

Rep. Williamson gives detailed report on Oregon legislature's special session

MULTNOMAH NOTEBOOK

By Melinda Hasting
The Southwest Portland Post

State Representative Jennifer Williamson (D-36) gave a detailed report on the highlights of the recent special session of the Oregon Legislature. Rep. Williamson, a freshman, sits on the Judiciary and Ways and Means Committees.

Rep. Williamson is chairwoman of the Public Safety Subcommittee of Way and Means. Highlights in education included an additional \$100 million in funding for K-12 schools and an infrastructure bond to fund an additional academic/student center with a medium-sized, 5,000 seat concert hall.

Williamson, a former post-secondary education activist, gained authorization for a study to determine the impact of the Pay It Forward program, which would create a financing system for college students to pay back their tuition after graduation through a percentage of pay upon the attainment of jobs.

The plan is designed to diminish cost-prohibitive disincentives for students to pursue lower-paying, but highly necessary fields of work such as social work. One idea under consideration is allowing co-enrollment in community colleges for certain core subjects.

In public safety reform, Williamson shepherded several policy bills,



Rep. Jennifer Williamson (right) gives a report on the recent Special Session to the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, October 8. (Post photo by Melinda Hasting)

including one measure that would improve flexibility in dealing with low-risk drug offenders by allowing probation coupled with treatment options under the Affordable Care Act.

Funding was also increased for multi-disciplinary centers for abused children, and domestic violence shelters received a doubling of funding statewide.

A citizen questioned whether the measures could help negate the need for two new prisons, and Williamson answered, "Yes, the majority of property crimes are related to drug abuse. These [bills] address the fundamental impact of addiction."

percent median federal income and 109 units will be available for households qualifying for Section 8 and public housing subsidies.

In addition, seven new Habitat for Humanity homes will be built for first-time home buyers.

Former Hillsdale Terrace residents received relocation services and will be offered the opportunity to return when the construction is complete.

Sustainability features in the proposed design include bioswales and cisterns to manage surface water; energy-efficient geo-thermal "heat exchange" heating and cooling system; and construction materials selected for indoor air quality.

Neighborhood association elects new officers

The Multnomah Neighborhood Association elected officers for the coming year on Oct. 8. Moses Ross will serve another year as chairman, and Ellen Houston was elected Secretary.

Current vice chairwoman, Katie Brumbelow, will vacate her seat to serve as the new parks committee chairwoman. Meghan Vidal has volunteered to be a member of the communications committee.

There are still openings for vice-chair and treasurer; members of the association interested in serving in these positions may contact Ross at mnachair@gmail.com.

Stephens Creek Crossing update

A representative from Home Forward attended the meeting to discuss the progress on the new Stephens Creek Crossing affordable housing development slated to open in January 2014. The development is designed to replace the isolated 1968 Hillsdale Terrace housing development in the Multnomah neighborhood.

According to Home Forward, 122 apartments will replace 60 existing housing units. Thirteen of those units will be provided to households with less than 60

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