonia's Voice*.

Council Authorizes Use of Airport for Military Exercise—Council authorized the City Administrator to sign an agreement with the 4th Battalion 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) for use of the Vernonia Municipal Airport Facility. The Special Forces Group is based at Ft. Carson, Colorado and

will be conducting an Unconventional Warfare Exercise out of Camp Rilea from August 10-16. As part of the exercise the Military Free Fall team will jump onto the Vernonia Airport grounds between the hours of 10:00 PM and midnight on August 10 at the beginning of the exercise. The City will receive no compensation for the use of the airfield.

Council Approves Application for Street Funds—Council approved Resolution 28-12 allowing the Public Works Department to make an application to the Oregon Department of Transportation for \$50,000 from the 2013 Special City Allotment Fund. The fund is available for cities with under

5,000 in population to be spent on streets that are not part of the state highway system. Vernonia intends to use the funds to install an overlay over Maple Street from Weed Avenue to Jefferson Street and to install sidewalks from Madison Avenue to Weed Avenue along Maple.

Council Meets in Executive Session for Review—Council moved to Executive Session under ORS 196.660(2) to review and evaluate the performance of an officer, employee or staff member. After returning to regular session, the Council took no further actions.

City Council Considers Changes to Parking Standards

The Vernonia City Council held a Public Hearing during their regular meeting on July 16, 2012 to consider recommended changes from the Planning Commission to amend existing parking standards in the City. The changes included the creation of a funding mechanism for downtown parking lots. City Planner Carole Connell was on hand at the hearing to answer questions from the audience and Council.

After deliberations Council chose to make no decision on the recommendations from the Planning Commission until they have additional information and Mayor Josette Mitchell recessed the Hearing so it could be continued at a later date.

The Planning Commission had previously conducted a Public Hearing on the issue on June 7, 2012.

According to the report presented by Connell to the Council at the July 16 hearing, the Planning Commission has had a goal of amending the off-street parking regulations for several years. The Commission has identified the need for improved parking conditions and consistent regulatory procedures, especially in the Downtown Zone.

Through their most recent review of the issue, the Planning Commission determined that the City and the business community have had difficulty complying with current parking requirements which require that a business provide a certain number of off-street parking spaces anytime a new building is constructed or a property changes uses. If a business is unable to comply they must apply for and receive a Variance from the Planning Commission before they can begin occupancy. The number of spaces each business is required to provide varies based on the size of the establishment and type of business. Residential units are also required to provide off-street parking.

The City has recently become the owner of several sites in the downtown area through the FEMA buyout process of flood damaged properties. One site is the paved parking lot at the corner of Maple and Adams Streets, across from the old West Oregon Electric Cooperative headquarters. The other site is the actual lot where the old WOEK headquarters is currently being demolished. The city has identified both these lots as an opportunity to provide off-street public parking. The city would need to improve and maintain these lots. Improvements that are needed could include fencing, curbs or bumper rails, stripping and lighting.

The Planning Commission has proposed several amendments to the current parking requirements. One amendment would allow applicants to request a waiver from the requirements and agree to pay an annual fee of \$10 per space required. The fees will be used to construct, operate and maintain public off-street parking for the downtown district. The Planning Commission recommended three methods for establishing the fee: 1) only new businesses be required to pay the

fee; 2) every new and existing business be required to pay the fee, requiring a one-time calculation of how many parking spaces each business is lacking; 3) set aside a portion of current business license fees paid by every businesses to be earmarked for a parking fund.

The Planning Commission also recommended reducing the number of spaces required for retail uses and medical and dental clinics. It also increases the number of spaces required for restaurants and bars

During the Public Hearing and deliberations by Council questions were raised about what FEMA will allow as improvements to parking lots as well as what the estimated costs would be to establish and maintain a gravel parking area. There was also a question of whether the mechanism established to collect fees could also be used to collect fees to maintain other "green spaces" the city has acquired through the FEMA buyout process. There were also questions about how the City would actually determine the number of spaces each property requires. Council was unable to reach consensus about which method they should use to establish the fee. Citizens in the audience raised concerns about how the public was notified about this hearing and also whether it would be possible to include downtown business owners in the process of devising a solution.

Upcoming Vernonia City Hall Closures and City Council Meetings

City Hall will be closed:
Monday, Sept. 3, 2012

Upcoming City Council Meetings are scheduled for:

Monday, August 6, 2012
Monday, August 20, 2012
Tuesday, Sept. 4, 2012

Dates and Times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules

*****NOTICE*****

The Vernonia Police Department has in its physical possession the unclaimed personal property described below. If you have any ownership interest in any of the unclaimed property, you must file a claim with the Vernonia Police Department within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice, or you will lose your interest in the property.

DESCRIPTION
Red (Rallye) 18speed Mountain Bike
Red (Glacier Point) Mountain Bike
Red (Stingray) Childs Bicycle
Green (Vertical) BMX Style Bicycle
Blue (Magna) Mountain Bike
Black and Blue – BMX Style Bicycle
Black and Green – BMX Style Bicycle
Red (Mongoose) – BMX Style Bicycle
White spray painted – BMX Style Bicycle
Black with Orange Rimes (Lajolla) Road Bike

The property described above will be disposed of 30 days from the publication of this notice.

Michael Conner – Chief of Police
Vernonia Police Department
1001 Bridge St
Vernonia, Oregon 97064
(503)429-7335



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