

ROLLING DOWNTOWN

Plans to redevelop downtown Eugene with massive public subsidies are rolling forward with limited vocal opposition.

Councilor Bonny Bettman said she was “disappointed” that more opponents didn’t turn out for a July 16 public hearing before the council concerning part of the about \$40 million in subsidies for developers.

“There’s really no awareness of what is going on,” Bettman said. “I can’t even describe how big of a mistake the city is making here,” she said. “It’s a monumental misappropriation of public tax dollars.”

Some of the subsidy for the high-end chain stores and their developers will come from federal funds dedicated to alleviating poverty. “We’re basically diverting that money from low-income needy people and giving it to speculators downtown like Connor-Woolley,” Bettman said. Tom Connor and Don Woolley own most of the

redevelopment area and will profit from “overinflated land prices” they want the city to pay, Bettman said.

Bettman said the city’s argument that the spending is appropriate because the chain stores will provide poor people with retail jobs makes no sense. “They’re basically boasting there’s going to be these low-income service jobs available.”

Councilor Bettman also questions why the city should subsidize national chains, including a corporate arthouse theater, against local businesses. “How is the Bijou going to be able to continue to compete with a heavily publicly subsidized theater?”

—Alan Pittman

RELAY FOR LIFE

Hundreds of local community members will take to the track July 27 to fight against cancer.

Teams of people will gather for the Eugene-Springfield Relay for Life and walk the track for a solid 24 hours. The walkers will support survivors and family members and friends of those who lost their lives to cancer. The goal is to have team members walking the entire time.

For local resident Kenny Gates, this marks the ninth year that his team will walk for a cure. In 1994 Gates and his wife lost their 10-year-old son Zachary Raymond to a rare form of brain cancer called glioblastoma. Shortly after their loss, they formed Zach’s team to raise cancer awareness and support for finding a cure. “We also, as always, walk for all who have battled or are battling this cruel disease,” Gates said.

The event will honor survivors during the Survivors Lap and will remember those whose lives were claimed by cancer during the Luminaria Ceremony.

Cancer is currently the second leading cause of death in the U.S. It is exceeded only by heart disease. In Oregon, the American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates there will be 18,630 new cancer cases in 2007. The ACS further predicts 7,370 statewide cancer deaths this year. This year more than 23 countries will host Relay for Life events, drawing worldwide attention to cancer awareness.

The local event is sponsored by ACS’s Eugene-Springfield chapter and is an “overnight activity that mobilizes communities across the country to celebrate survivorship, remember those who lost their lives to cancer and raise money for the fight against cancer.”

The Eugene-Springfield Relay for Life is planned to begin at noon on Friday, July 27, at LCC.

For more information about the relay, see www.cancer.org — Erin Rokita



SLANT

• Although **Tom Kemper’s talk** to the City Club last Friday was generally upbeat, he clearly was not happy that Beam Development has a little piece of the downtown project between Willamette and Charnelton. He left us wondering if his company, KWG Development Partners, will be able to pencil out its required 13 percent profit on the \$150-\$200 million combination of housing, retail and commercial development in this little burg south of KWG’s hometown Portland. His talk of a multi-screen cinema, boutique hotel, grocery store, nightclubs, lots of

housing of all kinds and a mix of local and national retail was enticing. But if he can’t meet his bottom line, even with large subsidies, it’s important that KWG and our local media not lay the blame on local government. Our elected representatives will not be at fault. It’s the economy, stupid.

• Meanwhile, the city is continuing to steamroll forward in its move to give Portland developers about **\$40 million in subsidies** to redo downtown. The money could come in large part from diverting tax revenue from schools and federal money for the poor to subsidize high-end chain stores, developers and land



speculators against local businesses. If you have an opinion on this plan, time is running out to make your voice heard.

• The UO is now planning to build a \$200 million basketball stadium, \$5-\$10 million **baseball** stadium and a big addition to its track complex all at the same time. Where will it end? Is an ice hockey arena next? Just think of what the UO’s struggling academic side could do if boosters and administrators invested just a fraction of that money in higher education.

• The UO’s **competitive cheerleading** announcement is an insult to Title IX’s requirements of equal treatment for women’s sports. We’ll grant that cheerleading involves strenuous workouts, strength and coordination, but how about gymnastics or women’s crew instead? These are Olympic sports and don’t have their roots in boosting men’s sports. Of course, boosting men’s sports by meeting Title IX requirements as cheaply as possible is what the UO’s cheerleading plan is all about. And you can bet that sportswriters and columnists all over the country (especially at the *R-G*) would be screaming bloody murder if a plan to add women’s crew and gymnastics were “Title IX-balanced” by adding men’s competitive cheerleading. Title IX means equality in money, folks. Or did the men in the Athletic Department miss the “equal” part?

• We’re glad all the **Simpsons hoopla** is over. We like the show and a good joke, but with the deluge of front page and other stories in the *R-G*, *Oregonian*, and papers around the country, you’d think these mainstream journalists have nothing

better to do than promote the movie for the 20th Century Fox corporation. No wonder their readership is declining.

• Some angry motorists and media have let loose with a backlash after the Legislature passed laws offering cyclists a small increase in protections from being roadkilled. Drivers need to recognize that **cyclists are doing motorists a favor** by reducing traffic jams, road taxes and pollution. What’s worse: A safe berth for the occasional cyclist, or all the tailgaters and crazy passers in speeding tons of metal?

• Oregon’s Gov. Ted Kulongoski has gone on trade missions to China to promote the state’s **grass seed industry**. How about if the governor goes on a health mission to Lane County to talk to local people choking on the smoke and pollen from the industry he’s promoted?

• Could have been some violations of the Oregon open meeting law last Saturday night at the Northern Lights Christmas Tree Farm in Pleasant Hill. Four of the five Lane County Commissioners were gathered together, but not a political or policy word was spoken – it was all fun. Pete Sorenson was **commissioner-turned-bridegroom** for the sparkling evening in the Oregon countryside on the river. He married Kim Leval, who works in the areas of sustainable agriculture and the environment. And all the local progressive policy wonks were there, so plenty of political and policy words had to be tossed around. Our words for the evening: Congratulations, Kim and Pete.

• Two strong Democratic women state senators running against each other in ‘08 to be **Oregon Secretary of State** doesn’t sound like a brilliant idea. That’s Vicki Walker from Eugene and Kate Brown from Portland, and right now heavy odds go to Brown because of her popularity in her population area. If Vicki loses, she still holds her state senate seat, but Kate has announced that she’s leaving the legislature. Barbara Roberts went from secretary of state to become the only Oregon woman governor so far and perhaps that progression could repeat in ‘10. But Demo resources will be stretched so thin in ‘08 that this primary fight is an extravagance. There’s still time to sort it out.

• Have you been **downtown lately?** There’s good food and atmosphere at Davis’ restaurant and bar on Broadway. We like the restaurant’s efforts to fight obesity by offering half servings on nearly every item. And their booty-shaking dance floor is a welcome addition to the Olive and West Broadway nightlife scene. West on Broadway on the other side of the street, look in at The Moxie, a beauty salon and lounge, a combination that makes some kind of pampered sense. Check out Books Without Borders’ Harry Potter release party. Notice the new law offices going in where the Book Mark used to be. Go to the monthly Thursday science night sponsored by the Science Factory and OMSI at Luna. Drop in at the Oregon Wine Warehouse after work. And appreciate the brilliant flowers down there. What else? You tell us.