

Special meeting of Banks City Council on Sellers Road, police levy, and city manager

Mayor Bob Orlowski opened the special meeting of the Banks City Council, November 25, with the good news that design for the Sellers Road realignment project would begin shortly. The city did not receive grant funding for the project, but the Oregon Department of Transportation has budgeted \$200,000 to start the work. Additional funding will come from ODOT and the Port of Tillamook.

Councilor Katie Murdock reported that many of the trees surrounding the Scout cabin have dead limbs that could pose a danger and are in need of professional attention. Murdock has been researching arborists to prune trees on Main Street and to assess the health and condition of the oaks in Boy Scout Park, and said she would bring additional information to the next meeting. She also stressed that, if the city is going to purchase and plant trees, they must provide for

continued maintenance.

Much of the meeting was used to discuss ideas for the maintenance and use of the Scout cabin and park. Ray Deeth, speaking as a representative of three organizations – Banks Chamber of Commerce, Banks Community Foundation and the Banks Historical Society – told the council that both the historical society and the community foundation have applied for status as tax-exempt organizations. He praised three young people active in the community foundation but also noted that there are many citizens who love their town and are willing to work for improvements.

A town hall meeting was suggested, where all groups working on community projects could exchange ideas and information, providing an opportunity for everyone to learn about the activities of these organizations. Deeth told council about plans for decorating the

cabin and park for Christmas, including a possible visit from Santa. Kathy Jackson, historical society genealogist, told council that the history of Banks belongs to the community and holds the context of the present and future.

Orlowski noted that Norma Stewart and lone Pilate, representing the historical society, appeared before council earlier in the month, with an offer to manage activities in the cabin. According to Orlowski, the city does not have any formal guidelines for management of the park and budgets only a nominal amount for maintenance.

Councilors Pete Edison and Kirk Andrews suggested that all activities in the park should be reviewed by a committee that could make recommendations for park use, maintenance, funding and long range plans. As suggested, the committee would be parallel to the Greenville Park Committee.

Council agreed that, should a parks levy pass in the future, the two committees would merge, creating a single panel that would allow a broad range of community participation.

Pilate and Stewart said they were interested only in the activities focused on the cabin. They would like to become a "Friends" organization, similar to the Friends of the Library, and not be required to administer all activities in the park. Orlowski said that an organization like that could be part of a parks committee and that Pilate and Stewart would have the opportunity to participate on the committee. Stewart declined, saying that "...would not work" and left the meeting with Pilate. Council will continue the discussion next month.

Police levy considered

Returning to ongoing council discussions of police department funding, Orlowski said that placement of a statewide tax initiative on the March ballot might draw enough local voters to meet the 50 percent-plus-one needed to pass a levy for Banks police funding. As city leaders, Orlowski said, the council needs to keep this issue in front of voters. He said that voters are confused about whether the levy passed, and that continued efforts are needed about the reason for the

levy. Orlowski said that the levy, which received a high percentage of favorable votes in both previous attempts, was 60 voters short of the double majority on the first attempt and 28 voters short on the second.

Council President Teri Branstre said that her initial response to the failure of the levy was a fear that voters would get "burned out" if the levy was proposed again in March. She had revised that opinion, however, and agreed that the levy may take several efforts to pass and should be kept on the ballot. A majority of people voted in favor of the levy, Edison said, and the council would be "letting those voters down" if they did not follow-up.

Council voted, unanimously, to put the measure on the March ballot, this time as a four-year levy so future renewals would coincide with presidential elections, when the double majority is not required.

City manager studied

Council appointed to a committee to study the feasibility of hiring a city manager. The committee, composed of Mark Ward and Wes Wingship, Councilors Pete Edison and Ryan Birr, and public works superintendent Tim Grossnickle, will begin meeting next week.

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