

'Open house' mulled for new skate park

Enterprise eyes Aug. 7 to welcome all to new facility

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — A target date of Saturday, Aug. 7, is being considered for an open house to welcome the community to Enterprise's refurbished skateboard park, the City Council was told Monday, June 14.

Alternative high school teacher Ron Pickens, who has been spearheading the work on the park, said work is slated to begin on it Aug. 2 and it should be completed by Aug. 6.

The project began in March, when alternative ed students proposed installing a half-pipe among the ramps already at the park. They secured funding from Building Healthy Families and sought more from the city.

When news of their plans got out, a community member stepped up with a donation of \$51,500. Now, they're looking at a \$60,000 project to totally revamp the skate park that would involve replacing everything there. The city agreed to pitch in an additional



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Ron Pickens, a teacher at the alternative high school in Enterprise, updates the Enterprise City Council on plans to refurbish the city's skateboard park during a meeting Monday, June 14, 2021. Listening at left is Preston Aschenbrenner.

\$3,500 in April. Pickens told the council Monday he's been in contact with the company that will do the work and got the start date for the project.

He said the project has received the promised funds. With the extra funds, he said, they're able to purchase benches, trash cans, a picnic table, a bicycle-repair station and upgrade the park rules sign. They also hope to purchase an additional ramp.

"This is really turning into a beautiful piece," he said, adding that two of his artistic students are

contributing artwork to beautify the park.

"We've gotten a tremendous amount of support from the community," he said.

Plans are to keep one of the quarter-pipes at the park and store the other two, he said.

Pickens asked the council what he needs to do to hold the open house. He was curious about needed permits, coronavirus restrictions and anything else he must get the city's OK on.

"I would love to celebrate this and I wanted to see where we stood to hold a grand opening," he said.

As part of the grand opening, hot dogs and other refreshments are planned.

He's also hoping to invite professional skateboarder and motivational speaker Brandon Novak to attend, and possibly demonstrate his skateboarding prowess. Pickens said he'd like to have Novak meet with his students at the alternative school. He also hopes to expand the invitation to Wallowa and to Union and Baker counties.

The council — particularly the younger members such as Mayor Ashley Sullivan — were enthusiastic over Pickens' proposal.

"I just want to say this is super for all the kids, all the youths and

people my age because we grew up knowing who Brandon Novak is," Sullivan said. "This is great; this is wonderful."

City Administrator Lacey McQuead said she'd work with Pickens to put together a formal request for a permit to submit at the July 12 council meeting.

In another matter, the council:

- Accepted the resignation of Councilor Christie Houston, who submitted a letter saying, "life is taking me in a different direction." McQuead said the city will now advertise for a replacement to be considered at the July meeting. She said she is aware of three or four people who may be interested.

- Scheduled a meeting for 6 p.m. July 14, to receive public input on possible action to limit transient lodging in the city.

- Discussed during a work session preceding the regular meeting plans to hire an additional sewage treatment plant operator. Public Works Supervisor Ronnie Neil said it takes eight years for a person to go from having no skills to become fully qualified as an operator. The council discussed the matter as a succession plan.

- The council will hold a budget hearing at 6:30 p.m. Monday, June 21, and its next regular meeting will be at 6 p.m. Monday, July 12.

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