

HERMISTON



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

The parking lot at Riverfront Park in Hermiston sits in disarray after floodwaters severely damaged the park during 2020 floods. The Hermiston City Council on Monday, June 14, 2021, awarded a \$154,140 contract to Granite Construction to revamp the park.

City awards contract for park project

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Housing developers will have to adjust to new rules and new prices after the Hermiston City Council adopted several housing-related changes during its Monday, June 14, meeting.

Under mandate from a new statewide housing law, the city had to change its zoning rules to allow duplexes in all residential zones, including those that previously only allowed single-family dwellings.

“For the record, the planning commission wanted to make sure that they got it into the record that they very much want to express dissatisfaction with the process taken by the state Legislature in mandating these changes,” City Planner Clint Spencer said.

As part of House Bill 2001, cities also must treat duplexes and single family dwellings the same. That pushed the city to make other changes, including allowing duplexes on smaller lot sizes, matching the 5,000 square feet previously reserved for individual houses.

In a separate action, the city council approved new fees for the building department, raising them 17-33%.

City Manager Byron Smith said the city is required to adopt building permit fees matching the state of Oregon’s established fee schedule so the city can use a free building permit program from the state. If the city doesn’t use that program, he said, purchase of a different system typically costs about \$35,000.

Smith said some of the fees had not been updated for 20 years.

The city council on June 14 also added new appendices to its comprehensive plan, as required by House Bill 2003.

The city’s planning department worked with Angelo Planning to study housing needs in Hermiston. According to Spencer, the city has 5,047 acres of unconstrained residential land and 346 acres that have constraints that would make them unlikely to develop in the future. Of the city’s residential land supply, about half of it is developed or already committed for future development, leaving 2,562 acres available for future residential development.

Spencer said those acres could theoretically support 18,075 more housing units in Hermiston, but planners estimate Hermiston only needs 2,030 additional hous-

ing units by 2040, with about 38% of those being rentals.

Granite Construction will handle a revamp of Riverfront Park after the city council awarded the bid. The company was the low bidder of three bids at \$154,140.

After the park was damaged significantly by flooding in 2019 and 2020, the city plans to move the parking lot and playground toward the south side of the park, out of the path of raging flood waters when the Umatilla River overflows its banks.

Smith said it was “really kind of scary” to see the power of the river last year, when it ripped the asphalt parking lot into large chunks and carried away those heavy pieces.

The parking lot since has been gravel, but Granite Construction will add a new parking lot to the south end of the park and grass will replace the the current parking area. The city also plans to build a new, larger playground to replace the one destroyed in 2020, and Granite Construction will do the site preparation for that. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is covering 75% of the project.

The council also approved the city’s 2021-22 budget during the June 14 meeting, adopting a document that includes millions in new capital projects.

The budget includes a 1% cost of living increase for staff in July 2021 and a 1.5% increase that will take effect in 2022 if revenues come in as expected. The budget includes a one-person increase in staff, from the equivalent of 121.47 full-time employees to 122.47 FTE, with the hiring of an extra water utility worker.

PSD approves stimulus-boosted budget

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Federal stimulus aside, the Pendleton School District has adopted a budget it considers “status quo.”

On Monday, June 14, the Pendleton School Board unanimously voted to adopt a \$60.5 million budget for the 2021-22 school year. The budget’s \$44.1 million general fund — the fund used to pay for teachers,

supplies and materials and other operational costs — represents nearly an 11% increase from the year before, but district Director of Business Services Michelle Jones said the jump is largely due to federal stimulus for COVID-19 relief.

Jones said the district is using some of its money to hire new staff, including new elementary teachers to alleviate class size limits, staff for the district’s summer remedial program and interven-

tion specialists at all school levels.

The district also is seeing its technology budget double from \$862,000 to nearly \$1.8 million. Jones said the money is being used to replace Google Chromebooks — every student in the district has one laptop assigned to them — and make other tech investments.

With the federal stimulus expected to be a one-time shot in the arm, Jones said the rest of the budget is fairly

status quo.

For now, the stimulus will cover up for the revenue lost from the tax levy, but Jones said it still will need to be addressed long-term. After keeping it palace for years, voters in 2020 rejected the tax levy, which generated \$300,000 per year for operational costs. Citing an economic climate that’s still recovering from the effects of COVID-19, the board has yet to put the levy back on the ballot.

Police investigate break-ins at Hermiston restaurants

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Police are investigating a series of break-ins that resulted in thousands of dollars worth of damages and property theft from restaurants in the downtown Hermiston area, according to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston.

Five businesses had their windows broken on Sunday evening, June 13, through Monday morning, June 14, Edmiston said in an email.

An unnamed suspect gained access to at least three of those businesses and stole items from at least two of them.

Taste of Thai, on West Hermiston Avenue, and Lawan’s Thai Garden, on North First Street, reported stolen items. The suspect also gained access to Dough Cookies on North First Street, but police received no reports of theft.

Two other businesses, El Ranchero, on East Main Street, and Neighbor Dudes,

on North First Street, also had their windows broken, but police have yet to determine if the suspect gained access to those restaurants.

Edmiston would not disclose the cost of the damages or items stolen from the businesses, but said police found a cash register drawer along Interstate 84 and planned to see if it belonged to Taste of Thai.

Police have obtained video evidence, according to Edmiston, and all the cases

remain under investigation.

There have been multiple incidents in Hermiston like it recently, Edmiston said.

“We have had other businesses in town and on Main Street have the same thing happen recently where someone will quickly gain access and rummage around while inside,” he said. “I can only imagine how frustrating it is for the owners who have already had many challenges thrown their way this past year.”

LOCAL BRIEFING

Hermiston to break ground on \$2M project July 7

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston will break ground on a new industrial park project Wednesday, July 7.

The \$2.5 million project will add roads, water and sewer to the South Hermiston

Industrial Park. According to a press release, construction is expected to last about four months and create 16 new parcels of shovel-ready industrial land.

The work by the city will coincide with development of a new 179,000-square-foot warehouse for Meyer Distributing, which plans to hire approximately 70 full-time

employees in the fall, according to the city.

Funding for the infrastructure project at SHIP comes from a \$1.46 million U.S. Economic Development Administration grant, a local improvement district made up of adjacent property owners, the city and Umatilla County.

“These new shovel-ready lots will make it much easier

for small light Industrial operations to set up and provide support services to our other large agricultural and industrial operations in the region,” Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said in a press release.

The groundbreaking is scheduled for July 7 at 12:15 p.m. on East Penney Avenue.

—EO Media Group

Dads Golf for Free!

Dads enjoy a free round of golf when playing with immediate family members on Sunday, June 20!

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Sunday, June 20
12-7pm Curbside
2-9pm Indoor Dining

\$25 Single | \$23 Per Each Extra Person

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Be one of five to win the Family Resort Fun Package. Enter to win daily June 18, 19 & 20. Swipe at any e-STATION for one free entry per day.

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Pins & Pizza Package

4
Cineplex Passes

Choice of \$50
Fuel or Golf Pro Shop

NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION

Pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes 305.583 (9) and (10), notice is hereby given that on June 9, 2021, Umatilla County Fire District No. 1, Umatilla County, Oregon (the “District”) adopted a resolution (a) classifying the tax levy to be imposed to pay the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on the District’s proposed issuance of general obligation bonds in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$13,145,000 as not being subject to the limits of section 11 or 11b, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution, and (b) specifying the authorized uses of the proceeds of the general obligation bonds. Any individual may contact the Fire Chief of the District at 320 S. 1st Street, Hermiston, OR 97838, telephone (541) 567-8822, to obtain a copy of the resolution. Judicial review of the classification of the taxes or the specification of authorized uses may be sought within 60 days of the date of the resolution.

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UMATILLA COUNTY, OREGON

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