

# Vernonia City News...

## At the November 6, 2017 City Council Meeting:

**Council Adopts Ordinance to Restrict Smoking in Parks** – The City Council voted 4-0 to adopt Ordinance 914, which regulates smoking in City Parks. The ordinance takes effect in 30 days from adoption. (See full story on front page.)

**Council Discusses Greenman Field Bleachers** – Following a joint workshop between the City Council and the Parks Committee on October 30, Council again discussed the current repairs needed for the stadium roof structure at Greenman Field. The roof was deemed unsafe by an engineer this summer. They also discussed potential future uses for the stadium after the School District constructs a new field at the school campus and no longer has need to lease the field from the City. It was agreed that the City does not see the potential for future use that would warrant the expense needed to make long-term repairs. Council directed City Administrator Josette Mitchell to attend the School Board meeting on November 9 and ask the School District to abide by their lease, which requires them to maintain the field and the structure, and either pay to have a temporary fix done to secure the roof through the winter, estimated at \$15,000, or install security fencing to reduce liability to both the City and the District.

**Council Approves Streets Recommendations** – Council approved three recommendations from the Public Works Committee which would begin the process of addressing additional street and stormwater repairs and upgrades. Council approved recommendations that would propose a cost sharing plan with residents on OA Hill to improve alleyways in that neighborhood. They also approved recommendations to gather information for survey work, preliminary engineering and cost analysis to build out Louisiana Avenue, build a connector street between the north and south sections of Louisiana Avenue, and build a connector to E Street.

**Council Approves Parks Recommendations** – Council approved two recommendations from the Parks Committee for upgrades to Spencer Park. Council approved spending \$500 to hire Robert Tidwell of Knot

Just a Bear to carve one of the stumps in front of Spencer Park into a salmon. They also approved starting the Spencer Park Tree Project which would allow citizens to purchase a memorial tree from a list of approved trees which would be planted in various locations around the park. The project is being headed by Parks Committee member Steve Whiteman, who would like to see places in the park for people to relax and enjoy the park. Anyone interested in purchasing a memorial tree should contact City Hall.

**Police Chief Report** – Police Chief Mike Conner confirmed that Officer Cody Pesio will be leaving the force on November 14. Conner said he will be closing the hiring process to replace Pesio on November 17. Conner also said he is continuing the background check process on one applicant for the Reserve Officer program.

**City Administrator Report** – City Administrator Josette Mitchell updated the Council on several ongoing projects and issues, including the Wastewater Treatment Plant project, Nickerson Ridge Estates, Spencer Park Picnic Shelter, the Green Bridge, and the Airport Seismic Monitoring Station.

Mitchell told the Council construction contracts are being prepared for the Senior Center/Food Bank facility. She said it looks like construction will begin in the spring, one year later than was originally projected.

Mitchell said the first phase of the streets and storm water upgrade project authorized by the Council is complete; next up is finishing work on G Street, culvert and side rock on Polk Avenue, and grading, re-rocking and a cold patch at the entrance to Old Bridge Street.

Mitchell said a meeting concerning mitigating flood run-off from Knickerson Creek was held with Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Department of State Lands, The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council, and local homeowners. Mitchell said the solution is probably a three year project to address restoration of the creek that would include creating swale areas to slow down water flow and create storage, and the re-

moval of the culvert at the end of Nickerson Avenue.

**Council Meets in Executive Session** – Council met in Executive Session under ORS.192.660 (2) (h) *To consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.* Following their return to Open Session, the Council directed the City Administrator to prepare a cost estimate for an engineering report. Council took no further action and did not provide any further information for the audience concerning this action.

**Topics From the Floor** – Jeff Goodman said he had concerns about provisions in the City's livestock ordinance which does not allow a resident to keep livestock within 15 feet of an inhabited structure. He said he keeps livestock on his covered porch and has been told by code enforcement this is not allowed. He asked Council to revisit the ordinance.

Wendy Sears provided an update on the Skate Park project and presented Council with petitions with over 300 names, including school students, who were in favor of a skate park. She asked Council to give approval for the project so she can begin fundraising. Council asked Sears to meet with the City Administrator and the Parks Committee.

Tim Nebergall told Council he has a problem with his water line, which runs through several other properties. There was a leak but he has been unable to receive permission to go onto the other property to fix it. The water shut off and meter are also on other property owners' land, which has also caused problems. He is looking for help in solving his issues.

Michelle Moline provided an update on the easement issue at the Lincoln School property where she lives and runs a business. She thanked City Administrator Josette Mitchell for her help with the issue and said a fence will be installed which should alleviate some issues with neighbors.

Brittanie Roberts said the proposed ordinance to restrict smoking in parks is a good compromise and encouraged the Council to do what they feel is best for the community when they vote on it.

## Council Approves Smoking Regulations in Parks *continued from front page*

from the Vernonia Schools OSSOM (Operation Student Safety On the Move) group took part in the nationwide Kick Butts campaign to help curb tobacco use by youths, collecting cigarette butts and tobacco litter at Hawkins Park and the Spencer Park play shed. Students noted that while the parks looked clean of cigarette butts at first, upon closer inspection there were quite a lot – especially for the month of March. Students concurred that they see a large increase in cigarette butt litter in the parks as the weather gets warmer each year. Students were also surprised about other things they found, including alcohol containers, broken glass, children's pacifiers, and a few syringes. Students later made a presentation about their findings to the City

Council.

In July of 2017 the Parks Committee returned to City Council and presented a compromise ordinance that did not completely ban smoking, but instead restricted smoking to designated areas in some parks, created smoke free areas in other parks, and banned smoking in two smaller parks where it would be easy for smokers to step outside park boundaries in order to smoke.

City Administrator Josette Mitchell raised several questions about the feasibility of implementing specific parts of the recommendation and Council asked her to work with the Parks Committee to clarify and simplify the proposal before bringing it back for adoption.

Council discussed the revised version of the ordinance at their August 21, 2017 meeting. Numerous public discussions on social media concerning the issue took place and several citizens, both for and against the ordinance, addressed the Council during the Topics From the Floor portion of their September 18 meeting, both in person and by email. At that meeting Council chose to table a scheduled vote on the ordinance and asked city staff to prepare a survey on the issue so they could receive more community input before making a decision. The survey was sent out with the City utility bills and copies of the survey were also made available to other citizens at City Hall.

At their October 16, 2017 meeting, Council received the results of the survey which had 153 individuals responding, with 67 (45.76%) saying they approved of restricting smoking in parks, 3 saying they approved of restrictions but wanted to see changes in the ordinance, and 83 (54.24%) saying they disagreed with the proposed restrictions.

At their November 6, 2017 meeting Council adopted the Ordinance with Councilor Bruce McNair making the motion without any discussion. The motion passed 4-0, with Councilor Susan Wagner not present at the meeting. The ordinance takes effect 30 days from adoption.

**The Vernonia Transfer Station is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday in November and December 8am-2pm**

**November 18  
December 2 & 16**

*Dates and times are subject to change due to weather*

**Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures**

**City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm:**  
Monday, November 20, 2017  
Monday, December 4, 2017

**City Closures are scheduled for:**  
Thursday, November 23, 2017  
Friday, November 24, 2017  
*Thanksgiving Holiday*

*Dates and times subject to change*

**Police Blotter • November 1-13, 2017**

**Reports/Arrests**

- November 1, 2017 Citation after a Non Injury Vehicle Crash for Careless Driving and Driving Outside Restriction near North Mist Drive
- November 2, 2017 Report of Outside Agency Assist near Jefferson Avenue
- November 4, 2017 Citation for Burning of Certain Materials near "F" Street
- November 4, 2017 Arrest for Criminal Trespass II near Jefferson Avenue
- November 7, 2017 Arrest for Attempted Burglary, Criminal Trespass II, and Violation of a Release Agreement near Jefferson Avenue

**Citations/Other**

- November 3, 2017 Citation for Title 3-02 Nuisance Control Violations
- November 6, 2017 Citation for Driving While Suspended and Failure to Carry Proof of Insurance near Rose Avenue
- November 7, 2017 Citation for Driving While Suspended near Maple Street

**Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation. 11/01/2017 through 11/13/2017 VPD had 89 calls for service.**