

ORGANIC INVESTMENTS/for the Itemizer-Observer

The site plan for Organic Investments includes two phases. The first phase is in gray.

Marijuana facility moves forward

Indy processing, grow business approved amid controversy

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Organic Investments, a marijuana processing and growing facility, got the green light from the Independence City Council after its business plan was appealed twice.

The business will be located on Stryker Road within the city limits of Independence.

The decision came at a special meeting on April 5, after the city council held a public hearing on March 31 regarding two appeals against the planning commission's approval of the business.

The appeals were filed by a resident of the Independence Airpark and by the Independence Northpark Homeowners Association, also located in the airpark.

Concerns ranged from noise

to odor to increased crime and decreased property values.

The applicant, Organic Investments, said he would address the noise concerns by taking a baseline measurement of ambient noise, followed by measurements twice a year for each of the two phases of development.

If noise levels exceed the baseline ambient noise by 10 decibels, the applicant will correct it, said Joey Shearer, city planner.

"At the last hearing, we heard some concerns from the public and the council about the noise impacts of the processing and the grow," Shearer said. "The staff analysis of the rules led staff to believe that the agricultural component was exempt. The condition (presented by Organic Investments) takes elements holding them both not to exceed the 10 decibels above ambi-

ent noise."

Councilor and airpark resident Ken Day said he didn't feel like the city's leadership "did any favors" in the application process. He said by the April 5 meeting — and by the March 31 public hearing — the application was "basically a done deal, and we have to do it."

"We should have done it early in 2016 or late 2015," Day said. "We've taken away our ability to say no. I don't like being put in that position, but I don't think there's anything I can do about it. I think they've made a lot of remedies to the main issues, which is odor and noise."


Councilor Tom Takacs said he appreciated the applicant putting additional conditions on noise, adding that a large part of the public concerns was a distrust that the city would enforce its codes.

"I'm not sure that's some-


thing we can address during this appeal process, perhaps we can actually address that in the budget committee meetings, make sure our code enforcement takes all the resources they need to manage this sort of business," he said.

Councilor Marilyn Morton pointed out that Independence is not alone in these kinds of discussions.

"It would have been nice to be more ready than we were," she said. "Part of it is this is new to the whole state of Oregon. We're concerned about regulation, that all the inspections are done. I would like to ... remind that there are two other agencies overseeing this business, the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, so we have some friends on our side with this."



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NEWS IN BRIEF

99W north of Rickreall closed briefly

RICKREALL — The Oregon Department of Transportation temporarily closed a section of Highway 99W north of Rickreall Saturday to repair a failing culvert.

The emergency closure about five miles north of Rickreall began Saturday and repair work began Monday, according to an ODOT press release. The section should be closed for less than two weeks.

Travelers will be detoured to Perrydale and Bethel roads during the closure. Flaggers, sign and message boards will guide motorists through the detour. Drivers should plan for extra travel time.

The corrugated metal culvert at Ash Swale Creek was scheduled for replacement with a bridge in 2020, but the condition of the culvert deteriorated rapidly. Maintenance in recent days didn't slow the failure, according to ODOT.

The bridge project, already paid through the State Transportation Improvement Project, still is scheduled for 2020.

Dallas Vitality to meet Tuesday

DALLAS — The Dallas Vitality Connection, an economic development group in Dallas, is meeting Tuesday at the Dallas Civic Center, 945 SE Jefferson St., Dallas.

Joan Wessell, the executive director of the Downtown Corvallis Association, will be the guest speaker. Dallas Vitality Connection's "action teams," addressing small businesses, community marketing, and property development, will meet.

Residents are welcome to attend the gathering, which begins at 6 p.m.

For more information: Scott Noon, scott@stsupportllc.com or 503-623-3630.

Income taxes are due Tuesday

SALEM — The Department of Revenue is reminding Oregonians that the deadline to file their 2016 personal income tax return — Tuesday — is quickly approaching.

The department expects 2.2 million returns this year, said Megan Denison, the policy and systems manager for the Personal Tax and Compliance Division, in a press release.

Oregon honors filing extensions issued by the IRS, but an extension to file is not an extension to pay. Interest on your tax due starts accumulating on April 19, the day after the return is originally due. If you can't pay your taxes, please contact the department. Based on your financial situation, they may be able to set you up on a monthly payment plan.

If you owe taxes and need to make a payment, the department's field offices can no longer accept cash, but they do still accept payments by check, money order, or credit or debit card. If you need to make your payment in cash, you'll need to go to the department's main office in Salem. You can make electronic payments directly from your checking or savings account or by credit or debit card through Revenue Online, the department's self-service site. You'll need a valid email address to make a credit or debit card payment online or in their offices. For information or to set up a Revenue Online account, visit www.oregon.gov/dor.

Donate now to master gardeners

POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Master Gardener Plant Sale Country Store is in need of tax-deductible items they can repair, refurbish or re-purpose for their fundraiser in May. They need those items now, well before the sale date to make the repairs.

Master Gardeners will pick up items for the Country Store. Call Rachel Montesano at 917-219-5629 and pickup will be arranged at your convenience.

For more information: 503-623-8395, or extension.oregon-state.edu/polk/mg.

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