

Partnership from 1A

However, engineering costs for the project will total \$540,000, and the county's cash contribution had previously been set at only \$200,000.

"The county was working with the city to find solutions on how to pay for this project," Reynolds said. "They proposed a creative solution to pay both in cash and with an 'in lieu of payment' transfer of the Oceanwoods Parcel to the City of Florence."

Oceanwoods Parcel, a 40-acre undeveloped county park within the City of Florence's urban growth boundary, has a property value of between \$200,000 and \$240,000.

Florence Public Works Director Mike Miller said, "They would provide the property to the city, and the city would pay that \$240,000 towards the project."

Additional funds for the project would come from system development charges.

The council report contained some history on the Oceanwoods property, including being passed from state to county lands and the removal of a deed restriction that kept the land designated as a park.

"It was at this time that the county marketed the parcel for development with an asking price of \$1 million," the report read.

Lane County Public Works Director Tim Elsea said it appraised so high in 2004 since it was "mistakenly" zoned as residential.

"The surrounding neighborhoods were very outspoken against the sale of the property for development purposes," the report continued. "Upon hearing those concerns, the county has had public meetings discussing this property with their Park Committee and has made a policy decision to respect the wishes of the residents and pursue an option that keeps the property as a park and no longer intends to sell the property to a developer."

Elsea said the county regards its past interactions with the residents as a broken trust, and has since held multiple public meetings to find out what, exactly, residents want for the Oceanwoods property. As such, the IGA contains wording to keep the deed restriction in place.

"The preferred language that staff is recommending is, 'conveyance of the parcel from county to city will contain a

restriction limiting the parcel's uses to parks, open space, wildlife habitat, structures, roadways and facilities related to those uses, and any combination of these uses in perpetuity,'" the staff report stated.

"The county believes the deed restrictions are fully consistent with the conversations we've had with the residents — and without a sunset clause. What this means is that it will allow for future public uses, and does not obligate the city to do anything out there now," Elsea said.

Each of the five city councilors got the chance to ask Elsea and Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich questions.

Both councilors Ron Preisler and Susy Lacer voiced support for the annexation and system development at Harbor Vista, but held reservations about Oceanwoods.

Preisler said he felt the city should retain the right to sell the land or develop it for other purposes in the future. He also said that City of Florence residents would pay for land that wouldn't immediately benefit them.

"I respect that they have their needs and they want that, but they are asking our citizens to

pay for that," he said.

Since Oceanwoods and the surrounding neighborhoods are in the city's urban growth boundary, the land could eventually be developed as a city park.

Councilor George Lyddon gave an analogy: "This would be like planting a fruit tree and not expecting any fruit for 10-15 years."

Staff said some properties could choose to annex in the next five years, as they would gain access to city water and sewer service, as well as police services.

Lacer said she also hesitated to approve the project because of the Oceanwoods property.

"It comes with not just the deed restriction," she said. "It comes with strings. ... There is a lot of passion from the community up there. That property, quite frankly, is coming to the city with a bit of baggage."

She said there will be a lot of work to develop it in any sort of way, even as an open-use park.

Bozievich advised thinking of the parcel as an "investment in the future."

"You're purchasing your future there. You've already made your stake on the area by putting your urban growth boundary there," he said. "Yes,

there's baggage with the site. We made a horrible miss-start when we put forth that draft version of the Parks Master Plan saying we were going to sell it off, without any neighborhood consultation or anything. ... This is an opportunity for the City of Florence to step in as the white knight, pick up this property and deal with it going forward as the new folks. The county's baggage will stay with the county."

Florence City Council voted to approve the IGA, with Preisler as the only opposed vote.

Bozievich said, "This is building on a partnership that has been building between the city and the county in recent years. We can add this partnership on to our ReVision Florence partnership, and our partnerships with the chamber. In all this collaboration and partnership, things are just moving ahead. This is one little piece that gets us further down the road."

At the end of the evening, Lyddon spoke about some of the partnerships he has experienced as a city councilor.

"I have never had so much fun working with the staff. I liken them to racehorses: you turn them loose, let them run



COURTESY PHOTO

Florence City Councilor Gorge Lyddon

and off they go. Look at what we've accomplished," he said.

At that point, he announced his intent to resign after the Dec. 18 city council meeting.

Lyddon said he and his wife have sold their home in Greentrees Village and plan to move close to family in Texas.

"We've seen what we can accomplish," he said. "We've awakened the city, it's in motion, and I'm going to miss the best ride of my life."

Mayor Joe Henry said, "We are going to miss you. You've been a great member of the team. We've worked together to make a lot of things happen."

Fundraiser from 1A

to send off grant applications.

One of the artists that has been participating in the Empty Bowls event for the last decade or so is Vicki Sieber-Benson. She estimates that she has thrown and donated thousands of pots to the fundraiser.

"I think the Empty Bowl event is the perfect metaphor for helping to stop hunger," Sieber-Benson said. "We have many people in our community who have jobs and are still unable to make through the month with food. If I can do my part as a potter, I am

happy to help."

Barton also wants the community to know that while the community has recently received an infusion of donations, the need is still there.

"The current state of our finances is that we have ongoing financial needs," Barton said. "The need never stops. We do not get government or city funding or any tax related funding, so we always have a large need to keep our doors open. This never ends."

One of Florence Food Share's most popular fundraisers is the annual MacDuffee Crab Crack. The event features an all-you-can eat crab, coleslaw, pasta,



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

dessert and garlic bread. Unfortunately, the date of

this year's event is in question due to a current ban on crabbing along the Oregon coast. This is due to unsafe levels of domoic acid, a neurotoxin which is produced by unusually high algae levels.

"We cannot sell crab crack

tickets until the commercial crabbing season opens in Oregon," Barton said.

She said she is hopeful food share will be able to offer the event once state officials have tested the areas crab and pronounced them fit to eat.

Handmade bowls, pottery and silent auction items were part of last weekend's event.

The Crab Commission will be testing crab Dec. 7.

"If it passes inspection, we will begin selling the tickets on Dec. 8," Barton said.

Other dates for testing are also lined up, including Jan. 1, 2 and 15.

Florence Food Share also has an increased need for volunteers this holiday season as some longtime contributors have moved or are unable to help this holiday season.

Barton hopes that interested community members will give Ivy Meadow, Volunteer Coordinator, a call to find out about the various opportunities.

Florence Food Share is at 2190 Spruce St. It can be reached at 541-997-9110.

EUGENE BALLET

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Events Center Box Office

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2 – 3:30 p.m.
Florence Events Center

- Free admission. ■ Refreshments served.
- Bring friends and family.

For more information, call Peace Harbor Hospice at 541-997-3418.

PeaceHealth
Peace Harbor Medical Center
peacehealth.org