

City's parks plan grounded

Indy airpark residents don't like idea for a park in area

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Six locations were proposed for future parks in the Independence Airpark community, and resident Gary Brown is unhappy with the idea.

"Aircraft are a draw to young people — I know it was to me," he wrote in a letter to the city expressing his discontent with a park in his community. "However, this residential airpark is co-located on a state airport, with private and commercial operations that could and most likely would come into conflict with younger, non-aircraft savvy persons being in close proximity due to natural curiosity or ... as opportunities for vandalism or theft."

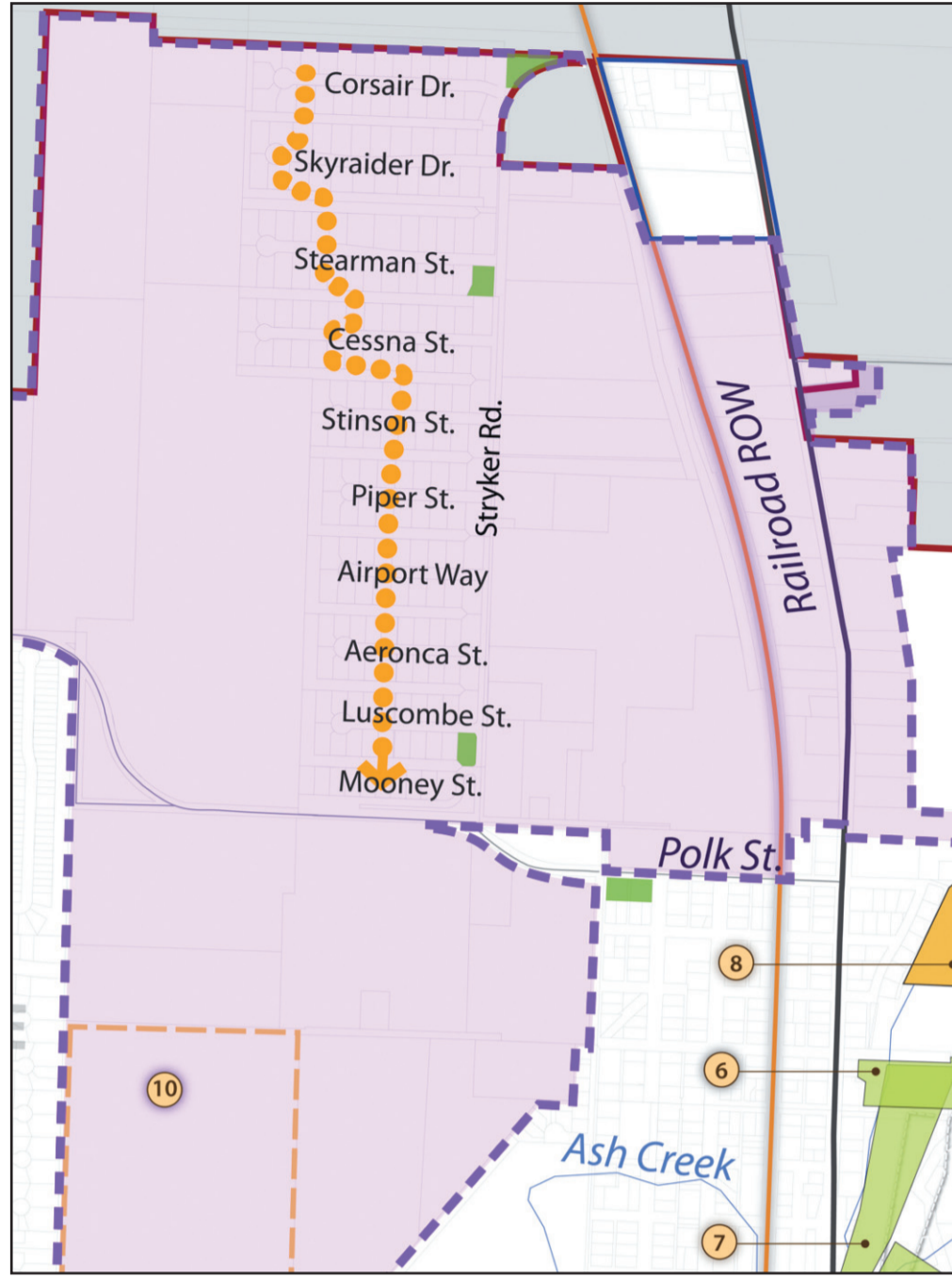
Brown wasn't the only one to send the city letters against the proposal, said Shawn Irvine, Independence economic development director.

"We've gotten a few responses, none in support," Irvine said. "What we've heard them say is what we expected them to say, frankly, (they) don't really like outside people coming into the airpark who aren't familiar with aircraft."

But, Irvine argues, the question had to be asked.

"We shouldn't assume they don't want to be involved," Irvine said. "Maybe (residents of the airpark) want a walking trail. A couple of them have mentioned they'd like a pickle ball court in the community somewhere."

The community at the airpark is underserved as far as access to city parks are concerned, Irvine noted. Access is defined by level of service standards, a way to quantify how many parks a community needs and where it needs them.



GREENWORKS PC/for the Itemizer-Observer

The four green lots shown in the Independence Airpark (pink area) are proposed parks for the city's master plan. Residents of the area were not happy with the options.

"You're supposed to be within a five- or 10-minute walk from a neighborhood park," Irvine said as an example.

Six plots were proposed for a possible park, either on buildable land within the airpark community or in right-of-way, Irvine said. If a buildable lot was chosen, the city would have to find the funds to pay for the lot.

Many people think of 5-year-old children running around on a playground

when they think of parks, Irvine said.

"They don't think exercise equipment or jogging trail or a spotting station for airplanes, something that would interest adults," he noted.

Brown said he thinks a park in the airpark would not be used by airpark residents, but rather younger people.

"My neighbors and I enjoy a high degree of freedom from victimization due to the type of community in which we live," Brown said.

The final open house on the Independence parks master plan is April 9, Irvine said. At that time, residents may have a say on the final draft before it goes to the planning commission and city council.

"If they don't want any recreation amenities at the airpark, that's totally fine, but we asked," Irvine said, noting that it may have been better communication to list a "none of the above" option on the parks survey.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Child abuse awareness walk slated

DALLAS — An awareness walk sponsored by Polk County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Department of Human Services and the Polk County Multidisciplinary Team will take place Monday from noon to 1 p.m. starting at the Polk County Courthouse steps.

The event is designed to raise community awareness about the issue of child abuse, and is part of Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month, which takes place in April.

Everyone is welcome to attend, and participants are asked to wear blue to show support of children.

For more information: Katey Axtell, 503-623-9286, ext. 1301; email to axtell.katey@co.polk.or.us.

On April 11, CASA will hold its first charity auction and dinner at Eola Hills Wine Cellars, 501 S. Pacific Highway (99W), Rickreall. The \$50 admission includes dinner, dessert and a glass of wine, beer or hard cider. A silent auction will help raise money for the volunteer CASA program, which helps abused and neglected children.

Tickets can be purchased by calling Polk County CASA, 503-623-9268, ext. 1301, or by emailing axtell.katey@co.polk.or.us or mikebarnett1@msn.com

Discussion planned on county levy

WEST SALEM — The first in a series of community gatherings to discuss the Polk County public safety levy will be held Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Salem Electric Building, 633 Seventh St. NW, West Salem.

County officials will be on hand to present information about the current budget situation and recent cutbacks to the sheriff, district attorney, jail, parole and probation, and juvenile departments.

A gathering has also been scheduled for April 9 at 7 p.m. at the Grand Ronde Community Hall. Additional meeting dates and locations will be announced at a later time.

For more information: Lynnette Henshaw, 503-507-1091.

Transportation fee proposed for city

MONMOUTH — The Monmouth street funding task force, named in January, will present a recommendation to the Monmouth City Council Tuesday night to create a transportation utility fee.

"If the council accepts that idea, then we'd hire a consultant to create the utility and the fee itself," City Manager Scott McClure said. "It will be part of our street fund, but in this case we have to establish the expenses and costs that we're trying to cover, then allocate those costs."

If the utility is approved, buildings will be charged a fee based on the number of "trips taken." McClure said a law office would have fewer trips to and from the building, so would have a lower transportation utility fee, while a drive-thru restaurant would have a higher trip number resulting in a higher fee.

The council will discuss the topic during its work session, which typically starts at about 7:30 p.m. after the regular city council meeting, which starts at 7, at Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St.

Search continues for new fire chief

INDEPENDENCE — Polk County Fire District No. 1's Board of Directors will begin interviewing finalists for a new fire chief at the end of April.

Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI), the consulting company the board hired to find the new chief, began background checks on the applicants on March 20, and conducted phone interviews March 25. Final interviews are scheduled for April 23-25.

ESCI received 10 applications for the job, one from an internal candidate, said Deputy Chief Neal Olson.

Fire Board Chairman Joost Vanderhave expects the candidates will be narrowed down to three to five before the board gets more involved in the interview process.

2015 PEP Talks Series
Promote Enterprising Performance

Developing a Budget & Understanding Cash Flow
Tuesday, April 14, 12 PM to 1:30 PM
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- Cash flow management techniques and dimensions
- Budgeting basics • Principles of commercial lending

Josh Whisenhunt: Over 12 yrs. of banking experience, nine years with Oregon State Credit Union, Josh is currently the Business Services Assistant Manager at OSCU and holds a BS degree from OSU.

Cost per workshop: \$15 for MI Chamber members \$20 for non-members. Fee includes lunch.
Register by noon April 13, 2015.

The 2015 PEP Talks Series features six workshops led by local leaders in their respective fields of expertise and are designed to strengthen businesses and organizations in our community.

For more information and to register, contact the Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center:
www.micc-or.org or 503-838-4268

Retirement May Be Far Off, But the April 15th Deadline for IRA Contributions Isn't.

You have only so many years to prepare for retirement. That's why contributing to your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) is so important. Fortunately, you still have time to maximize your 2014 IRA contribution before the April 15th deadline.

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