

CENTER:

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location.

Mary Corp, one of the members who voted for the Ridgeway site, urged the council to consider the downtown location and presented a list of signatures from people who supported that site.

"One of the things that every city recognizes is the ability of your downtown to create a sense of place, and I see that Hermiston, as we've grown larger, have recognized that we need to develop kind of a sense of community and a sense of place," she said. "... I believe that, with the existing parking area that's behind the library and then the acre that's available from the school district, that we could create a beautiful location and a beautiful facility that would be beneficial to all of the community and to our seniors."

While several people concurred, others disagreed, citing the ease of construction on the flat Aspen site and the ability for future expansions on the larger lot.

Senior center board Chairperson Irene Miller said the board unanimously preferred the Aspen site.

"After the new center is built, the present agreement is that the seniors are in complete control for the first five years," she said. "After that, the city will join in the management ... of the center, which could include many activities for the greater population, such as children's activities and so forth. At that time, the community would most certainly have a desire to expand the existing facilities. ... Our seniors and our community deserve a well-planned center that can look far into the future."

Councilman John Kirwan said not using this opportunity to invest in the downtown area "would almost be sacrilegious," and he was joined by Councilwoman Lori Davis in voting against approving the Aspen site.

The majority of the council approved the site, however, citing the ability for expansion and the wishes of the senior center board.

After the site was selected, no one expressed opposition to naming the new facility the Harkenrider Center in honor of the long-time councilman and former mayor.

Harkenrider's first Hermiston City Council meeting was in January 1959, according to a city press release, and he has been a fixture of the community's leadership until he attended his last meeting in January of this year.

Councilwoman Jackie Myers said Harkenrider was deserving of the recognition.

"No matter if you agree with everything Frank Harkenrider has done in his very, very long service, colorful service, you cannot deny that service, and this is simply a tribute to the person who donated more time than probably anyone else in the city of Hermiston ever has," she said.

Mayor Dave Drotzmann said, although it is never easy to name a facility after one person, he believed Harkenrider earned the distinction.

"There isn't anybody that's Hermiston's greatest cheerleader besides Frank Harkenrider," he said. "... Anybody who has heard of Hermiston knows about watermelons, and they know about Frank Harkenrider."

In other City Council news:

- Council members changed the city dog licensing from an annual to a lifetime fee to encourage owners to comply with the law and to help find the owners of dogs at large.

- The council approved a contract designating Anderson Perry & Associates as the city's engineers of record.

- After a public hearing with no testimony, the council approved an ordinance annexing into the city two acres of land on the west side of Southwest 10th Street at the request of the property owner.

ALLISON:

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is acting as the front line between the public and the school, whether in person or by phone. They are the "greeters," she said, who set the tone and the atmosphere for the school.

At 7:30 a.m. Allison's day begins, usually by fielding phone calls, mostly from parents calling to say their child won't be attending school that day.

After school begins at 8 a.m., the secretaries will check in the students arriving late and find out if anything is wrong and if they have eaten breakfast. If they haven't, the secretaries make sure they

get something in their stomachs before sending them off to class, Allison said.

"We never know what they're going to be coming from," she said of the circumstances leading to the students' tardiness, and they don't want the children to start their day hungry.

The office will get busy again mid-morning, when it is time for recess.

"That's when we start getting the boo-boos," Allison said.

She said the secretaries see everything from scraped knees, which get a bandage and some sympathy, to bonked heads, which receive an ice pack, concussion check — they are trained by the school nurse

to look for signs — and sympathy. They have also been trained to administer medicines and will oversee everything from insulin injections to inhaler use.

Allison said she enjoys giving the students a little bit of extra attention because sometimes that is all they need.

"We get called triage sometimes because this will be the last stop before (the students) go home," Allison said.

When faced with sick students, Allison said the secretaries will take temperatures and ask them how they feel. She said they always have cereal in the office, and sometimes the students just need a little

snack to help them feel better. If they have a fever or have thrown up, however, students are sent home.

"We're like the moms down here," Allison said. "We're like the moms before we call Mom or Dad or Grandma. So you get to know the kids that way."

Between the boo-boos and emergencies, Allison said a lot of time is devoted to taking and passing along messages, from parents to the teachers and vice versa and from parents and teachers to the principal. She said one aspect of her job is making sure people — parents, teachers and staff — have the information they need so their days to run smoothly. Things like

letting a teacher know a student is not supposed to take the bus home that day is a minor but important part of it.

"I love it," Allison said of her job. "I had no idea how much I would. It's like an adrenaline rush. You go home thinking, 'I took care of 560 kids today.' I can go home knowing I did my job. And I love these kids, oh my gosh."

Allison said the students are always a source of great delight.

"They're so sweet, and they say the darndest things," she said. "They give you hugs. They give you flowers from other people's yards. I get homemade Valentine's day cards."



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