

Miles to go on riverfront property, now Independence Landing

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The old Valley Concrete site along the Willamette River has been cleaned up and readied for development.

Now the 20-acre parcel has been renamed Independence Landing, City Manager David Clyne said.

“The development team was wanting to name it that, and, without having the conversation with the city

council, the city council wanted to name it that,” Clyne said. “Neither one had talked to each other, so it’s really interesting they came up with the same thing.”

The site, purchased by the city for \$800,000 in October 2014, will be developed by Tokola Properties Inc. Plans include residential, retail and lodging.

The city has spent about half a million dollars on the property to increase its appeal to developers, and will

end up spending more before it’s done, Clyne said.

“It’s our job to build the infrastructure,” he said, referring to streets, sewer and water, for example. “We’re going to have to invest in that. We’ve done a lot of economic work and market analysis.”

The city has approached the public-private partnership with Tokola with as much of a business attitude as possible, Clyne said.

It’s not the first time the

city of Independence has worked with private developers, and city leaders have learned a lot from past experiences, Clyne said.

A recent successful example of public-private partnership is Riverplace Apartments on Deann Drive, he said.

“We invested about a million bucks on that site,” Clyne said. “Since that was done, we’ve either gotten \$3 million in cash, or improvements for the property.”

Those improvements in-

clude completion of the Independence Sports Fields and a paved road going to the Independence Boat Landing, he said.

Another successful business venture was the location of Independence Cinema, Clyne said.

The most obvious example of a public-private partnership gone wrong is Independence Station, Clyne said.

“We are doing a lot more up front,” he said. “We’re learning lessons, where we

gave up control and leverage and security, and the outcome. So this time around, the stakes are higher. It’s a far more sophisticated project (at Independence Landing). It’s huge by anybody’s standards.”

To avoid a disaster, Clyne said one thing the city has done is write up more detailed agreements.

“We’re maintaining more control over early stages than we did with Independence Station,” he said.

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