

Falls City looks to make code more business friendly

By **Jolene Guzman**
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — The process of incorporating the expansion of Michael Harding Park into city property in Falls City revealed outdated and inefficient provisions in the municipal code, city officials found.

Mayor Terry Ungricht said he would like to use the necessary planning process to change the zoning on the park property, which is now in the city's name, to make the code more development

and business friendly.

He said the city was originally planning to spend about \$1,500 to make the zoning change on the property, the city recently took possession from the Falls City Alliance.

"While we were doing that, we've come across a lot of things that make development here kind of tough," Ungricht said. "We are reviewing the code. That hasn't been done. A review should be done every year after the legislature meets to make sure that your land codes stay com-

plaint with state law."

He said the council should hold a work session to review suggested changes to see which ones it would like to modify.

"Right now, under our code, if you raise chickens and you sell the eggs, you are breaking our law. Now I don't think that is the intent any of us want," Ungricht said. "The way our residential (code) reads, you can't grow a vegetable and take it to a Saturday market."

He added lot partitions are unnecessarily cumber-

some and expensive, too.

The larger review will cost \$4,000, including the \$1,500 slated for the zoning change.

"While we are having those public meetings, we are going to try to get as many changes in as possible," he said. "We are not bringing in anything that is going to really change the way we do business. We're hopefully making it easier for a developer to be able to develop a piece of property."

In other business, the city:

- Will be meeting with officials from Oregon Infra-

structure Finance Authority about its application for grant funding to upgrade its sewer system. The application didn't receive funding last year, but was deemed a strong application. Ungricht said its main weakness is that the system is considered "in compliance" by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

"I'm going to meet with DEQ because we don't feel we are compliant now. We feel any time you've got raw sewage on a football field, you're not compliant," Un-

gricht said, referring to past sewage leaks of the drain field underneath the high school football field. "They're saying you are compliant now because you don't have that sewage. But we've had it three or four times in the past, and it could happen tomorrow."

- Will soon refinance the loan on the Michael Harding Park expansion. Ungricht said the balance to be paid on the property is \$55,622, and the new loan should be financed at 1 percent for a yearly payment of \$2,500.

Flu: Flu season unusually bad

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He added most long-term care facilities don't mandate vaccination for employees and, thus, have the lowest rates among health care workers.

This year's flu season is proving to be unusually bad, but that doesn't mean the vaccine is ineffective.

"The vaccine appears to be a good match," Hillebrand said. "Nearly all of the confirmed cases I've seen have tested positive for the flu strain AH3, which was included in this year's vaccine. The more people that are vaccinated against the flu, the less likely it is to spread through a community."

Flu clinic

POLK COUNTY — Salem Health will offer free flu shots at clinics throughout its facilities.

"We want to reach out to people living in Marion and Polk counties to help protect them from the flu virus," Leilani Slama, vice president of community engagement at Salem Health, said in a press release. "This has been an especially bad year for the flu, and it's not too late to get a shot. Our main goal is to make it convenient as possible for people to get these shots."

A total of 800 influenza vaccines will be available for free on a first come, first served basis for those aged 3 and older. Appointments are not required. Those with an allergy to eggs are asked to see their primary care doctor for the influenza vaccine.

Wednesday, Jan. 25

Salem Health Medical Clinics
Dallas, 555 SE Washington St., 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Monmouth, 512 Main St. E. Suite 300, 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Recycle for a better future

Forum: Community shares ideas

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Jimmy Jones, with Mid-Valley Community Action Network, said he's working to get better data on the homeless situation in Marion and Polk counties. He said Lane County received significantly larger amounts of grant funding to address homelessness than Marion and Polk did last year. Based on his experience working with the local homeless community, it isn't because there is

less of a problem here.

"My biggest charge, essentially, going forward, is to get an accurate count of the homeless population," he said, noting that Polk County is just as much on his radar as Marion. "I take that 'Polk County' part of that very seriously. We come out here to do assessments. I've been to Falls City; I've been to every corner of this county."

The second half of the meeting was dedicated to

hearing ideas from community members about what could be done better immediately and what to work toward in the future.

Immediate suggestions included volunteering to help organizations assisting the homeless population and donating clothing, household items and blankets.

Longer-term needs include more one-bedroom units — or more affordable housing in general; affordable child care; a family shelter; more warming and cooling centers during ex-

treme weather events; more employers and landlords willing to give people with imperfect employment and rental history "second chances"; and more landlord and tenant training on available programs and rights.

DeMoe said he was impressed with the turnout and ideas presented at the forum, and pledged to take the information gathered Thursday and put it into a plan.

"We are not just going to let this meeting happen and then do nothing," he said.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Melissa Baurer, center, with the Salvation Army, speaks at the homeless forum in Dallas on Thursday.

You can help

Volunteer opportunities:

- Dallas Community Resource Center, 185 SW Academy St. Suite 220, 503-623-9664; or Central Community Resource Center, 1601 Monmouth St. Independence, 503-606-2310.

- The Salvation Army: Email volunteer@salvation-armysalem.org or call 503-798-4783.

Donation opportunities:

- Fill Our Home, Polk County Family and Community Outreach Warehouse in Dallas, taking donations of new or gently used household items and clothing. Donations are accepted the first Saturday of the month. For more information: 503-623-9664.

- Host a clothing or hygiene supplies drive.
- The Salvation Army Email volunteer@salvation-armysalem.org or call 503-798-4783.

- Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network, 503-370-975 or info@salemihn.org

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