

Council delays Refinement Plan vote

Opts instead for March 16 worksession; planning grant extension needed

BY MATT HOLLANDER The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council postponed a vote on the Main Street Refinement Plan during its Monday evening meeting. Instead, Councilors will review the document at a worksession on March 16 and prepare any changes to the plan before the next Council meeting on March 23.

Initially, there was a motion and a second motion to bring the ordinance to a vote. However, several Councilors expressed concerns for the plan's contents — despite the voluminous amount time and effort that has already gone into the process.

Councilor Mike Fleck said he is aware that downtown business owners are worried about the prospect of narrowing Main Street. He said he is also concerned about the street and sidewalk measurements involved with the plan, the precedent that the Council would set by repairing sidewalks for properties that aren't owned by the city, and, should it be adopted, whether or not the plan has adequate recommendations for mitigating disruptions to business.

Councilor Jeff Gowing said he spoke with 20 downtown business owners, of which 16 did not support the plan. Gowing said he would not vote in favor of the plan as currently written.

Although absent, Councilor Heather Murphy passed word along that she would prefer a worksession in lieu of a vote.

Community development director Howard Schesser said that if the Council opted to postpone its vote, the city would need to file an extension on its grant application with the Oregon Department of Transportation. He said that such an extension would likely be accepted.

Afterward, Councilor Jake

Boone withdrew his motion and the Council opted for the worksession, which will be held at 5:30 on March 16 and will be open to the public, though there won't be opportunity for public comment.

Pending the outcome of that session, the Council could adopt the ordinance at its March 23 meeting with a unanimous vote. If, however, the vote isn't unanimous, or the ordinance isn't available to the public one week prior to that meeting, a second vote will be needed.

Regardless of the Refinement Plan's fate, Main Street and its sidewalks need repairs, according to City Manager Richard Meyers. By current code, the

cost of those repairs would fall on Main Street property owners. However, the Council would have to issue that order, and no councilor seemed particularly keen on that idea at Monday's meeting.

Meyers also stressed that the ordinance is a plan that can evolve as circumstances change.

With the final word on the item, Mayor Tom Munroe said he has seen a lot of change during his many years of living in Cottage Grove but none have been for the bad. He said the city should only do what it can afford, and he believes All-

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Quilts of Valor Ceremony honors local veterans, page 12A



Also

inside:

Surprise wedding! Local couple shocks friends, family with ceremony, page 6A



FISHING WEATHER

tries a new fly on the fish at the Cottage Grove Pond at the Row River Nature Park, with canine companion Angie surveying the scene. Fishing at the pond has been busy for some time, and warm, dry weekend weather only seemed to draw more anglers. Wolfe said he caught (and released) 20 fish on Friday. The return of rain is predicted for this week.



City Engineer directed to weigh crosswalk options

City, ODOT don't agree on best placement

> **BY MATT HOLLANDER** The Cottage Grove Sentinel

t its regular meeting on Monday night, Athe Cottage Grove City Council directed City Engineer Ron Bradsby to pursue the most pragmatic solution between two submitted designs for a pedestrian crossing on Row River Road.

The consensus of those involved with the project has stated a preference for constructing the crosswalk at or near the intersection of Jim Wright Way. However, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) did Z

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not approve this design because a semi truck with a trailer could not make a left-hand turn



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Power's on, but legal battle over Dorena hydroelectric project continues

BY JON STINNETT The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Nonstruction is complete and the power is flowing, but the protracted legal battle between the company hired to build a hydroelectric power plant at Dorena Reservoir and the company that produces power there continues.

It took over a decade to clear the regulatory hurdles necessary to greenlight construction of the Dorena hydroelectric plant, which was dedicated in August of 2012 by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden and Congressman Peter De-Fazio. The project aimed to produce enough power for about 1200 homes by utilizing the flow of water through a "penstock" or hole in the dam to turn two massive electric turbines. The project was approved by the Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the reser-

voir, and given a 50-year operating license. Pacific Power contracted to purchase the power produced at the dam, which flows underground along the Row River Trail to the Village Green electrical substation some eight miles away in Cottage Grove, for 20 years.

The hydroelectric plant was scheduled to be operational in 2013, but documents filed as part of an early 2014 lawsuit by attorneys representing Mowat Construction, the company hired to build the plant, and Dorena Hydro, LLC, which currently operates it, indicate that the working relationship between the two companies was shaky at best almost from the start and may have led to construction delays. In January of 2014, Mowat filed suit against Dorena Hydro, an arm of Canada-based Symbiotics, LLC, for payments in excess of \$7 million it says it has not received for work done at the

site prior to Dorena Hydro's dismissal of Mowat from the project three days after the lawsuit was filed.

photo by Jon Stinnett

Mowat alleged in court that, "from very early in the project, Dorena failed to meet its contractual obligations, which hindered and impacted Mowat's work, including delaying Mowat's access to the site and repeatedly failing to provide timely, adequate, accurate and complete designs." It added that equipment purchased by Dorena Hydro including the Kaplan turbine that powers the plant has not functioned properly.

For its part, Dorena Hydro says that Mowat was lax in workplace safety and that delays to the project cost the company an \$8 million subsidy it could have received if the plant had been built on schedule.

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The Dorena hydroelectric plant, as viewed from Dorena Dam. The plant has been operational since June of last year, though a court case between the company that built the plant and the company that operates it continues.

photo by Jon Stinnett

1905 3bd ha ex Gat	 5 E. Whiteaker b edroom, 1 bath Cottage with ardwoods and ctra lot. Behind teway Shopping Center. 124,900 	1019 Bear Creek Rd Beautiful large home with lots of wood on 6 level acres and Bear Creek at the back with spawning Salmon! Dead end street. \$394,000	Principal Brokers Teresa Abbott 221-1735 Frank Brazell 953-2407 Lane Hillendahl 942-6838 Brokers 800 Ron Schneider 521-8713 Laurie Phillip 430-0756 Valerie Nash 521-1618
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