

Vernonia City News...

At the August 6, 2018 City Council Meeting:

Senior Center/Food Bank project on Hold – City Administrator Josette Mitchell told the Council the City Received two bids for construction of the Senior Center/Food Bank, but said both were far above the proposed budget. (See full story of front page.)

Lease Back Flood Properties – Mitchell told the Council that properties owned by the City that were part of the buyout following the 2007 flood are now free to be leased back to adjacent property owners for a small fee. Those properties still have restrictions based on flood plain ordinance rules. Mitchell said the City is still finalizing the legal draft lease agreement. Mitchell said a number of the potential properties are not owned by the City, but are owned by Columbia County and said she is working with the County to transfer those properties to City ownership, although she said the process could take up to a year.

Mayor Extends Planning Commission Appointment – Mayor Mario Leonetti, with approval from the rest of the Council, appointed Erika Paleck to another four year term on the Vernonia Planning Commission.

Council Appoints Wagner to County Public Safety Council – Based on a request from Columbia County District Attorney Jeff Auxier, the Council agreed to appoint Vernonia City Councilor Susan Wagner to the Columbia County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council. According to a letter sent by Auxier to the City Council, ORS 423.560 requires every Oregon county to convene one of these groups with the duty of “coordinating local criminal justice policy.” The statute mandates that each county include a variety of leaders including: a state court judge; the county Sheriff; a police chief; a representative from the Oregon State Police; members from the community corrections, county juvenile and mental health systems; and a City Councilor or Mayor. Wagner will fill the City Councilor position. “I saw this is an opportunity to engage your city, which due to its size and geographic location is often underrepresented in our local justice system,” stated Auxier’s letter to the Council.

Council Approves Naming of Dog Park – Based on a request from the Dog Park Committee and a recommendation from the Parks Committee, Council voted 5-0 to approve the name “Archie Dass Dog Park,” in honor of the longtime citizen who passed away this past

year. Holly Vaughn and Michal Smith both addressed the Council earlier in the meeting during Topics From the Floor to explain the name. (See full story on this page.)

Topics From the Floor – Dale Webb updated the Council on the operation of the pump at Vernonia Lake, which was installed and has been run by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Webb says he has been monitoring the pump and said a repair was made recently. Webb says he thinks the City is ready to take over operations of the pump.

Council Approves Park Name Change – Council voted 3-2 to approve Resolution 13-18, officially changing the name of Airport Park to Nehalem River Park and Campground. Councilors Bruce McNair and Mike Seager voted against the resolution.

Council Approves Fee Schedule Changes – Council approved Resolution 14-18, amending the Master Fee Schedule. Changes included: correcting Security Deposit amounts for water service; adding a 6” meter rate to sewer utility billing; increasing the fee for printing at City Hall; and adding a headstone installation fee to Cemetery Fees.

Police Department Report – Vernonia Police Chief Mike Conner told Council that Jamboree was a little bit busier than recent years for law enforcement, and noted the following calls: one DUII arrest, one arrest for a felony warrant, one criminal citation for driving while suspended, four fights, one report of naked male, one suspicious activity at Hawkins Park involving juveniles. Conner said the VPD received assistance throughout the weekend from Oregon State Police, Columbia County Sheriff’s Office, St. Helens PD, and Columbia City PD.

Conner updated the Council on the stop sign that ODOT placed at the intersection of Bridge Street and Rose Avenue, telling Council that he has asked ODOT to review the placement for other options. He said ODOT staff has stated that no travel permits will be denied because of the sign.

Grandstands Update – Following a Council workshop with the Intercultural Society of Vernonia and the Save the Grandstands Committee, City Administrator Josette Mitchell is working on an amended draft lease agreement. The groups are all scheduled to meet again on August 21.

Dog Park to be Named for Archie Dass

The proposed dog park in Vernonia, located on an open property along Mist Drive between Ivy Street and Heather Lane, has a name – the Archie Dass Dog Park.

The Vernonia City Council approved the name at their August 6 meeting, based on a request from the Dog Park Committee, a group of volunteers advocating for the creation of a dog park in the Vernonia community, and a recommendation from the Parks Committee.

The Dog Park Committee has been working for several years to raise funds to fence the property, owned by the City of Vernonia, and is waiting to hear if they’ve been awarded a grant from Oregon Parks and Recreation.

Edward “ Archie ” Dass was a lifelong resident of the Vernonia area who passed away in March 2018. He was born in 1937 on the family homestead farm in Vernonia and attended school in the one room Natal Grange School house, Mist Grade School, and later graduated from Vernonia High School in

1955. In 1968 he was united in marriage to Margaret “Janette” Olson. He started working in the woods directly after high school, honing his skills as a logger. After learning all he could from various loggers he started his own business, Archie Dass Logging, which he owned and operated for over 40 years. Archie was a member of the Forest Grove Elks Lodge B.P.O.B #2440. Among his special interests, he enjoyed spending time with his wife and family. He enjoyed being in the outdoors and loved hunting. He was known as a hard working and loving family man who would help anyone in need when asked.

Archie Dass was an amazing person that will always be remembered and now his name will be connected to Vernonia’s newest park.

A sign will be placed at the park location in the near future. To follow the park’s progress go to “Friends of Archie Dass Dog Park” Facebook page. An account is set up at Wauna Credit Union if you would like to donate to the project.

Vernonia Ballots May Be Crowded This Year *continued from front page*

kiddie pool a new liner and paint job a few years ago, and has also recently been active in helping beautify certain properties in the community, including the landscaping at the Vernonia Post Office. Hobart has also been active in the Save the Greenman Field Grandstands campaign.

Sterner may be remembered as the citizen that approached the City Council with a proposal to site an ice cream truck on City property in early 2017. When the City offered a different location than he requested, Sterner withdrew his proposal and filed complaints with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission against Councilor Susan Wagner and Mayor Mario Leonetti, claiming both had undeclared Conflicts of Interest. Sterner later submitted a Notice to File a Tort Claim against the City of Vernonia, naming

Mayor Leonetti, all four Vernonia City Councilors, and City Administrator Josette Mitchell, and seeking damages of \$180,000. Sterner’s complaint against Councilor Wagner was dismissed without an investigation as having “no merit,” while his complaint against Mayor Leonetti remains under investigation by the State. Sterner has yet to take further action with his threatened suit.

Dale Webb, a current member of the City Public Works Committee, who has been actively involved in studying water and sewer rates in the City of Vernonia, and helped craft the plan that recently saw rates reduced slightly for City utility customers, has indicated he is running for City Council. Current Council member Mike Seager said he will be running for reelection.

NOTICE OF POSITIONS OPEN CITY OF VERNONIA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the General Election will be held on the 6th day of November 2018, at which time the legal voters of the City of Vernonia will be entitled to vote for candidates to certain city offices.

OFFICES OPEN FOR ELECTION:

- VERNONIA MAYOR TWO YEAR TERM
- VERNONIA COUNCIL MEMBER FOUR YEAR TERM
- VERNONIA COUNCIL MEMBER FOUR YEAR TERM

Election packets are available at the office of the City Recorder, 1001 Bridge St, Vernonia, OR 97064. Nominating petitions can be filed no later than Thursday, August 23rd, 2018, by 4:00 p.m. with the City Recorder. For more information call Stephanie Borst, City Recorder at 503-429-5291 ext. 105.

The City of Vernonia is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm:
Monday, August 20, 2018
Tuesday, September 4, 2018

City Closures are scheduled for:
Monday, September 3, 2018
Labor Day Holiday

Dates and times subject to change

The Vernonia Transfer Station is scheduled to be open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday January - October 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

**August 25
September 8 & 22**

Dates and times are subject to change due to weather