

Warrenton will take hard look at commercial, industrial land

The Columbia Press

City commissioners have dissolved one advisory panel – Warrenton Business Association – while establishing another – the Economic Development Strategy Advisory Committee.

Thirteen business and community leaders were appointed to the new committee, designed to guide and provide feedback on available commercial and industrial property in the city.

In the fall, the city learned

it had been approved for a \$70,000 Economic Opportunities Analysis grant from the state to plan and designate an adequate amount of land for future commercial and industrial development. Another \$10,000 in matching funds were kicked in by the city's general fund and urban renewal district.

"We want to know where in our community and what



Cronin

kind of economic development opportunities do we have based on the land we have," Mayor Henry Balensifer said.

During the past two years, the city conducted an available housing inventory and also participated in a countywide housing needs assessment.

While this survey is similar, it's limited to business and industrial land.

"We have a lot of undeveloped industrial land," Balensifer said. This type of land provides "high-paying and long-term jobs."

Community Development Director Kevin Cronin is negotiating a contract and scope of work with Seattle-based Community Attributes Inc. to conduct the survey. And a group of area business leaders was appointed April 28 to put the survey into action, which could include devising strategies for marketing the available land.

"Success for this project, in my mind, depends on our ability to have a 'strategic' perspective in terms of the types of business sectors that we should ... support" with city policy, Cronin said. "It needs to be feasible, reasonable, and based on good data and economic trends."

Larger businesses that locate in Warrenton should be a "good fit," he added. They should respect local culture, offer living-wage jobs of \$17 per hour or more, offer career advancement, and, ideally, produce a product that's exported outside the county.

Those appointed to the committee are:

- David Reid, executive director of Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Jeannie Smith, Main Street

Market owner and member of Spruce Up Warrenton.

- Mike Moore, a supervisor at Hampton Lumber.

- John Nygaard, Nygaard Logging/Warrenton Fiber.

- Kevin Leahy, CEDR/Small Business Development Center.

- Andrew Bornstein, co-owner of Bornstein Seafoods.

- Matthew Vineyard, representative of Pacific Fabrication.

- Tom Rogozinski, superin-

tendent of Warrenton-Hammond School District.

- Mark Popkin, commercial real estate broker.

- Gary Kobes, airport manager for Port of Astoria.

- Melanie Olson, regional development officer for Business Oregon.

- Lisa Phipps, North Coast representative for Department of Land Conservation and Development.

- Lylla Gaebel, Warrenton Planning commissioner.

City leaders disband WBA

Warrenton city commissioners took final action April 28 to disband Warrenton Business Association, a group of appointed business representatives who provided input on how money collected through business license fees should be spent.

Those doing business in the city pay annual fees of \$60, plus \$5 per employee.

The task of deciding how business fees can be spent now will be decided solely by the commission, which also chose to change what's eligible for business licence fee money.

The purpose of the fee initially was to provide revenue for "enhancing the business community." That

has been changed to enhancing the city's "economy and livability."

Other new uses for the fees:

- Purchases of public safety equipment.

- Blight and nuisance abatement, including improvement projects that will increase property values or visibility for businesses.

- Grants to the local Main Street program.

- Grants to nonprofit groups whose efforts improve the economic value or viability of businesses or business districts.

- Events that celebrate national, state or local holidays or festivals, such as public movies or games.

Post seeks patriots flying flag

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Fort Stevens Post 10580, is on the lookout for those flying the flag.

VFW members will stop by the homes of those spotted flying the American flag in Warrenton or Hammond and return with a Patriotic Citizen Award

to thank them for their patriotism to the community and country.

To date, the post has given 85 awards to Warrenton citizens.

To nominate yourself or someone else, contact VFW members Mel or Betsy Jasmin at 503-861-2030.

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