

MAYOR: Houk said Turner is a good candidate for the job

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toral history isn't spotless.

Turner's first foray into local politics was an appointment to the Umatilla Port Commission in 2008 to replace former commissioner Bryan Brock. Turner ran unopposed for the seat in 2009 and won re-election in 2013 by beating back a challenge by Pendleton Tea Party leader Eli Stephens.

Turner's next campaign was for the District 58 seat in the Oregon House of Representatives, which was open due to the impending retirement of longtime representative Bob Jensen.

Despite receiving endorsements from Jensen and other stalwarts in local politics, Turner lost in a landslide to Cove business owner Greg Barreto in the Republican primary.

Barreto labeled Turner a proponent of big government in the course of the campaign. Barreto even managed a narrow victory in Turner's home base of Umatilla County.

Within hours of his mayoral announcement, Turner was already garnering support from local leaders like Umatilla County Board of Commissioners Chairman George Murdock, Port of Umatilla General Manager Kim Puzey and current Mayor Phillip Houk, who declined to run again after serving three terms.

Houk said this was his second push to get Turner into a leadership position, having supported making Turner the president when he was serving on the BMCC Board of Education.

Houk said Turner is a good candidate for the job and would be able to work well with the council, staff and the city manager.

Turner said running for mayor

City council races

MAYOR
John Turner

WARD 1 (Downtown, South Hill, Riverside)
Becky Marks (Incumbent)

WARD 2 (North Hill, Westgate, Airport)
No candidates filed

WARD 3 (McKay Creek, Southgate, Tutuilla Road)
Don Bennett

AT-LARGE
Paul Chalmers
Paul Rabbittaille
Rick Rohde
Jim Swearingen

wasn't really on his radar until January, when citizens and members of the city council, including Houk, started to encourage him.

While Turner may have support from members of the current council, that body will have a very different look in 2017.

In addition to Houk, Ward 2 Councilor Chuck Wood and Ward 3 Councilor Tom Young have decided against running for re-election. Furthermore, former at-large city councilor Jane Hill resigned in January to take a job with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Candidates can file for city council seats through March 8. Municipal elections will be held May 17.

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WOLVES: Only one member voted against the bill

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wolves are unfounded.

"This does not mean we're going to hunt wolves to extinction again," he said.

Rep. Chris Gorsek, D-Troutdale, was the committee's only member to vote against the bill.

While he doesn't have a problem with the delisting, Gorsek said he was concerned about the precedent set by the legislature inserting itself into the process.

Environmental groups that are fighting the delisting in court — Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands and the Center for Biological Diversity — fear that a ratification by the legislature will hamstring

their lawsuit.

Sean Stevens, executive director of Oregon Wild, recently argued that if the commission's decision was scientifically sound, there is no reason to pass H.B. 4040.

While the plaintiffs groups seek judicial review to determine if the commission acted correctly, they have not asked for an injunction and so the delisting will remain effective while the litigation is pending, he said.

Laurel Hines, a member of Oregon Wild, said that wolf management in Oregon has emphasized the protection of the livestock industry, so conservationists should be allowed to proceed with the lawsuit to protect their interests.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association disagrees with the claim that H.B. 4040 will preclude environmental groups from obtaining judicial review, said Rocky Dallum, the group's political advocate.

H.B. 4040 would not prevent the plaintiff from filing a lawsuit, and since their complaint has already been filed, its merits will still be decided in state court, Dallum said.

A judge may find the commission acted properly regardless of the legislature's action, or may decide that the question about the delisting's legality was answered by H.B. 4040, if it passes, he said.

"It's up to a judge to decide whether the case is moot," Dallum said.

HIGHWAY: Advisory committee has 11 property owners

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inspiring what the potential could be," he said.

He said committee members want to eliminate the nickname FUMO, which stands for "Five Ugliest Miles in Oregon." Medelez said one committee member shared a story about an out-of-state job applicant who took his wife to town the long way via Powerline Road because he didn't want her to see north Highway 395.

"That really stuck with me," he said.

The citizen advisory committee consists of 11 property owners plus county commissioner Bill Elfering and the support of county staff. The committee chair is Steve Watkins of the Columbia Court Club, who Medelez said has worked especially hard on the project.

Mabbott said it's unusual to have a committee like that out gathering information from their

neighbors, and she has been impressed that after their year-long commitment recently ended, they said they wanted to continue meeting and working on getting some of the ideas from the original report implemented.

According to the 2015 report by E.D. Hovee & Company LLC, the 861 acres of county property between Hermiston and Umatilla's urban growth boundaries represents approximately 1,170 jobs with an average wage of \$32,205, mostly in agriculture, transportation, waste management and construction.

Other suggestions in the report beyond landscaping and road improvements include building better utility infrastructure, creating more flexible zoning, implementing a marketing plan and providing technical assistance to companies looking to move in or expand.

Mabbott said in working to

draw more development to the area the committee did not want to compete with what the cities of Hermiston and Umatilla were doing to draw development inside the urban growth boundary. Some uses were better suited for north 395, however, she said. For example, a large trucking company wouldn't help with "revitalizing downtown." To many construction companies driving cranes and other heavy machinery around would tear up city streets.

She said committee members are optimistic that more visible improvements to the stretch of Highway 395 and surrounding roads will happen.

"We're looking at a couple of grant opportunities," she said. "I do know that once you start investing some, it gets the ball rolling."

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