

Housing Project Back on Track

continued ▲ from front

PDC is also granting \$5.1 million in tax revenues to the developer, including donation of the land itself, to the \$13 million project. Winkler Development Corporation has also secured a \$4.6 million loan from Wells Fargo Bank, according to Winkler and PDC executive Sara King.

The finished project will contain 57 for-sale condominium units. Of these, 34 will be sold at prices affordable to households earning 80 percent or more of median family income. The build-

ing will also have 9,000 square feet of ground floor retail space. It will be a LEED Gold construction project with an eco-roof, recycling of storm water, and use of highly energy efficient materials for reduced energy consumption.

The project has been on the drawing boards for at least 10 years. PDC acquired the 32,000 square foot site between the years 2000 and 2003, removing several existing homes in the process. In 2004 PDC selected the Kemper Company to develop the site, but the firm withdrew the following year for financial reasons. In 2006 PDC gave Winkler a chance

to pursue development of the project, and in 2008 the parties signed on to a \$3.3 million subsidy for the project. However, the deal languished when Winkler's couldn't secure the remaining financing. In her report to the Commission, King cited letters of support for the project from the Overlook Neighborhood Association, the adjacent Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association, and the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Advisory Committee which oversees the use of the urban renewal funds that are the source of the project's subsidy and loans.

King noted that there was also

some opposition on the advisory committee to the project because of a lack of more family-sized units and affordability.

Nearly all of the units will have just one bedroom, with most of the living spaces between 600 and 750 square feet, but Winkler told the Portland Observer that there will also be three two-bedroom units of 1,062 square feet each.

For the PDC, the biggest issue seemed to be the amount of money they were spending on the project, but all of the PCC commissioners accepted its necessity.

PDC Chair Scott Andrews said, "It's significant that there's bank

financing behind this, though at a lower level than in the past. There's a construction loan to be paid back, and without that, this project wouldn't go. This will encourage other development in these neighborhoods."

Commission member Charles Wilhoite said, "The community really wants to see something happen here."

Commission member John Mohlis said, "As we go from the new world we're in back to the more traditional one, we'll hopefully be able to stretch our dollars further. Meanwhile, it's great to get this project going and put people back to work."

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Reverend
F.D. Woods

continued ▲ from front

"And that infuriates me because they can go," he said, referring to financial aid through loans, grants and scholarships that can make college possible.

But what makes matters worse is that it's often unclear how much tuition will be raised from year to year. This year, at the University of Oregon, tuition shot up by 6 percent. Last year it was increased 3 percent.

"It scares the hell out of every-

body," he said.

Under Laviviere's financial stability plan, which he said hasn't been tried at any other public university, the state would issue \$800 million in 30-year bonds to the UO. The state would spend about \$64.5 million servicing the debt, which is about the same amount it gives to the university each year. UO would invest the money, creating an endowment that would steadily generate money for the school. This would free the university from having to rely on revenue from the state's increasingly volatile coffers.

"If we know three years out how much money is going to come from the state, we can now manage our environment such that we can predict what the cost is going to be for the entire four years that you're an undergraduate," he said.

Lariviere argues that if his plan is successful, the university will be able to tell students about how much they can expect to spend for tuition, room and board. They will also have a sense of how much they will have in grants, and how much they will have in loans.

Currently the University of Oregon is overseen by the State Board of Higher Education and the Legislature. Lariviere's proposal would create a new board to oversee it, giving the school more autonomy.

"This isn't a model that's radical or unknown in Oregon," he said. Lariviere pointed to Portland Community College, which, like other community colleges, operates this similarly. Lariviere also mentioned that the PCC recently won approval of nearly \$400 million in property tax bonds.

Lariviere also talked about his plan to revamp the UO admission process putting less emphasis on test scores and GPA's in favor of a more holistic approach that will di-

versify the university.

"We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that they [test scores and GPA's] are skewed throughout the population in favor of families that prepare their children from youth to be ready to go to college. That's the only thing that most parents focus on when they are in the upper educational socio-economic strata," he said.

He hopes to bring in more students who may not have the best GPA's, but have life experiences that will enrich the university.

Lariviere was also asked about the tough job market for recent college grads, which has prompted some to question if college is worth the trouble.

In responding, he recalled seeing a newspaper article describing how the job market was the worst it's ever been for new grads. The date on the newspaper was 1972.

"It's always terrible; there are no guarantees," he said.

However, Lariviere said that college grads, in the long run, will be richer, healthier, and happier.

"No bank, no credit card company can ever take away this education; it's yours," he said.

He also weighed in on an incident that occurred last February, where a swastika was found spray painted on an office for gay and lesbian students. In the aftermath, the student senate considered a resolution asking the Pacifica Forum, a controversial organization some believed to be tied to the incident, to leave the campus.

"The students argued about the principles of free speech that in a way were more lucid, better informed, and clearer than almost any other debate surrounding these issues," said Lariviere, who added that he was "intensely proud" of how they handled it.

Lariviere's Pitch

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