

OBIE OUTLINES 'MARKET DISTRICT'

"I doubt we'll put in a Ferris wheel," Brian Obie says of his proposed new development downtown. County Commissioners voted 4-1 on Feb. 26 to give Lane County Administrator Liane Richardson authority to enter into discussions for an interim lease and exclusive negotiating rights with Obie and Housing and Community Services Agency of Lane County (HACSA) for land at East 6th Avenue and Oak, near Obie's 5th Street Public Market.

He compared the development, part of what he is calling the "Market District," to European cities like Copenhagen and to the Pearl District in Portland. Obie says the Pearl District is "colder" than what he sees for Eugene, and the HACSA portion is planning on preserving the historic "bus barn" building as part of the project.

The current proposal, which Obie says is going through due diligence and subject to change, currently features a cinema similar to the Steve Masters/Bijou project at Broadway and Willamette, but Obie says, "I wouldn't want to duplicate that."

Architecture Week Editor Kevin Matthews says he has doubts the project will proceed with the quality called for in the plans without substantive public input. He calls Obie's hotel at 5th Street Market "provincially low-brow for a self-proclaimed 'boutique hotel,'" and criticizes it for turning its back on 5th Avenue and "wiping out a key section of the pedestrian promenade," which he says is "in direct contradiction to the public drawings and renderings presented at the time of public approval."

Pete Sorenson was the no vote on the County Commission. He says, "Having almost a complete block of land and have it be vibrant and beautiful and contribute to the community and be respectful that it's owned by 350,000 owners" is

a positive, and as such he would like to see a public hearing to get input from county residents on the proposal. The final lease would be for 99 years, with the fee renegotiated every five years, Obie says.

Matthews questions the lack of public input, saying the commissioners' swift vote without public comment "simply cements the impression of insider dealing."

Sorenson says that if the Lane County Farmers Market were to move to the new development it would affect farmers, the county and the city, and needs their input. County spokesperson Jason Davis says, "At this point there is not a lot to talk about; details are not ironed out," but added that there will be full transparency going forward so the community has a voice.

Obie says the proposal is already responsive to public comment — it developed from input on downtown density in the Envision Eugene process. He says as it progresses he wants to get input from future generations, even kindergartners, about what

they want to see developed on the land.

Obie says one thing that has gone without mention in recent media about his project is that the city of Eugene will be a "very important partner in this" from permitting to planning.

The joint Obie/HACSA proposal would have 170 market-price apartments and 64 low-income "workforce housing" apartments, a grocery store — Obie says he will offer it first to someone local like Market of Choice — and perhaps give a permanent home to the Farmers Market. He says there have been talks with the Farmers Market but nothing has been determined.

The timeline for development is fairly long, Obie says, and projects like these are "fragile." One issue that will take at least a year, he says, is the possible presence of underground storage tanks and soil contamination on the site. That cleanup would be the responsibility of the county, Davis says, as it addresses pre-existing environmental issues. "This clean-up has to happen; we can't have polluted soil sitting there," he says, and adds that the county is looking into creative funding solutions for the mitigation. — *Camilla Mortensen*

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WOMEN'S DAY FOR WOMENSPACE

Local women's advocacy group Women Amplified celebrates its first birthday on International Women's Day, Friday, March 8, with a party to benefit Womenspace. In January, the nonprofit for domestic violence survivors announced that it would have to end its emergency walk-in counseling services due to nearly \$4 million in funding cuts.

"We wanted to give back to them because they've been such a critical part of our community and very needed," Terra Williams of Women Amplified says.

Performers at the event range from Gypsy Circle Belly Dancing Troupe to Russian dancing duo Matryoshkas. Women Amplified will raffle off a photography package from Digital Latte, manual labor and copies of *Pet Goats and Pap Smears* by local doctor Pamela Wible.

Williams describes Women Amplified as "a network of women who wanted to affect positive change in the community through outreach and education." To learn more, check out their Facebook page at wkly.ws/1fo.

Women Amplified's benefit for Womenspace begins 8 pm Friday, March 8, at WOW Hall; \$10-\$50 sug. don. — *Shannon Finnell*

WOMENPEDIA

When you think of the gender gap, you probably think of fields like math and science or construction. But Wikipedia says it has its own gender gap in female entry writers, and it's trying to fix the problem. The Center for the Study of Women in Society, the Fembot Project and the ASUO Women's Center will host workshops to train women as Wikipedia editors March 8-9.

Sarah Stierch, who trained at the Wikimedia Foundation, says that subjects like women's health need the input of female writers. "If women aren't contributing to these subjects on Wikipedia, when the majority of contributors are male, we're going to have a natural systematic bias that forms," she says.

Stierch says she writes a lot of biographies of women, ranging from modern Asian businesswomen to feminist artists. One of her subjects is Louise Nevelson, who she says was the grandmother of feminist art. "She was an amazing woman. Really unique, really fashionable, really bold. She's got a lot of attitude."

University towns like Eugene are a great place to find new woman editors, Stierch says. "Women in the scholarly field are just prime real estate, I guess you could say, to contributing," she says. "They have specialized fields and interests. They know where the best sources are at. They know how to write."

International Women's Day Writing Women into Wikipedia 2013 with Sarah Stierch runs 3 to 5 pm Friday, March 8, in UO's Knight Library Browsing Room, and a workshop creating entries runs 1 to 4 pm Saturday, March 9, in 141 Allen Hall. — *Shannon Finnell*

STINKY FEE TO FUND BIG GOSHEN PLANS?

The Lane County dump smells like fundraising to Commissioner Faye Stewart. A bill that has been introduced to the State Legislature, SB 248, would increase garbage "tipping" fees up to \$10 more per load at Short Mountain Landfill in order to raise funds for what has been dubbed the Goshen Region Employment and Transition (GREAT) Plan. The fee would apply to the entire county and would likely raise residential and business garbage fees.

Changing Goshen's zoning designation from a rural industrial one to a more "urban" one would allow for bigger buildings, as Lane County's lobbyist, Alex Cuyler, put it at

IT'S ABOUT TIME BY DAVID WAGNER

Watching ducks on the Delta Ponds keeps me entertained. Shovelers continue their circle dances this month, the males trying to pair bond before heading north in April for nesting season. You still have time to experience this courtship ritual unless you choose the rare sunny morning when they line up on a log to bask in the warm rays.

A less happy sight is a big ash tree that has been completely girdled by beavers. It is a solitary individual which sheltered a small island gracefully but now that tree is doomed. I wonder how long it will take for it to fall over? It is a big tree that still has a lot of wood left in its trunk. If it doesn't fall over this season, the beaver's gnawing efforts will have been wasted because the tasty twigs will be too dry to feed on.

The crescent moon will be very close to Jupiter on Sunday evening, March 17. Jupiter is the brightest "star" in the sky; this conjunction will help identify it. There is a chance that a comet discovered last June will put on a show this month. However, nobody can predict if it will be glorious or a dud like Kohoutek. A bigger comet is due later this year, in November.

Mosses are starting to look luxuriant this spring, as the mild winter has encouraged robust growth. The maturing capsules of the capillary thread moss (aka nodding bobbars) are prominent on concrete blocks and walls everywhere.

David Wagner is a botanist who has worked in Eugene for more than 30 years. He teaches nature drawing and moss identification classes. Visit his website at fernzenmosses.com

CAPILLARY THREAD MOSS, *BRYUM CAPILLARE*

