

# Playground: City moving forward on Funland rebuild

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year, and other service club members expressed similar sentiments.

Some lifelong Hermiston residents at the meeting said they have spent hours watching children and grandchildren play there, while others who moved to the community more recently said Funland was one of the highlights of their recruitment tour when they were deciding whether to move to Hermiston.

"My kids absolutely love Funland, so they were real excited that Mom got picked (for the committee)," Patricia Alder said.

According to the timeline laid out by Fetter, the committee will examine proposals and pick a design company in August and complete the design (with public input) in November. Fundraising would wrap up in January, and construction would start in February.

The committee agreed that it was time to move on from wooden structures to a more durable composite plastic material that will retain some of the same look without the flammability. In the same vein, the area underneath will likely change from bark chips to a rubberized surface. Security upgrades, fewer places to hide behind, more accessibility for children with disabilities and more shade were also on the list.

In addition to a new play-

## Hamley's: Tribes win auction for iconic Pendleton business

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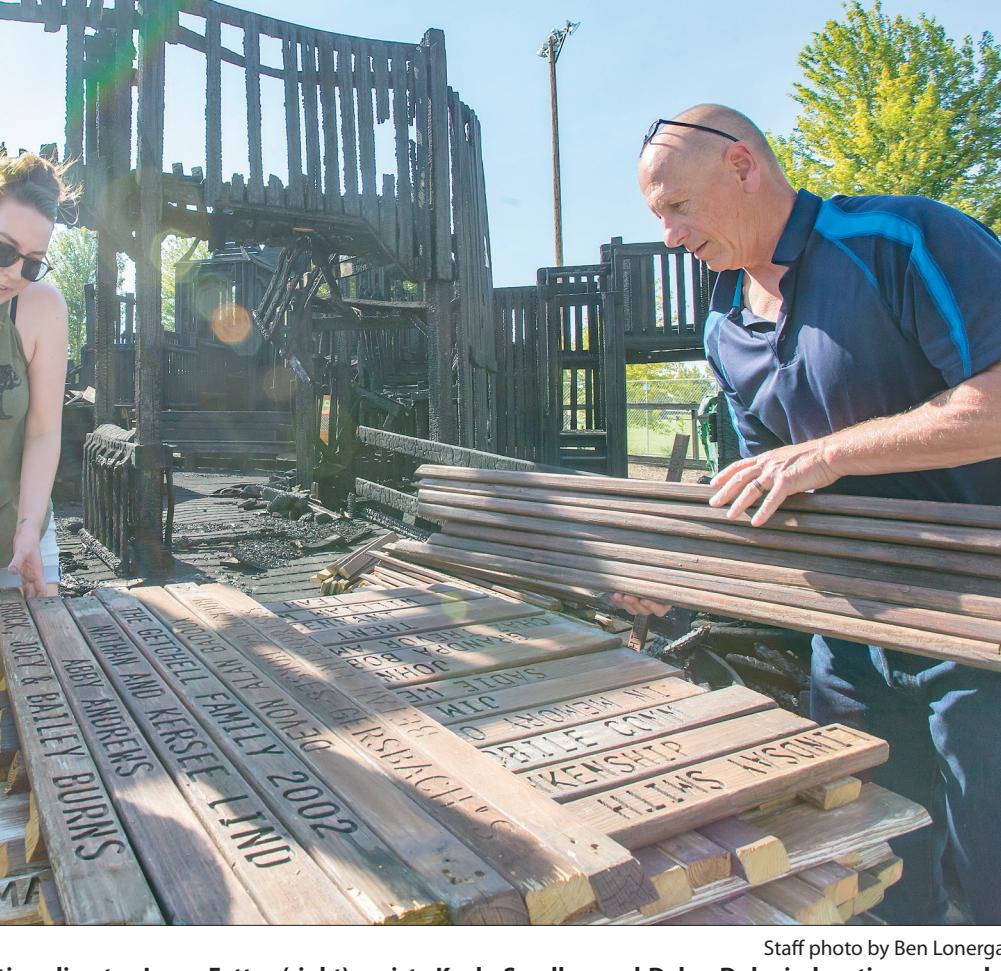
along with surrounding tribes have shopped for clothing, tack and saddle since then.

"Many tribal members have great respect for the family and their sponsorship of tribal events in past years and look forward to carrying on this western tradition," according to the statement from the tribes. "The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes have engaged in commerce and trade since time immemorial and this purchase is an extension of their history of

a strong business acumen."

Pearce said the bidding came down to the tribes and Fancho "Fee" Stubblefield, owner of the Lehman Hot Springs resort near Utkia. The deal has eight days to close, Pearce said, and the transition in ownership should be smooth.

Pearce did not want to sell the Hamley's businesses to the tribes in spite of a \$3.1 million offer a few years ago. But Thursday afternoon he said he wished them "all the success in the world." He also said he would stay on as long as the tribes wanted or needed him.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Hermiston Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter (right) assists Kayla Sandlyn and Dylan Duke in locating a wooden fence board carved with the name of Dylan's father Scott Duke, who passed away several years ago.

ground itself, Fetter proposed the committee also look at adding at least one more picnic shelter to the area and building a restroom/concessions building right next to the playground.

He said the concessions area could take requests for proposals, or the Tiki Hut shaved ice stand currently located on the other side of the splash pad could move

there. The Tiki Hut owner does a great job of keeping an eye on the splash pad, he said, and it would be nice to have the same kind of watchful eye on Funland as well.

Fetter said he envisioned about 40% of the construction of the playground being done by contractors, 40% done by parks staff and 20% done by the community. But committee members said

volunteer work should play a more prominent role if possible.

"The more community involvement, the more ownership people feel," Sherman said.

Committee members asked about the engraved fence pickets, plaques and other items that carried the names of the donors from the last build. Fetter said

anything with a name on it has been removed and saved, including 800 fence pickets, ahead of demolition of the blackened structure over the next couple of weeks. They are not in good enough shape to reuse, however.

Fetter said some people have suggested the playground be moved to a location more visible from a

## FUNLAND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Martha McClusky  
Charles Clupny  
Leah Lutz  
Ric Sherman  
Lindsey Lloyd  
Kelsey Volk  
Patricia Alder  
Jackie Myers  
Rod Hardin  
David Drotzmann

main road so that more people can keep an eye on it. But committee members rejected the idea, pointing out its central location in the community, the cost savings from rebuilding in the same footprint and other benefits.

"This is the heart of our community," Mayor David Drotzmann said. "Just because someone stuck a knife in there and twisted it to make us feel bad, doesn't mean we should give in."

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said there were security upgrades that could be added to the new park, from better design to a good-quality camera feed beamed live to the police station.

The city has released a request for proposals and committee members plan to meet with interested bidders on Aug. 8, before choosing a designer on Aug. 21 and starting the community input process and fundraising campaign.

## Theft: Financial web was so complex FBI was brought in on case

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the elderly.

The sheriff's office in early 2018 received a report Picard had been taking money from the Sunset Housing bank accounts over a period of two years. Sheriff's detective Kacey Ward investigated. Ward outlined some of Picard's dealings in affidavits to search her bank and financial records.

Sunset Housing selected Pickard as its new treasurer on Nov. 29, 2016. According to the affidavit, the next day she ripped

off the organization for \$15,000 with a check to her personal business, Athena Income Tax Services. Throughout the following year, she drained more than \$63,000 from Sunset Housing.

He said he found Picard had at least 11 bank accounts spread across multiple banks. The financial web was so complex, he said, the sheriff's office sought help from the FBI, which put a forensic examiner on the case.

The sheriff's office also reported it continues to investigate the possibility of additional victims.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris, File  
The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation are the new owners of Hamley's.

Chuck Sams, spokesperson for the tribes, said the auction lasted only a few hours. He said he did not have a definite time line for

when the tribes would take control of Hamley's, but the management and government teams will meet soon to discuss the next steps.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney, File

Members of Pendleton's First United Methodist Church gather one last time for worship on May 26 before their church was sold to a Portland investor.

## Church: May be leased out as an event center

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tage building. Would the church be pieced out with the organ and stained glass going to the highest bidder? Would it repurposed into living space or offices? Might it become a McMenamins brewpub, following in the footsteps of other historic properties such as McMenamins Edgefield in Troutdale or the Kennedy School in Portland?

At the latter speculation, Clemens chuckled. He said he called

McMenamins to ask if they might be interested in the building.

"They said they are not doing any acquisitions right now," he said. "They're consolidating."

He said, after repairs, the building may be leased out as an event center or for some other purpose. There is a small chance he may fix up the building and resell.

Clemens said he doesn't intend to piece out the church's interior features.

"I have no plans to do anything with the organ and the stained

glass," he said.

The property comes with a large parking lot and two adjacent houses. One is leased by Legal Aid Services of Oregon through the end of the year and Clemens said he's open to working out an agreement at that time. The other house, which now sits empty, will be leased or sold. The parking lot, for which there is a joint agreement for use by employees and customers of businesses on the north side of the block, likely will remain as is.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A distinctive tower that is part of the First United Methodist Church in Pendleton drew the attention of potential buyer Craig Clemens.