

HERMISTON

Parks and Rec committee discusses Northside Playground makeover

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Neighbors of the Northside Playground met with the city of Hermiston's Parks and Recreation committee Thursday to discuss ideas for a park makeover.

Longtime residents said the half-acre lot on Beebe Avenue behind Pizza Hut, which has also been referred to as Candy Stripe Park or Jaycee Park, still has the equipment they played on when they were children in the 1960s.

None of it meets current safety standards.

"You can't buy a merry-go-round today," Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter said. "You can't buy an aluminum slide today and this one is a perfect solar angle to heat up to 150 degrees in the summer."

The swingset could meet safety standards, he said, if it were relocated farther from the fence and had softer material underneath.

Neighbors who were present unanimously expressed an interest in keeping the merry-go-round, if possible. They said children, teenagers and parents all use it regularly and there was a lot of nostalgia surrounding it.

Committee member Ryan Severs suggested if the merry-go-round, which is run down and missing one of its handholds, could not be saved it could be repurposed and implemented into the new park design as bench, table or part of a climbing area.

Fetter said he would look into that suggestion, as well as how feasible it was to keep the merry-go-round despite liability issues.

Other suggestions that came up during a brainstorming session included benches, shade, lights, a drinking fountain, a climbing structure and a safer slide. Everyone agreed that the tiny restroom that hasn't been functional for



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

The merry-go-round at Northside Park is the last of its kind in Hermiston.

years should be removed.

From a safety standpoint, Fetter said softer materials need to be added to the playground to cushion falls and he would like to see a fence added between the basketball court and playground to keep balls from flying into the area where small children played.

He asked if it would be better to get rid of the basketball court altogether in favor of more playground space, but neighbors said teenagers and pre-teens enjoyed using the court.

Committee member Mike Kay said the basketball hoop was perfectly positioned to encourage kids to practice shooting but keep rowdy games with older teenagers and adults to a minimum.

"If you put a hoop up kids will shoot at it, but where you put it will dictate how they play," he said.

Mayor David Drotzmann suggested

four-square lines, educational designs and other things could be added to the court to allow younger children to use the space when no one was playing basketball.

At the end of the meeting Fetter said he would take all of the suggestions and come up with some designs. He invited the neighbors to come back in January, when the committee would go over the suggestions and choose a new plan for the park.

Committee member Doug Primmer said he would like the city to continue to try to gather input from residents who lived in the neighborhood.

"My big thing is keeping the people who live there involved, because they're the ones who use it," he said.

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MISSION

American Indian researcher reflects on Umatilla Reservation

Third edition of Tiller's Guide released

By GEORGE PAVEN
East Oregonian

Driving along Interstate 84 from Portland into Pendleton, Veronica Tiller gazed at the Oregon landscape along the Columbia River.

"Oregon has always had a reputation of being quite progressive," said Tiller, an American Indian professor and researcher from Albuquerque, New Mexico. "Just looking at this beautiful land. I thought if I lived in Oregon, you're darn right I'd be interested in environmental protection."

Tiller, whose expertise lies in natural resources and Indian affairs, visited the Umatilla Indian Reservation for the first time October 5-8 during the 25th annual Indian Land Consolidation Symposium at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, where she served as a moderator and discussed the upcoming third edition of her book, "Tiller's Guide to Indian Country."

The book, which was originally published in 1996, contains economic profiles of all 567 federally recognized tribes nationwide — including nine in Oregon. The third edition will be released Saturday during the American Indian Film Festival awards banquet in San Francisco.

Tiller, herself a member of the Jicarilla Apache Nation in New Mexico, said she was impressed by the Umatilla Reservation and saw encouraging signs of economic progress — especially at Wildhorse, which has grown over 20 years to employ 800 people.

By creating such a large entertainment center, Tiller said the tribes are bringing more revenue into the community that, in turn, allows the government to invest in things like infrastructure, preservation programs, senior care and scholarships.

"They can make investments, and start putting some of that revenue into things they could only dream of before," she said.

Tiller also commended the tribes' commitment to environmental protection and green energy. Though it takes a lot of money to do large-scale projects, she said the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation appear to be moving faster in that direction than the rest of the country.

"I think that's due to their philosophy of living in harmony with the earth," Tiller said. "They'll have the means to manage those resources better."

Tiller holds a doctorate in American Indian history and is a former professor at the University of Utah. She established her own research firm, Tiller Research, in 1980 and has worked 35 years aiding tribes in envi-



Tiller

"It's time for the state of Oregon and other states to start looking at tribes as partners. We're not your welfare child anymore. We are part of this nation."

— Veronica Tiller, American Indian professor and researcher

ronmental lawsuits against the federal government. Her studies delve extensively into subjects such as water rights and forest management practices.

It took Tiller 18 months to compile the first edition of "Tiller's Guide to Indian Country." She said her firm prides itself on being the most comprehensive and reliable source on Indian land.

Indian reservations such as the Umatilla Reservation should be looked at more as a contributor to the economies of states and the entire country, she said.

"It's time for the state of Oregon and other states to start looking at tribes as partners," Tiller said. "We're a viable partner in economic development. We're not your welfare child anymore. We are part of this nation."

Admittedly, Tiller said there is still work left to do, especially in schools. According to the Oregon Department of Education, the graduation rate of American Indian students in the Pendleton School District was just 44.7 percent.

"The level of education does not meet the rest of the nation," she said. "I think the schools always need help."

Tiller said she is an American Indian historian by training. She grew up with Indian stereotypes, and said she hopes "Tiller's Guide" can prove there's more to the tribes than the negative statistics typically reported.

"I'm always interested in what's going on in Indian country," she said. "It's a big job."

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MILTON-FREEWATER

DA's office reviewing elderly woman's hate crime arrest

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office has yet to charge an 89-year-old Milton-Freewater woman with a hate crime after a confrontation with police.

Milton-Freewater police arrested Lydia Gilmore at her home on the afternoon of Oct. 4 for second-degree intimidation, third-degree criminal mischief, harassment, attempted assault on a public safety officer and resisting arrest. District Attorney Dan Primus said his office is reviewing the case for possible criminal charges, and that means taking into consideration Gilmore's mindset at the time and if her age played a role.

Her son, Larry Gilmore,

said he spoke to his mother and she did not want to comment.

Two officers that day responded to a complaint at 417 Miller St., where Juan Castillo-Epifanio reported his neighbor, Gilmore, sprayed him with her garden hose because she doesn't like "Mexicans," according to a written statement from Milton-Freewater police Chief Doug Boedigheimer. Castillo-Epifanio also told police Gilmore sprayed a personal vehicle at the residence.

The officers talked to both parties, Boedigheimer stated, and the woman spouted off a racial slur to one officer and sprayed him with the hose. The second officer took the hose from Gilmore, who struggled and kicked the

officer. Officers then handcuffed her and put her in the police car.

The arrest sparked concern from Milton-Freewater City Councilman Jeff Anliker, who in recent emails stated police should have done more to have the parties relax and later deliver a summons to Gilmore to appear in court. He also questioned if Gilmore's comment to the officer was a hate crime, equating it to someone calling an officer "pig, 5-0, and any other negative term directed at an officer while on duty."

Anliker also claimed the officers raced though his neighborhood to the scene, going "60+ mph in a 25-mph residential area full of elderly and children." That kind of driving, he said, was for "chasing an armed-and-dan-

gerous criminal or heading to the scene of a violent crime-in-progress and definitely not to a 90-year-old woman spraying someone and calling them names."

Boedigheimer said Anliker never contacted him, but he believes city hall addressed the councilman's concerns. The chief also explained the slur prompted the intimidation charge, a Class A misdemeanor that Oregon classifies as a hate crime. He said language, in association with other crimes, can itself be a crime.

Under Oregon law, intimidation applies when someone "subjects another to offensive physical contact because of the person's perception of the other's race, color, religion, sexual orientation, disability or national origin."

BRIEFLY

Dan Hill to take over as district's presiding judge

HERMISTON — In January, Circuit Judge Dan Hill of Hermiston will be the new presiding judge of Oregon's Sixth Judicial District.

The district encompasses the circuit courts of Umatilla and Morrow counties and has five judges. The district's trial court administrator Roy Blaine made the announcement Thursday.

"Presiding judges serve as the administrative judge for a district," Blaine explained in a written statement, "setting policies and procedures and determining, for example, what caseload judges will carry and where they are assigned. The presiding judge in each judicial district is chosen by Oregon's Chief Justice, with input from all the judges in a district."

The term is for two years. Judge Ron Pahl has been the district's presiding judge since 2010. Blaine stated Pahl decided not to continue in the role.

Historic Cemeteries Commission seeks new members

PENDLETON — The Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries is seeking volunteers to fill open positions representing

three regions across the state, including northeast Oregon.

The commission, comprised of seven members, works to maintain a list of all pioneer and historic cemeteries in Oregon, make recommendations for funding, obtain grants and coordinate restoration projects. Positions are also open for southern Oregon and the greater Portland area.

The group meets four times per year in various locations around the state. Anyone can apply, though members should have some knowledge related to cemeteries, historic preservation, genealogy, cultural and burial practices of ethnic groups in Oregon, archaeology, landscaping and history.

To apply, send a letter

of interest and résumé to commission coordinator Kuri Gill at Kuri.Gill@oregon.gov. Applicants should include their reasons for wanting to serve on the commission, skills they will bring and goals for participation. The deadline is Dec. 20.

For more information, email Gill or call 503-986-0685.

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Lorena Sanchez

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