

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers
About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: I'm looking for the best places to search for green jobs but am having trouble locating them on traditional job search sites. Where should I look? —H. Jenkins, Biloxi, MS

With the environment now high atop the public agenda, green jobs are more popular than ever. Defined by eco.org (a leading green jobs website) as any job in any company where the primary focus is on reducing the impacts of our activities or products on the environment, green jobs serve to maximize efficient use of resources while minimizing degradation of the planet from pollution and waste.

"Eco-jobs can range from engineering a photovoltaic solar cell to designing a building for more energy efficiency to landscaping a yard to minimize erosion to finding more sustainable forestry techniques," reports eco.org.

While you may be hard-pressed to find environmental job opportunities on general employment search websites, sites like eco.org that specialize in green job listings can make your search easy. Also, many general environmental sites have employment sub-sections.

Green job seekers and employers alike use these websites to find each other and get their work done, whether in the non-profit or for-profit worlds.

Eco.org prides itself on hosting a wide range of listings from colleges, environmental and other nonprofit groups, media outlets and government agencies.

With Google and Bing listing the site first for the search term "eco," the website generates hundreds of thousands of page visits per month from thousands

of green job seekers and employers, and also keeps its audience engaged through social networking.

Another leader in the field is the nonprofit Green Jobs Network, which provides online services including a green job board and a 20,000-member group on the professional networking site LinkedIn.

The group also uses its GreenJobs.net website as a platform for webinars, and is the home of the frequently updated Green Collar Blog, which provides career resources and information on the green jobs sector.

Environmental Career Opportunities (ecojobs.com) is another tried and true source for green job listings. Some 50,000 targeted job seekers subscribe to the company's bi-weekly newsletter that contains unique green job opportunities. Still other places to look for green jobs include EcoEmploy.com and the Environmental Career Center.

Another site, Greenjobs.com, focuses on job opportunities specifically in the renewable energy sector. Jobseekers can use the website to apply for jobs, post their resume, obtain guidance on finding and applying for jobs, gain background information on the renewable energy sector, and access a directory of relevant companies and organizations. Employers can take advantage of the firm's recruitment services.

Browsing job listings at other more general environmental websites could also turn up that perfect opportunity. SustainableBusiness.com and the U.S. Green Building Council feature extensive green job listings as sub-sections of their websites.

And yet another way to find a green job is to sniff around the website of a company, organization or institution in your field of interest for specific job listings—or better yet, call them on the phone to find out if there are any openings.

CONTACTS: Eco.org, www.eco.org; Environmental Career Opportunities, www.ecojobs.com; EcoEmploy.com, www.ecoemploy.com; Environmental Career Center, www.environmentalcareer.com; Green Jobs Network, www.greenjobs.net; GreenJobs, www.greenjobs.com; SustainableBusiness.com, www.sustainablebusiness.com; U.S. Green Building Council, www.usgbc.org.

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Ash Creek neighborhood denied on water tank appeal to City Council

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

A majority of the Portland City Council last month sided with the Tualatin Valley Water District, against the Ash Creek Neighborhood Association.

The ruling upheld Hearings Officer Gregory Frank's approval for a new 2-million gallon water tank for the district at 6217 SW Garden Home Road, and denied Ash Creek's appeal of the decision.

The new tank will replace two 500,000-gallon tanks that have been on the property since 1962. The Water District contended both that the existing tanks are unsafe, and that they need more capacity to meet current and future needs.

Ash Creek did not oppose a new facility on the property, but argued that the one proposed was incompatible with its surroundings due to its size and lot coverage.

Planner Sylvia Cate, relaying Frank's decision, said that he had found that "on balance," the new tank "will be compatible." At 46 feet, it is only a foot taller than what it will replace, she said.

The Water District is committed to adding new landscaping on the west side, as well as other amenities. They do plan to cut down some of the 100-foot-tall Sequoia trees along one side, but will save as many as possible.

It is the trees, rather than the tank, that account for most of the shading of adjacent properties, Cate said. She quoted Frank as saying that the tanks are "not required to look like a house."

Ash Creek chair Dean Smith argued that the tank would nearly fill the 0.6-acre lot and said, "Nowhere else in the city is there such a large facility on such a small lot."

Smith particularly attacked one aspect of Frank's decision: his interpretation of the structure's floor area ratio. This is a measure of density, and is usually a comparison between a structure's total floor area and the lot size.

In this case, Frank decided that the tank had a single "floor" 46 feet high, and therefore a small FAR. "This is not the intent of the code," Smith said.

District consultant Mark Knudson said the agency currently serves two million customers in Washington County, making it the state's second largest water district.

Their water supply is insufficient now, he said, and they expect significant growth in the future. In addition, he said, the existing tanks "are at the end of their economic life" and do not meet current seismic standards.

In the face of strong neighborhood opposition at the original February 16 hearing, Knudson said, Tualatin Valley asked that the record be held open for additional written comments for an additional 60 days to allow them to work with the neighbors to find common ground.

Smith countered that no such meeting occurred; the District simply held an open house during which they showed new plans for screening and amenities. He added that whether the facility is needed or not is not a standard for whether it is compatible.

Nine Ash Creek residents testified, all in opposition. Laura Ghonea-Smith said, "I've always been proud of my street and my neighbor's (Dr. Charold Baer) roses. I dread this project and what it will do to my property values."

In voting to deny the appeal, Commissioner Dan Saltzman said, "I feel the replacement is compatible with the neighborhood," and Mayor Sam Adams said, "It meets the letter of the law."

Addressing Smith's point, Commissioner Randy Leonard said, "I think the FAR argument would have had some weight if the existing tanks were significantly smaller, but they're just as tall and almost as wide."

Commissioner Amanda Fritz seemed persuaded by the floor area argument. "I believe that the (zoning code) criteria are not met, and this is not compatible," she said, casting the sole dissenting vote.

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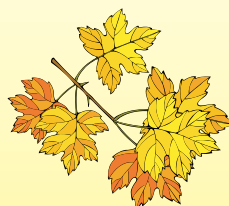
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