

Richardson: Family was ‘really so central to him’

Continued from Page A1

going to fit in,” he told Oregon Public Broadcasting in a 2017 interview.

He eventually turned to The Book of Mormon — his father was a lapsed member of the church — and was filled with a “sense of love that was overwhelming” and that “changed me dramatically.”

Richardson and his second wife, Cathy, went on to have eight daughters — their youngest was adopted out of the state foster care system — while he built a successful law practice.

“I can’t emphasize enough how often he’d come back to the importance of family,” Buckley said. “It’s really so central to him.”

Accountability

In his campaign for secretary of state, Richardson promised to hold Oregon government accountable in his role overseeing the state audits division.

Once in office, he released well-publicized reports probing the state’s troubled foster care system and the tangled finances of the Oregon Health Authority.

He also fulfilled a campaign promise to launch an audit of Portland Public Schools, Oregon’s largest school district, which was in the midst of management turmoil.

Recognizing that registered Republicans made up only about a quarter of the state’s voters, Richardson repeatedly made a point that

he wasn’t in office to serve a partisan agenda.

“If somebody has to pass your personal litmus test to be a Republican or get your support,” he told one GOP gathering in early 2018, “our party is doomed.”

Richardson, the state’s chief elections official, followed through on this by rejecting national Republican rhetoric about rampant voter fraud. He defended Oregon’s mail ballot-system and eased rules on how long someone could remain registered to vote even if they didn’t actually participate in any elections.

‘WE ALL KNEW DENNIS’ KIND HEART GUIDED HIS CAREER OF SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF OREGON.’

Gov. Kate Brown

Many Democrats remained wary of Richardson. Some thought his audits were designed to embarrass Gov. Kate Brown. Chris Parrish, the governor’s communications director, once complained to the Salem Statesman Journal that his audits “are just about politics.”

Conservative roots

He first ran for the state House as a staunch conservative, particularly on social issues. He defeated a Republican incumbent who had voted against a bill sought by the state’s major anti-abortion

group, Oregon Right to Life.

During his campaign for secretary of state, he insisted that his views on gay rights and abortion — both of which differed with most Oregon voters — wouldn’t affect how he’d do his job. In his lengthy 2017 interview with OPB, Richardson paused for a long time before answering whether he felt it was immoral to be gay.

He finally said that he continued to believe that sex outside marriage was wrong and that marriage was a sacrament between a man, a woman and God. “And so, based on my definition, my

answer is ‘yes,’” he said. “But it doesn’t change the humanity or the acceptance I have for people to make their own choices.”

Parrish said she and other Republicans urged Richardson to run for secretary of state in 2016 when the position would be open.

“I told him he could do a lot of what he wanted to do as governor by holding state government accountable through the audit process,” Parrish said.

The Democratic nominee, Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, had emerged from

a tough three-way primary. Avakian vowed to use the secretary of state’s office to get involved in a wide range of big issues, from environmental protection to corporate responsibility. Richardson focused on a more stick-to-your-knitting approach that emphasizes holding government accountable.

“His claim was you wouldn’t know if he was a Democrat or a Republican — he was just going to take a look at things,” said Rep. Jeff Barker, D-Aloha, who became friendly with Richardson after the two entered the Legislature together in 2003.

After winning, Richardson rented a nondescript apartment in Salem and dived into his new job.

But in June 2018 he told constituents in a Facebook post that he had been diagnosed a month earlier with brain cancer and was undergoing treatment.

Barker said Richardson told him in the fall that the chemotherapy was taking a lot out of him.

He stopped attending meetings of the State Land Board, which is made up of the governor, secretary of state and treasurer.

On Nov. 16, 2018, he attended a ceremony for Oregon’s Kid Governor, which is part of a national civics program that Richardson enthusiastically brought to the state in 2017.

He sat on the stage during the event and posed for photos with students and parents afterward.



Agile Design

Mark Cox has proposed a new data center and technology incubator in Warrenton.

Data center: Initial stage of the project is estimated to cost \$200M

Continued from Page A1

But Cox has yet to close on the property, seeking multiple extensions of his due diligence period while he tries to get the project approved. His current review period lasts until early May, by which point Cox said he hopes to determine whether he can build what he envisions.

Cox met last week with representatives from Warrenton, Clatsop County, several state agencies and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, trying to better understand his development plan and what it needs to move forward. In a news release about the meeting, Cox said he gained clarity about the permitting requirements he faces.

Monica Steele, the interim county manager, said that for the permitting process, the Army Corps and the state need a detailed master plan of what Cox wants to do at the site. “They don’t approve filling wetlands on speculative development,” she said.

Agile Design will create a master plan that conforms to the agencies’ requirements once it is done with due diligence, Cox said.

In addition to wetlands, he is exploring issues

around infrastructure for the data center, which would require significant power, water and access to fiber-optic cable. Cox has previously pointed out the business park’s proximity to undersea fiber-optic cable landings on the West Coast as an attractive attribute for a data center.

The initial stage of the project is estimated to cost \$200 million. Cox is funded by investors based on milestones, including the sale of the property. He has mentioned wanting to break ground on the first phase this year, but said that timeline is fluid.

“The concept of breaking ground is very dependent on the ability to receive those permits,” he said. “The permits come after you submit the applications, which come after you complete due diligence and close on the property.”

Shortly after approving the land sale to Cox, the county approved another \$1.2 million sale of 62 acres nearby in the business park to Zion Funding Inc., a company that plans to develop technology-related office space, an incubator and research facilities. Zion has also secured an extension of its due diligence period, which now ends in April, Steele said.

Lawsuit: Investigation has spanned nearly nine months

Continued from Page A1

Sims was placed on leave around the same time her accusations against Johnston came to light.

Krista Le Roux, a Portland attorney representing Sims, said her client’s primary motivation is to restore her reputation. Filing a lawsuit was also done in part to urge the housing authority to finish its investigation, which has spanned almost nine months.

“She wants to clear her name, and it seems the only

way to do this is through a lawsuit,” Le Roux said.

Johnston declined to comment on the lawsuit, but noted that many of the allegations were similar to other complaints Sims has filed with the housing authority and the state Bureau of Labor and Industries.

Investigators hired by the housing authority and the state Bureau of Labor and Industries dismissed the complaints.

The agency’s investigators refuted claims that Johnston

promoted an employee who wasn’t qualified for the position, obscured information or that Johnston and Helping Hands, a nonprofit that works with the homeless, mismanaged public funds.

A separate investigation into complaints lodged against Sims by housing authority staff is ongoing, but is expected to wrap up by March, Johnston said.

Le Roux said it did not concern her that similar allegations have been dismissed by other investigators, and

believes taking Sims complaints through the court system will help facilitate a broader investigation.

“I feel certain I’ll be able to unearth more evidence that will be helpful to my client,” she said.

Warrenton: Commission decided to allow 90 days

Continued from Page A1

encouraged the commission to consider requiring some kind of master plan to guide future development.

Though approved by the Planning Commission, the zone change proposal had already faced several delays over questions about traffic impacts when it came in front of the City Commission.

On Tuesday, with the zone change up for a second and final reading, the other commissioners agreed with Balensifer. Since the last meeting, many of them had fielded calls from residents who were concerned about the decision. Commissioner Mark Baldwin said he believed there were some pieces left out. He wanted to slow the process down a bit, he said.

Balensifer pointed to other recent examples of development that, in hindsight, had either been problematic or were anticipated to cause future issues.

“We have an opportunity, on a relatively blank slate, to get this one right,” he said.

He said he did not have

a problem with tapping city dollars or urban renewal funding to pay for a master plan.

Commissioners Pam Ackley and Rick Newton had questions about how the requirement for a master plan would affect property owners’ ability to make decisions about what to do with their property since the zone change was still proceeding.

Ackley said Warrenton needs the kind of denser housing that could be developed under the zone change. But they both voted with the rest of the commission to require a master plan.

Rather than ask the Spur 104 property owners to pay for and develop a complex master plan that dives into minute detail about building height and design and other specifics, Community Development Director Kevin Cronin proposed a simpler, faster process.

He suggested a city-led public workshop where people can come and provide general feedback. He expects the final master plan to provide information about where streets would go and

how many housing and commercial units could be included.

The goal is to figure out the highest and best use for the land, he said, “not to create some Disneyland.”

He believed the whole process could be completed in 60 days. The commission decided to allow 90 days, though many of them believed the process will likely wrap up earlier. Property owners will be able to proceed with plans for their property, contingent on the completion of the master plan.

“Am I disappointed? I’ll put it this way: I understand the city’s position, but I also realize where the property owners are all coming from,” Planning Commissioner Ken Yuill said afterward.

Yuill owns an estimated 20 percent of the developable property in the Spur 104 area under consideration and has been a constant advocate for the zone change.

“If it takes another 90 days, OK, just as long as it doesn’t restrict them too much ... We’ll see what happens.”

Chief: ‘I sensed a really good team atmosphere’

Continued from Page A1

Crutchfield began his fire-fighting career as a volunteer at 18 and has spent almost 26 years with the Coos Bay Fire Department. He oversaw Coos Bay’s fire prevention program and helped implement a smoke alarm program, which resulted in the installation of 500 free smoke alarms throughout the community.

“The Astoria Fire Department is similar in structure and operation to the Coos Bay Fire Department, so it felt like a comfortable move for me,” Crutchfield said in a statement. “I know a few of the people who work in the Astoria Fire Department, and after meeting (Estes) and (Police Chief) Geoff Spalding, I sensed a really good team atmosphere.”

Among Crutchfield’s pri-

orities when he arrives in Astoria will be to examine what is going well and what can be improved in the department. He will also assist in the search for a new deputy fire chief. Former Deputy Chief Paul Gascoigne retired last fall.

Estes had held off replacing Gascoigne, wanting to give whoever was hired as fire chief the opportunity to build the department.

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The future of flavor

Oregon State University Food Innovation Center is renowned as a hub for entrepreneurial food development for businesses large and small. Recently featured in The New York Times article, “Meet the ‘Million Dollar Palate’ Behind a Flood of New Foods,” Sarah Masoni is a professional food designer who will discuss how flavor and consumer preferences have changed over the years and her vision for the future of flavor.

Sarah Masoni

Sarah Masoni is the Director of Product and Process Development at the OSU’s Food Innovation Center, where she has resided for the last 18 years. Sarah works as a liaison between the university and the food manufacturing industry by managing projects, and budgets at an innovative, leading-edge technology center. Sarah has specialized in food entrepreneurship, and she works on projects ranging from local and natural ice cream sandwiches, dairy products, beverages, seafood products, pet food and treats, sauces, dry mixes and organic fruit and nut bars. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Art and Food Science from Oregon State University.

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