

Charter Amendment Would Permit Ordering Sidewalk Construction

The city charter amendment appearing on Medford's ballot Nov. 4 would permit the city to order construction of paved sidewalks and to assess abutting property owners for the cost.

At the present time, as Medford's four wards are defined by their relation to Main st. and the Southern Pacific railroad tracks.

Ward I is north of Main and east of the tracks. Ward II is south of Main and west of the tracks. Ward III is north of Main and west of the tracks. Ward IV is south of Main and east of the tracks.

Election officials in the county clerk's office have given the following figures for registered voters in the four wards: Ward I, 4,239; Ward II, 4,185; Ward III, 2,385; Ward IV, 2,241.

Assessments for paving, including both streets and sidewalks, can be levied by the city only upon receiving a petition requesting the improvement.

Such a petition must be signed by abutting property owners who together own a majority of the lineal frontage where the improvement would be made.

Would Exempt Sidewalks
The proposed charter amendment would exempt sidewalks only from this petition requirement.

The city could order construction of sidewalks and assess abutting property owners regardless of whether those owning a majority of the lineal frontage asked for, or approved it.

This amendment was placed on the city council's agenda Aug. 21 at the request of Robert Van Sickle, councilman from Ward III. The council at that meeting approved its appearance on the ballot.

The amendment would serve two primary purposes. It would provide safe routes for school children as well as older people who otherwise often walk out in the street.

And it would increase beautification and convenience by assuring that sidewalks could run the whole length of a block instead of just in front of the properties of those who want them.

Remove Protection
On the other hand, the amendment would take away from property owners the protection afforded by the petition requirement.

The discretion of the city council, rather than the wishes of individuals, would determine whether a sidewalk should be constructed.

A survey of several interested citizens puts the issue in sharper focus.

Sidewalks are needed, some say, along streets adjacent to schools, Hedrick and Roosevelt schools on the east side have been mentioned in particular.

Create Traffic Hazard
Children are forced to walk to and from school either in the street, creating a traffic hazard, or on front lawns. These lawns, it is pointed out, are muddy in bad weather.

Medford's school board reportedly approached the city council last year, requesting that the city take whatever steps it could "within its authority" to provide sidewalks for school children where the need was justified.

Some principals and Parent Teacher association officers are strong advocates of more sidewalks.

In at least one case, an interested group following the present requirement reportedly circulated a petition among property owners near

an east side school trying to get enough signatures to make a formal request for a sidewalk. They failed.

Recommend Change
A Medford Safety Council official said yesterday he certainly "would recommend" the proposed change "from a safety angle."

But so far, few if any school, PTA and safety group officials favoring more sidewalks say they have studied the terms and implications of the measure appearing on the ballot.

A second purpose of the amendment could be illustrated by the situation on one side street west of the downtown area.

All the properties along this street have sidewalks in front with two exceptions, one at each end. The owners of properties with sidewalks reportedly have tried unsuccessfully to persuade the two without them to conform.

Powerless to Petition
Since the sidewalks desired here are each but one piece of property in length, each having but one abutting property owner, the other residents, whose property does not abut, are powerless to petition.

The only recourse at present would seem to be for them to petition for a new sidewalk overlapping the "withouts" and enough of the "withs" to insure the necessary majority of lineal frontage. In this case, of course, the "withs" would have to pay their share.

Under the amendment, the city, acting in the "public interest" of the majority could order in sidewalks on the "withouts" property and assess just them for it.

In this particular situation, it so happens, the two "withouts" who have no sidewalk on the side street, do have sidewalks on the streets at each end, the streets on which their houses actually face.

Considerable Disadvantage
Such corner lots are at a considerable disadvantage, since abutting on two streets they have a much greater lineal frontage so far as sidewalk assessments are concerned.

According to Medford City Attorney E. Roy Bashaw, the present petition requirement was instituted by a charter amendment in 1918.

Prior to that, he said, the city ordered in so many street and sidewalk paving projects and assessed so many property owners that the amendment was passed to protect the hard-pressed citizens.

The "minimum and only requirement" in general law, he explained, is that people whose property is going to be assessed are entitled to notice and a hearing.

The petition requirement, generously protecting the property owners, exists in "a minority of cities," he continued.

Intermediate Restriction
But cities lacking this requirement, Bashaw said, usually have, as a matter of "common practice," an intermediate restriction.

This restriction, while less protective than the petition requirement, does offer the property owner a concrete means of self-protection.

As contained in the "model city charter" developed by the Bureau of Municipal Re-

Lively To Stay With Commission

Salem—UPI—Springfield attorney Jack B. Lively has agreed to continue as a member of the Oregon Centennial commission, Gov. Robert D. Holmes announced Friday.

Lively, one of the original members of the commission, had resigned last week to take a part-time pay position with the staff of the commission. But the Governor asked him to reconsider and continue his services as a commissioner instead.

The Governor said he was "pleased" with Lively's services and his response to the appeal to continue.

Governor Urges U. N. Machinery As 'Best Vehicle'

Salem—UPI—The need for encouraging the U.S. to use the machinery of the United Nations and resist unilateral action that "unnerves our friends and confuses free people everywhere" was voiced Friday by Gov. Robert D. Holmes in a talk to the second annual United Nations Day reception here.

The Governor termed the UN the best vehicle for preventing major world conflicts and for paving the way for permanent peace.

About 300 persons attended the reception held in the Governor's office.

Among those present were consular officers of several foreign nations. Also speaking was Karlin Capper-Johnson, president of the Oregon United Nations association.

The day marked the 13th anniversary of the acceptance of the United Nations charter.

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Grange News

Bellview Grange
Illustrating her trip to Europe with colored slides Mrs. William Walters spoke to members of the Bellview Grange at a regular session Oct. 21.

Mrs. Walters' interest in fine arts and structural architecture was noted as she showed slides of buildings in many parts of England, castles and bridges along the Rhine river in Germany and many other points of interest in Belgium and Switzerland.

At the conclusion of Mrs. Walters' remarks the regular business meeting was held with Master Frank Malin presiding. Final plans were made for the annual bazaar and food sale to be held Oct. 26 in the Lithia hotel building.

Legislative chairman, Mrs. Ralph Jennings, explained in detail the 13 bills which will appear on the Nov. 4 election and stressed to members the duty and privilege of all citizens to vote at that time.

As chairman of the dance committee, Frank Malin reported on the success of the semi-monthly square dances and the beginning of a new square dance class, Nov. 7, open to all who wish to participate.

Election of officers for 1939 will take place at the next

regular meeting of the Bellview Grange on Nov. 4 and all members are urged to attend this important meeting.

During the social hour at the close of the meeting refreshments were served by Mr. and Mrs. George Nichols, Mr. and Mrs. Owen Osborne,

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Dunn and Blanche Murphy. May F. Malin, Reporter.

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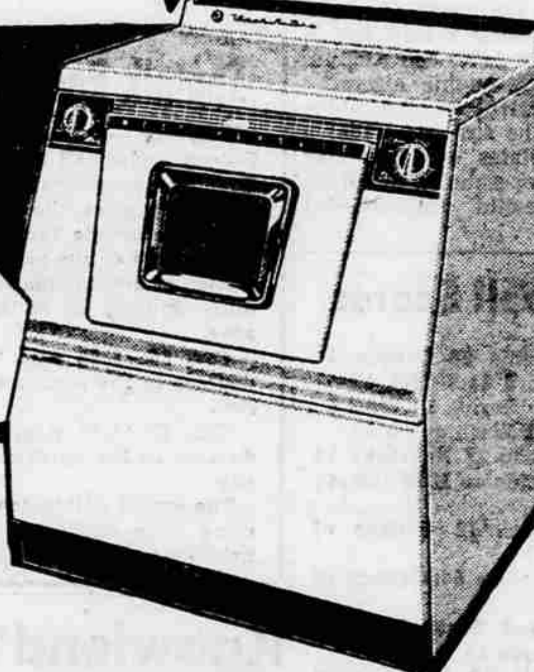
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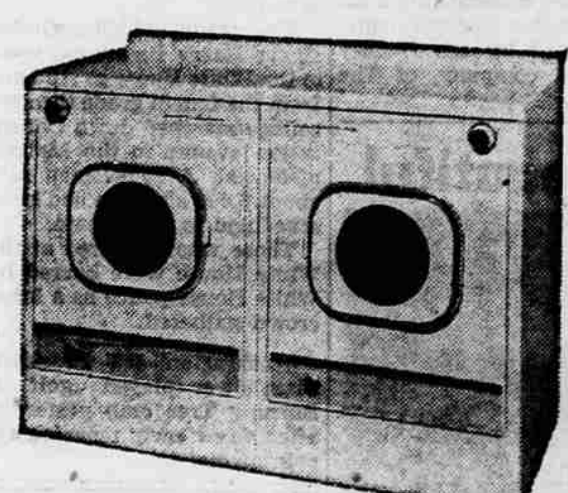
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