

# City considers land purchase for more parking

*Would be used for overflow parking during events*

By David Sykes

The city of Heppner is considering purchasing a lot at the corner of May and Chase to turn it into a parking lot. City Manager Kraig Cutsforth says the lot would be a good place for a parking lot to handle overflow parking downtown especially during events such as St Patrick's Day and Fair and Rodeo.

The property is owned by Jason Patterson who also owns Heppner Auto Parts Store across the street, and Cutsforth says he has expressed an interest in selling. Cutsforth said no deal has been struck but feels the .35-acre lot is probably worth somewhere in the neighborhood of \$18,000 to \$20,000. Cutsforth said money for the purchase would come from funds set aside by the city for street repairs and improvements.

Councilmember Adam Doherty questioned the wisdom of the city buying property when there is need around town for street repairs. "We start purchasing lots and graveling them over for parking. I didn't know that is what we were going to use the street fund for," he said. The city is getting ready to do some major street repairs in town, and although there is state money set aside already to cover this, the city will have to have to pay for any water and sewer repairs needed once the old streets are dug up and public works finds out what's under them. Doherty said maybe the city should wait and see what infrastructure costs are going to be uncovered before buying more property. "We have a lot going on with streets and under streets," he reminded the council.

Councilmember Corey Sweeney wanted to know how many properties the city currently owns and Cutsforth said it was 36 parcels around town. Council member John Bowles said he liked the idea of buying the lot, cleaning it up and using it for parking. The council ended up voting 5 to 1 in favor of having Cutsforth investigate the purchase further and make sure the city has the money. He will report back to the council.

In other property issues, the council heard a report from Sally and Ralph Walker about establishing a dog park in Heppner. The city of Heppner had earlier indicated that a strip of vacant land between the old swimming pool park and Shobe Creek at Cannon Street and South Main

Street might be a possibility for the park if it is acceptable to nearby residents.

At Monday night's meeting the Walkers told the council after publicizing the proposed park in the paper they had not heard any negative comments from the public so were asking the city to donate the property for the park. According to the Walkers, creating an off-leash dog park has become a necessity due to many other fenced areas being posted with "no dogs allowed" recently. "This only leaves open public parks, sidewalks and people's yards for dog's use," Sally Walker said earlier.

Cutsforth said a better option than a donation would be a dedication of the property, where the city would still own the property. Walker said there would be no maintenance responsibility by the city and all

Cutsforth to begin getting the paperwork together for the dedication.

In other business the council heard a report from councilmember John Bowles who spoke in part about the amount of information available concerning COVID-19. He said the Sheriff's Office has been adjusting the amount of information released in its reports since there is so much available. Bowles said there is a tremendous amount of information available about COVID-19 and it changes so rapidly that he recommended people who want more than the Sheriff's report gives, to check in with the Oregon Health Authority web site. "They have tons of information," he said. Bowles, who is also the Undersheriff in addition to a councilmember, said his office is trying to find the right balance be-



The city council is considering purchasing this lot at the corner of May and Chase Streets across the creek from the pizza shop. -Photo by David Sykes

the park needs is some minimal water available for the dogs to drink and possibly some 'poop bags' to use. She said some individuals have already approached them about donating money to get the park set up, adding that they were looking at purchasing some benches and maybe planting some trees for shade for the dogs and owners. She said there would be no landscaping to take care of, so the park is going to be low maintenance.

Walker asked the council to give them about a year to start getting things underway, and the council gave its consensus telling

tween releasing too much information for people to process, and too little.

Bowles was also asked why when the reports are released from Sheriff's Office, they continue to count the number of cases from several months ago even when those people no longer show symptoms? He said the state has been changing its reporting rules, originally saying anyone that is 14 days past testing positive could be removed from the active list, and then the state came back and first moved that time period to 30 days and it is now up to 90 days a person stays on a county's active

# Wheat harvest begins

Kevin Gray, General Manager of Morrow County Grain Growers, reported some farms began harvesting their wheat in June, but most started after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Early red wheat began early and white wheat started this week.

Gray told the Gazette that the crop yields are recording a little above aver-

age at this time, in the upper 40 bushels per acre. Dry land wheat started first but they are now seeing some irrigated wheat coming in as well.

"April was tough with no rain and high mid 80s temps in May were a problem. Then it rained and the wheat popped back up and

was perfectly level across the top," Gray reported. "The hot weather did take some of the top end yield, though," he continued.

In other news, MCGG just completed their new Hogue-Warner bunker at the large terminal west of Irrigon. The bunker will hold 1.3 million bushels.



MCGG's new bunker west of Irrigon will hold 1.3 mil bushels. -Photos by Chance Frederickson of Frederickson Farming, LLC.



ed as an active case in the county where they live not where they work. In other virus news Cutsforth said the city had received a large shipment of masks and that anyone who needed one could get one from city hall. Masks are required at all indoor offices and stores and all members of the council, city staff and members of the public at Monday's council meeting had on masks.

In other business the council received a report from Public Works Director Chad Doherty who gave the run down on what his department had been doing the past month: Raised the water meter boxes at the new duplexes on Cowins Street, replaced several water meters around town, fixed an afterhours water leak on Green St and on Hwy 207, assisted the town of Lexington in fixing a water main break where Heppner sent a truck and a crew to help, ran a new sewer line and finished the underground plumbing for the new information / restroom building on Main

-See LAND PURCHASE PAGE THREE

list. A person is considered still an active case in the county up to 90 days after they have been tested positive even though they are no longer showing symptoms.

Bowles was also asked

where a person would be reported as active if they tested positive, where they work or where they live? He said even if a person may have caught COVID-19 at work they would be report-

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