

RIVER: Needed property owners along route to grant access

Continued from 1A

but determined civic leader, led the charge.

“She was the driving force,” said Bud Moore, original board president and now-retired Pendleton pharmacist.

Bedford herself attributed the original idea to Art Evans, who chaired a city beautification committee and proposed a parkway in 1969. But Bedford was the engine. “She has dogged city officials, researched property titles and pushed the plan through a slow-moving bureaucracy,” said a 1985 *East Oregonian* story. The dogging was necessary, Moore said, because Mayor Joe McLaughlin had rejected the parkway idea as too expensive.

“We didn’t have a lot of support from the city at the time,” Moore said.

The river, except for installing a levee to prevent flooding, had largely been ignored. The public rarely used the dirt and gravel path atop the levee, said board member Marie Hall.

“It was utilitarian. Nobody looked at it for its beauty,” she said. “There weren’t many parkways around rivers yet — Pendleton was way ahead. The idea of turning the river into a feature was really new.”

Hall said she’d gotten pulled into Bedford’s orb when the latter walked into the East Central Oregon Association of Counties office one day in 1978. Hall, then 23, worked there as a land use planner.

“Amy walked into the ECOAC with plans rolled up under her arm,” Hall recalled. “She spread out the plans and talked about her vision for the parkway.”

Hall found herself pulled into the dream. When Bedford asked her to serve on the parkway board, she readily agreed.

The foundation hired Portland architect Richard Gabriel to conduct a parkway study. Gabriel, speaking by phone this week, said he reviewed existing conditions, analyzed community objectives and prepared a preliminary design. The strip of land alongside the

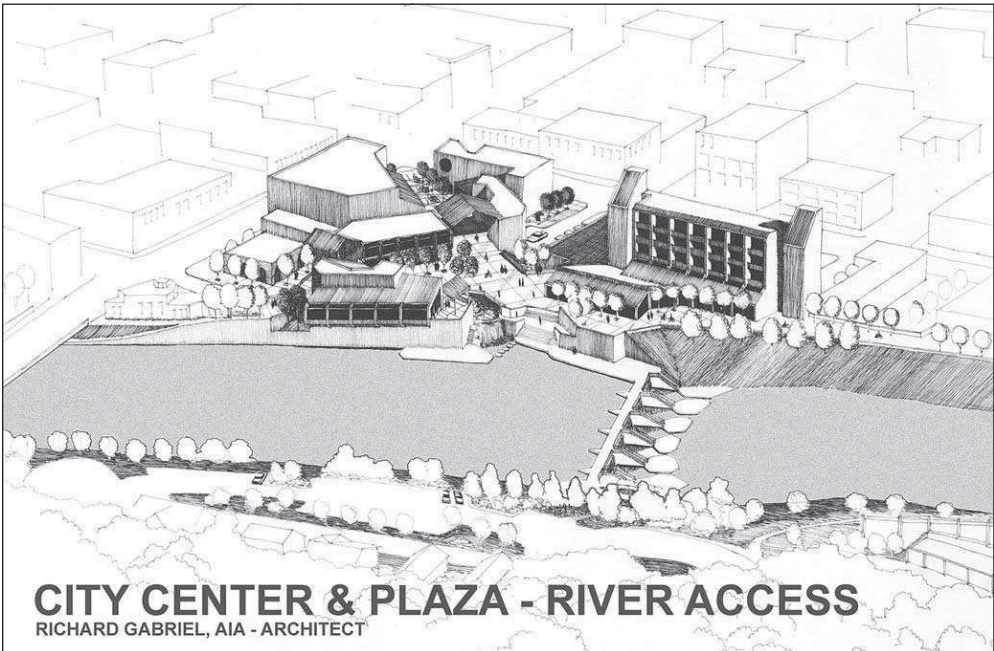


Image courtesy of Richard Gabriel

Some of the proposed parkway features never materialized, such as low dams to establish still water in certain locations, a wildlife preserve with nature trails, a small boat basin and an open plaza at the river’s edge surrounded by commercial development.

“It just seemed this town should have a parkway. I’m a native and I’ve been here a long time and I just got stubborn and didn’t want to give up.”

— Amy Aldrich Bedford, at the River Walk’s dedication ceremony

river had promise. Gabriel remembers meeting several times with Bedford who “was determined, yet elegantly understated in her determination.”

“We were excited about the potential,” he said.

The proposed parkway would eventually extend two and a half miles from near Highway 11 to Highway 37, connecting the Round-Up Grounds, baseball fields, Washington Elementary School and other locations. Before the project could proceed, though, property owners along the route had to grant access.

“Amy asked a number of us if we’d be willing to knock on doors,” Moore said. “We would tell them what we were planning to do and ask whether they’d be willing to grant an easement.”

Among those knocking on doors, Bedford and board member Hazel Hubel were an especially persuasive duo. Most of the property owners were receptive.

“They got the ones who

were supportive, then went to the ones who were hesitant,” Hall said. “They really listened to objections.”

Some owners worried about privacy or had safety concerns, Hall said, but most were solved creatively, by agreeing to special concessions such as fences to screen yards from public view.

“About the issue of crime, I remember Amy getting a little impatient about that,” Hall said. “She said there was no reason to think there’d be more crime because of a park along the river. She viewed the parkway as one more park.”

Pendleton Parks & Recreation Director Pat Dunham visited with every property owner. Most of their deeds, he said, showed ownership to the middle of the river.

“A lot of the owners weren’t sure they wanted the public back there,” Dunham said. “They worried about people throwing things in their yards.”

Ultimately, each and every one agreed.

“There were a few hold-

outs, but they eventually caved in,” Moore said. “Amy was a very convincing person.”

Bedford, who ran the *East Oregonian*’s commercial printing operation for years, fit her parkway activities into a busy schedule of work and other civic activities. The always-impeccably dressed Bedford preferred to stay just outside the limelight.

She was delighted when work got underway in June 1985 on the first half-mile section of parkway, which ran from the Southwest 10th Street Bridge to Southwest 18th Street. The \$104,000 project included benches, lighting, shrubbery and a wooden shelter, funded mostly with federal and state grants. Six additional stretches of parkway appeared in the next 12 years. The River Walk now runs from Highway 37 east to beyond the Little League Park. A pedestrian bridge named after Bedford connects the high school and Aquatic Center with the Round-Up Grounds.

Dunham, as Parks & Rec



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A man rides his bicycle down the River Walk on Wednesday in Pendleton.

director, wrote numerous grant proposals over the years and presented the proposals at federal and state meetings. He said city crews provided much of the labor. Still, Dunham doesn’t doubt who served as the Parkway’s biggest mover and shaker.

“Amy Bedford was the mother of the parkway,” he said. “She was a bulldog, but she did it in such a nice way. She was very persuasive. She wouldn’t let herself get discouraged.”

At the River Walk’s dedication ceremony, Bedford said: “It just seemed this town should have a parkway. I’m a native and I’ve been here a long time and I just got stubborn and didn’t want to give up.”

These days, the public path is a magnet for walkers, cyclists, birdwatchers and others. The parkway doesn’t include all the features on the original design, but much of Bedford’s vision has come to

life.

This week, Gabriel said thinking back to the parkway project was like visiting “a ghost out of the past,” with many of the details hazy, but he clearly remembers Bedford’s determination.

“While this work occurred over 40 years ago,” the architect said, “the memories of Amy’s vision, enthusiasm and grace will always remain.”

Gabriel plans to attend Saturday’s Reconnect to the River event, celebrating 30 years of Pendleton’s River Walk. The event includes a free barbecue at noon at Roy Raley Park with music by James Dean Kindel and the Eastern Oregon Playboys.

Bedford, known as the Spark of the Parkway, won’t be there. She died in 2007.

No doubt her presence will be felt anyway.

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.

Christie, Huckabee relegated to undercard at next GOP debate

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Chris Christie and Mike Huckabee have been bumped from the main stage at next week’s GOP presidential debate, while George Pataki and Lindsey Graham have been cut from the lineup altogether.

Debate sponsor Fox Business Network announced the moves Thursday evening, dealing a blow to Christie and Huckabee as they struggled to stand out in the crowded Republican field amid signs of momentum in states where the first primary contests will be held.

The decision underscores concerns about the pivotal role that national opinion surveys have been playing in shaping the contest for the GOP nomination. Statistically, pollsters say, there is no significant difference between candidates lumped together near the bottom of the pack in national polls, which typically have a margin of error of 3 percentage points or more.

According to debate criteria issued by Fox Business last week, candidates must score 2.5 percent or higher in an average of the four most recent major polls conducted through Nov. 4 to be featured in the prime-time debate. They must hit the 1 percent mark to qualify for an undercard debate airing before the main event.

If proven, bomb on Russia plane could bring new phase in fight against group

BEIRUT (AP) — At this stage, there is no hard evidence. But reports from the U.S. and Britain suggesting an Islamic State group bomb may have caused the Russian plane crash in Egypt are raising the alarm

among experts, who say such an act would be a frightening change in tactics by the extremist group.

It would also underscore the failure so far of the U.S.-led coalition to deter the jihadis — despite the recent addition of Russia to the seemingly formidable forces arrayed against them.

Russian and Egyptian officials say any talk about a bomb is premature, and aviation authorities are working on all possible theories as to why the Airbus A321-200 crashed Saturday in Egypt’s chaotic Sinai Peninsula, 23 minutes after takeoff.

Still, British Prime Minister David Cameron said Thursday it was “more likely than not” that an explosive device brought the jetliner down. If that proves to be true, and if the Islamic State group was responsible, it would be the Sunni extremists’ largest act of transnational terrorism by far.

BRIEFLY

While the Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for deadly attacks that struck tourists in Tunisia and Shiite mosques in oil-rich Sunni Gulf countries — claims that have not been proven — it has so far refrained from spectacular al-Qaida-style attacks on airliners. It has focused instead on seizing and expanding territory it already holds in Syria and Iraq, and establishing branches in other countries like Egypt and Libya.

Student who stabbed 4 meant to do more harm

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A freshman student who stabbed four people at a California university meant to do even more harm, but he acted alone and had no connections to terrorist groups, authorities said Thursday.

Faisal Mohammad, 18, burst into his class at the University of California, Merced, and attacked a fellow student with a hunting knife Wednesday morning. He stabbed three others, including a construction worker credited with preventing Mohammad from killing anyone, before police

shot him dead as he fled across campus.

Police found zip-tie handcuffs, duct tape and a hammer in a backpack near his body. It also contained two plastic baggies of petroleum jelly, which Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke called a “poor’s man” explosive if ignited.

Warnke and other officials said background checks of Mohammad and his family show the 18-year-old had no connections to organized hate or terror groups and no past behavior to suggest he would lash out violently.

“We had zero to indicate he was on anyone’s radar,” Warnke said.

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RECONNECT TO
THE RIVER

Celebrating 30 years of Pendleton’s River Walk

PENDLETON
RIVER WALK

Event sponsored by Pendleton Parks
& Recreation, East Oregonian,
Umatilla Basin Watershed Council
and Betty Klepper.

- Explore activity stations that will be set up along the trail between Trailhead Park (at the west end of the trail) and SW 10th Street.
- Activity stations will feature bird watching, insect identification, a river art project, a watershed lesson, geology, City drinking water, and additional engaging aspects of the river!
- Play “River Walk Bingo!” Children participate at various stations and return their completed bingo cards for prizes at the barbecue.
- Celebrate the people who helped make the River Walk possible, the anniversary of the dedication of the first section of the trail, and take the opportunity for you and your family to reconnect to the river.

Roy Raley Park

November 7

Starts 10:00 am

Free BBQ

At Noon

& Live music!

James Dean Kindel and the Eastern Oregon Playboys

Call Parks at 276-8100 for questions.