

Continued Morrow County Board of Commissioner

-Continued from PAGE THREE site) is the "only" industrial land here and there is no way they can put the fairgrounds at the Mill site. He then asked the room to raise their hand if they were in favor of the courthouse being at the fairgrounds, then again if they wanted it at the Mill site. They room was in favor of the Mill site. He then tells the commissioners to not push this any longer saying "time is money". He then says the county has lots of money and its an issue of the best site, and that this could turn the south end around.



The city of Boardman site.

Heppner resident and Mayor Corey Sweeney asked if the county is willing to go 3 million over budget for the Mill site.

Sykes replies saying "I want you people to know It's a county wide project, people in Irrigon, Boardman, Lexington, Ione, this is their money too they need to know what it's going to cost to do each site. Unknowns worry me I don't think you want us coming back going it's gonna be another 2-3 million. That's why I asked them to put unknowns in there, so you know just like us that we got a base price of 3.6 plus unknowns."

Sweeney asks addressing the room, if it is worth to the rodeo committee and the fair board to go over the 4.5 mill to get it to stay in Heppner, saying "is it worth it to you?"

An unnamed resident says "I think it's a different question to ask what the boards opinion is versus the peoples opinion is" another resident says "I don't think money is our biggest concern."

Sykes then says, "In this room money isn't a thing." Sweeney then says "it be nice if somebody come out and said it, yeah well either spend the money to get it done here or say we can't really see it getting put here because of the extra cost-" Sykes then suggest a city, county, and Port alliance to pay for the bill. Sweeney replies saying he thinks that's a great idea.

Resident Jodi Ferguson says, "we don't care who pays for it-"she is cut off by Sykes saying "A lot of people care who pays for it-" then he is cut off by Ferguson saying "we're the tax payers."

Drago says "at this point it is solely a county issue there is no indication from the city that they have money and are willing to pay, no indication from the port, and we've met with them numerous times, that they are willing to pay for any infrastructure. So, as we've chased this down we've looked at it solely as a county issue to decide."

Resident Rick Drake then asks what the cost is for just the 24,000 square foot building saying, "take the infrastructure out, if you've got the perfect site what's the build cost of that?" Kelly Stewart replies saying, "we're working with a budget given to us so the 24 million." Drake replies saying, "so you're saying without any infrastructure this building is costing \$24 Million, regardless of where it goes?"

Jensen replies by saying there's a certain consideration built into that budget, but running sewer and water a mile and a half is not part of that, hence it being an unknown.

Drake then asks what the state would think if they cut the square footage to 20,000? Drago replies saying its not about the footage its about meeting the state requirements.

Resident Mollie Rhea then asks about the budget saying " she just said we're working within the budget given, so are we attempting to cap out at that 24 mil-

lion? Or are we budgeting frugally and building what we need. Are we trying to spend that money or are we trying to spend that money appropriately?"

Jensen replies saying "No, I've had to make cuts, so we're already knowing, we are not shooting to say hey we've got 24 let's throw a big party. There are certain standards to be built when talking about a circuit court, there are certain departments that are conceivably best advantageously positioned right by, District attorney, Juvenile those kinds of things that have to be in there. There is some that you get some return on like having the justice court over there, a single point for security but then you have two separate court rooms." He goes on to say they could have "bare bones it" and have just a court room and get that down to 20 mill or even lower. But it would not be as effective as spending a bit more money and putting these other entities nearby. He says they were going to move the whole juvenile department over there, but at 1200 square feet at 600 dollars a square foot that's a significant amount of money, so instead of that they'll have a nice room to conduct business in. "We're definitely not trying to make a Taj Mahal there."

An unnamed resident then takes the floor to address attendee John Murray saying "If you really want it at the Mill site John, I want a commitment from the Port to partner with this because if it really could support the infrastructure of putting something there then let's do that. Because I'm sorry but the Port has been giving the Mill site lip service for 30 years. I ask you to ask them to partner." She then expresses her opinion on the fairgrounds saying "I support it at the fairgrounds, I've worked in the court system. I see we do not change our way of life when court is held, nobody makes sure their children don't walk past the courthouse when theirs court that day, I bet you guys don't even know what day courts held. When we have a prisoner come into the court they are chained down to a wooden bench, how secure is that. Our courthouse is also built in a residential area, we have people that live right next door to our courthouse, they don't get robbed and broken into on a regular basis. I don't have fear of the courthouse being right next to the football field, next to the elementary school, next to residential. I do have concern with the fact that we've already made cuts -."

An unnamed resident then asked the commission how many people, at the meeting that was held earlier that day for Irrigon, wanted the courthouse at the fairgrounds?

The commissioner replied saying it was mixed feedback, some for Boardman, some for the Mill site and some just concerned about cost.

Another unnamed resident mentioned that at the Mill site there is "unlimited" space to expand.

Resident Kirsten Espinola asked the commis-

sion what will happen with the school since they do pickup from the back of the school? Commissioners say that's a question for the school, and Jensen says the school has a bad design and they use county land for the pickup "It's something that we'd have to work towards to make sure there is a safe space."

Then Kirsten says she believes that the conversation about the fairgrounds and rodeo was more detailed during the Irrigon meeting than in their current discussion. When Dave asks her for specifics on what was discussed in depth, Kirsten was not able to name specific solutions but says that other people agreed that the courthouse should be located at the Mill site.

Both Jensen and Sykes say there could be meetings with the city, the port, and the POM to see what it will look like to use the Mill site. Resident Stuart Dick and Kirsten Espinola both say that that would be a great idea with Stuart saying it's the best idea that's come out of this meeting.

John Doherty, the City manager, acknowledges that sending water is not the main issue, but rather receiving the waste. He says the city has reached out to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for clarification but has not yet received a response. There is, however, preliminary discussion between the city and the county regarding a potential boundary extension called a "cherry stem urban grown boundary extension." This extension would run along Highway 74 to the port property.

Doherty says before involving the port in the conversation, more information is needed on the specifics of this boundary extension and its implications. There are exceptions under goal 9 that need to be addressed, as well as various goals set by the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).

Doherty highlights that finding a solution is not as simple as everyone in the room coming to an agreement in one meeting. It requires addressing the needs and considerations of the city services, county business, and the port property separately.

Resident Rick Drake then asks how much capacity the Heppner wastewater system has? John Doherty replies saying that in peak season, like July, its about 60 percent capacity and in the winter 40 percent.

Then resident Mollie Rhea chimes in, saying, "I just want to get on the record, cause I've heard several different versions of it tonight, that it was out of left field we just heard about the Kinzua site two months ago. The Kinzua site was brought up and requested in September at your first meeting. It has not been two months; it's been quite a while now."

Sykes replies, saying, "There was an ORS that I read multiple times, sent to me by our county council that specifically says, did you read it? It specifically says it shall be built within

the City of Heppner."

Mollie Rhea says she understands that, but the community had requested it to be looked at further. Sykes replies, saying, "You cannot look at something that isn't legal."

Kirsten remarks, "I like how you a cut Mollie off, just like you did to me at One a clock, when I brought up-"

Sykes interjects, reminding Kirsten to refrain from discussing personal matters. Kirsten retorts, insisting that this is not a personal issue, as she had asked him the same question. She contends that they should have taken the initiative to inquire about the ideal location for the courthouse and conducted thorough research.

Sykes counters by stating that they did conduct research, namely by consulting with the county council. He emphasizes that their efforts resulted in a clear answer - they are not allowed to construct the courthouse beyond the city limits. That concluded the public comment section.

The commission requests that Matt Jensen arrange a meeting the Port of Morrow, the City of Heppner, and the Morrow County Council to discuss a site for the new build.

Drago inquires with John Murray about whether DLR group handles the Geotech testing at the Mill site. Drago also raises the question of what actions the Port would take if an issue arose from the testing, considering their ownership of the Mill site.

Doug from Alliance adds that he is uncertain about the legal obligations for addressing any issues that may arise from the testing.

A resident named Bob passionately expresses his belief that the Mill site is the ideal choice. He acknowledges the complexity of the situation but remains optimistic about finding solutions.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

HRL to host BINGO May 26th

The Holly Rebekah Lodge will be hosting their monthly BINGO on Sunday May 26th at the Odd Fellows Lodge Hall on 135 Main St, Lexington. Due to it being Memorial Weekend the Rebekahs

everyone to bring food to share. This will start at 3pm. BINGO will start at 3:30pm. The packet of 10 BINGO cards cost \$5. Come join an afternoon of food, fin, and prizes.



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Broker
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\$175,000

New Listing
Reduced price

This charming bungalow is move-in-ready gem! New flooring and light fixtures. It also offers a one-car garage with a utility room attached. The fenced backyard provides a serene view of Willow Creek, with the soothing sounds of the creek flowing at night. MLS#:24544788 - 310 W Union Ave Heppner



375 W Union Ave, Heppner

Reduced price

\$265,000

This single family home, spanning 1641 square feet, boasts a spacious dining room and living room along with a family room 3 bedrooms, 1.5 bathrooms and lots of storage. Situated in a peaceful neighborhood, it is conveniently located close to the swimming pool, high school, baseball park, and downtown area. The property sits on a large lot with street access, with lots of parking and also features a shop. Large covered deck, patio and a carport. The total land area is 0.25 Acres. MLS#: 23224220



\$395,000

Sold

80439 Black Mountain Ln Heppner
MLS#:23425595



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Sold

For sale: Prime commercial lot on Main Street, Heppner, Oregon. Property presents a golden opportunity to establish your presence in a vibrant community. Embrace the potential and seize this chance to make your mark in Heppner, Oregon. Act now and turn your visions into reality. Main St MLS#: 23022056



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