

PENDLETON



Tall grass and wildflowers grow in an open area of the north bank of the Umatilla River in Pendleton in this May 2017 file photo. The property, once considered for a housing development, could be designated for conservation.

City council directs staff to look into preserving riverfront land

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

A grassroots effort to conserve a piece of riverfront land north of the Umatilla River is one step closer to reaching its goal.

In its role as the Pendleton Development Commission, the Pendleton City Council directed city staff to clarify the legal process of designating the land for conservation.

The commission had previously considered selling the half acre for housing development, but a group of nearby property owners and environmentalists lobbied the commission to preserve it and formed a committee to devise a solution.

Packing council chambers again Tuesday night, the group was represented by

Casey Brown, a Pendleton parks and recreation staff member who took a personal interest in preserving the land.

Brown said the committee collectively contributed 200 hours toward the project and ultimately agreed to three recommendations to the commission: approve the land's conservation, choose how it would be conserved and extend the "vision" to all riverfront land in the city.

While the council didn't want to tackle a river-wide conservation plan, members did seem open to the committee's first two recommendations.

Councilor Neil Brown praised the committee's efforts, saying it was an example of how the community can come together behind a cause.

City manager Robb Corbett said he wanted to run the issue by city attorney Nancy Kerns and it could be brought back before the commission at its March 20 meeting.

Earlier in the meeting, the commission approved a \$26,933 façade grant to the Pendleton Underground Tours, which intends to turn the former MaySon's Old Fashioned General Store space into a "made in Pendleton" store.

As a part of the façade renovations, the underground tours will install new windows, doors and storefronts at MaySon's, Alexander's Chocolate Classics and 365 S. Main St., the new space for the Pendleton Downtown Association.

At the city council meeting immediately following the

commission meeting, the council took several actions:

- The council unanimously approved amending the chronic nuisance ordinance to include properties where frequent criminal activity occurs.

Kerns said the ordinance might not have much current use, but it may be useful in the future.

- The council also approved a \$23,500 work order with Anderson Perry & Associates to conduct a study of changing out existing street lights for LEDs.

"Study will evaluate the cost to own, install, and operate LED street lights compared to the continued cost of paying Pacific Power & Light for the existing high-pressure sodium street lights," a staff report states.

BRIEFLY

Elgin principal hired for Weston-McEwen job

ATHENA — Weston-McEwen High School found its next principal just across the county line.

According to a press release, the Athena-Weston School District hired Elgin High School Principal Rob Shell to serve the same role for Weston-McEwen.

A former history teacher and Navy veteran, Shell will start on July 1.

"We know Rob's background and experience in the high school setting will be great

assets for our district, and we look forward to welcoming him into our community," Superintendent Laure Quaresma said in a statement.

Shell was selected after being interviewed by separate panels for students and staff.

Shell will replace Jim Reger, who is serving as Weston-McEwen's interim principal this year and served as interim superintendent during the 2015-2016 school year.



Rob Shell

Tax proposal advances after breaks removed

SALEM (AP) — The top legislator in Oregon's state Senate said he supports a stripped-down proposal to partially disconnect the state's tax law from last year's federal tax overhaul after legislators increased the amount of money the proposal would raise by removing breaks for individuals and businesses.

Senate President Peter Courtney confirmed his support Wednesday. The proposal would stop a federal deduction on certain types of income from

also being automatically deducted from Oregon taxes. Altogether, changes in the federal overhaul law were forecast to cost the state up to \$217 million over the next two years, according to a report released by the state economist last week. The bill would reverse that impact, and collect \$27.4 million extra in taxes, or about \$244.4 million altogether.

The measure's future had been in question after Senate leaders sent the bill back to committee.

Farm house fire started in flue

STANFIELD — A blaze at a Stanfield home was likely caused by a flue fire, Umatilla County Fire District officials said.

Fire crews responded to a call at a home on North Ash Road in Stanfield on Tuesday afternoon, around 2:30 p.m. No one was in the home at the time of the fire, according to fire marshal Scott Goff.

"It was contained to one building, and was knocked down in less than

30 minutes," Goff said. "But with these older farm houses, it got into some of the void spaces."

Goff said the fire started in the basement, and got into the floor space between the basement and the ground level. Goff said the house belongs to Larry Newman, a former board member of the Stanfield Fire Department.

He said the damage was fairly extensive, but probably repairable.

Umatilla County picks charter committee

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners selected nine people to serve on the county charter review committee.

The county's home rule charter requires a committee of at least five residents to review the founding document every four years, though the last review was in 2008.

County counsel Doug Olsen said several people submitted applications, and the county limited the committee to nine. He said the group represents different communities and areas of the county. The board of commissioners Wednesday morning in Pendleton voted 3-0 to appoint the following to serve on the committee:

- Sally Anderson Hansell of Hermiston
- Jerry Baker of Athena
- Genna Banica of Pendleton
- Daniel Dorran of Hermiston
- Mark Gomolski of Hermiston
- Michele Grable of Pendleton
- Jennifer McClure Spurgeon of Weston
- Donald Miller of Milton-Freewater
- Kim Puzey of Hermiston

The new committee has until July 2019 to make recommendations for possible changes to the charter. The board of commissioners

gets to say whether those recommendations end up on a ballot for county citizens to decide.

The board also approved nine wolf depredation grants totaling \$83,771. The grants from the Oregon Department of Agriculture compensate livestock owners for losses due to wolves. The nine grants covered the costs of non-lethal and preventative measures, ranging from paying for range riders to motion-detection lights to food for guard dogs.

The largest amount — \$26,019 — went to the Cunningham Sheep Company of Pendleton. The Agricultural Research Foundation of Corvallis received the second largest grant — \$20,621.83 — for a depredation prevention workshop. Hellberg Farms of Lowden, Washington, received the smallest grant of an even \$1,000.

And in other business, the board authorized Aggregate Resources Industries of Springfield to drill and blast 25,000 cubic yards at the Casper Gravel Pit. The company's bid of \$1.99 per cubic yard beat two competitors.

The board also approved an \$11,000 contract for two table top emergency training exercises. County emergency manager Tom Roberts told the board the funding is from a state hazardous material grant that required a local match of 20 percent.

FREE EVENT!

ABC'S OF MEDICARE

Helping you through the Medicare Maze

February 27th, 2018 (We'll buy the coffee!)

The Saddle Restaurant @9:00 AM

Roosters Restaurant @5:30 PM

Looking for a fun, no-pressure way to learn more about Medicare? Join us at an upcoming event! We'll answer any questions you have about Medicare and explain the benefits of the plans.

Terry Beckett • Sr Health Care Specialist

541-276-0367 • terry@pendletoninsurancecenter.com

Friday Meals

LENT

February 23rd from 5 to 7:00 p.m.

@ the St. Anthony Hospital Blue Mountain Cafe

Cedar Wrapped Salmon - \$7.50/Adults - \$7.00/Children & Seniors

Baked Potato w/ Toppings & Vegetable of the day.

Clam Chowder Bread Bowl - \$4.25

Single Cup \$1.25

Hearth Pizza Station

Filled with Lent friendly Pizzas

CHI St. Anthony Hospital

2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR 97801

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