

Planning Commission Considers Zoning Changes Part I: Vernonia Needs Room for More Businesses

By Scott Laird

The Vernonia Planning Commission recently invited the public to attend a meeting on July 19 to discuss changes to current land use zoning within the community. A second meeting with the public is scheduled for August 16 at 6:00 PM at City Hall.

The Planning Commission scheduled the meetings in order to inform the public ahead of any hearings about possible changes to local zoning that could affect property owners.

According to Planning Commission Chairperson, Dan Brown, there is a concern about the amount of land available within city limits that can accommodate businesses.

“We’re not trying to hurt or devalue Vernonia in this process, we’re trying to solve a problem with the least amount of impact.” said Brown in a recent interview. “But what people have to realize is that the problem has to be solved.”

Currently under consideration is a change in land Use Zoning from the “Residential” designation to either “General Commercial” or “Downtown.” The Planning Commission is currently considering changes along Rose and Weed Avenues at the south end of town on either side of the new West Oregon Electric Cooperative headquarters. Brown says the Planning Commission is required by state law to provide buildable land inven-

tory inside the city limits.

According to Brown, the Vernonia Planning Commission has been looking at rezoning for some time. The flood in 2007 caused several changes in what land is available for development, as well as how certain properties can be used.

“What has sped this up right now is that we need to re-zone all the flood lots the City has acquired and the old school property needs to be rezoned, so we’re trying to do as much as possible at the same time,” said Brown.

Brown says the Planning Commission invited the public to take part in discussions early in the process

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Vernonia School Opening Celebration is August 21

The big day has finally arrived!

After over four years of hard work the Vernonia School District is ready to celebrate the grand opening of the new Vernonia K-12 School and community center.

The celebration will take place on August 21, 2012 with festivities scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM. The new school facility is located at 1000 Missouri Avenue. The Vernonia School District and the Catalyst Campaign have invited the entire community to attend.

The schedule of events is as follows:

- 10:00 AM Grand opening program
- 11:00 AM Tours of the new school
- 12:00 PM Lunch, thank you program
- 5:30-8:30 Community open house

According to Vernonia School District Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Cox the building will be open for tours all afternoon.

The new facility is 135,000 square feet which will house elementary and middle school classrooms in separate wings on the ground floor and high school classrooms on the second floor. The building contains two gymnasiums and a commons area, with stage, that will serve as a lunch room as well as auditorium and community room.

The school was designed to be an innovative model for rural education. It will include sustainable features such as passive heating and cooling, day-lighting, and photovoltaic and ground source energy use and aims to be one of the first LEED-certified public K-12 building in the country.

In November 2009, the residents of the Vernonia School District overwhelmingly approved a \$13 million bond to get the school district started towards raising the funds

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Verdura Clinic Leaves Vernonia

Verdura Family Wellness, the medical care provider that has been operating a health clinic in Vernonia since February 20, 2012, abruptly closed their doors for business in Vernonia on July 30, 2012.

“Dear Vernonia Patient: We are writing to inform you that the Vernonia location of Verdura Family Wellness will be closing its doors, effectively [sic] immediately,” stated a letter dated July 30, 2012, which was posted on the front door of the office at 510 Bridge Street. “We have great [sic] enjoyed getting to meet you and help you with your healthcare needs, but at this time we are un-

able to continue our practice in Vernonia.”

According to Vernonia Health Center Board President Marie Krahn, the announcement that Verdura was closing came as a shock to the Board, patients and staff at the clinic. “The Vernonia Health Center Board met with Verdura Family Wellness on Monday evening, July 30th and was informed that the Vernonia Clinic would be closed for business as of that day,” said Krahn. Krahn said she had received a phone call from Verdura on Tuesday July 24th informing her that Verdura was planning to close at the end of the month.

The Vernonia

Health Center Board owns and operates the physical building where the clinic was operating and had a month to month lease with Verdura Family Wellness, which ran through August 15, 2012.

“We are greatly saddened by the announcement,” said Krahn. “It came as quite a surprise. We had just received their monthly update on July 19th which stated that things were going fine. We were working on getting better signage for them as they had requested.”

A copy of that monthly update—an email



Verdura Family Wellness closed their Vernonia clinic on July 31.

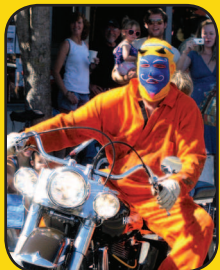
sent from Verdura Practice Manager, Sara Miller to Krahn, stated that Verdura needed some kind of signage to catch the eye of

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11 friendship jamboree



19 booster day camp



catalyst

The campaign for Vernonia's schools

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www.vernoniaschools.org

catalyst

The campaign for Vernonia's schools

Oregon's Barn Raising

Join us for the celebration!
August 21, 2012
Festivities begin at 10:00 am
1000 Missouri Avenue
Vernonia, Oregon