

Slim likelihood of improvements to deteriorating Hwy. 47 in Banks

At the request of the Banks City Council, Ron Kroop, who is Manning District Manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation, explained at the January 13 meeting how his department operates and discussed the possibility of resurfacing Highway 47 in Banks.

The Manning region contains about 470 miles of urban, suburban and rural highways and, according to Kroop, Highway 47 in Banks has not had a "contract scope" project in approximately 40 years. In Washington County, funding for this type of project usually goes through the county coordinating committee, and it is not scheduled until 2009.

However, Kroop told the council, during the last legislative session, an unfunded job-creation initiative was passed that looks at highway maintenance as a way to create jobs. Kroop explained that the legislative emergency board, which allocates funds when the legislature is not in session, might provide some funding for the program. If funded, it could include resurfacing the highway in Banks and begin as early as summer 2004.

Vehicle miles traveled in Oregon have grown dramatically and funding for maintenance and repair of the system has been out of balance, Kroop told the council, until the recent passage of a \$50 million per

year bond for road improvement. He concluded by saying that most of the system was designed and built in the 1950s and '60s and that bridges, in particular, were not designed to handle the present capacity.

Audit

Dennis Conner gave the city a glowing audit report for the 2002-2003 fiscal year, telling the council that he was gratified to see the progress that has been made in the last several years to achieve \$254,000 general fund balance. Conner complimented the public works department for being careful with their fund and reported no problems with the U.S.D.A. report required for the federal loan used for water system improvements. According to Conner, the general fund, traffic impact fund and system development fund had more money at the end of the fiscal year than anticipated, though the water fund was slightly short. Mayor Robert Orłowski said that he and public works director Tim Grossnickle were working to resolve the issue. Orłowski also said that the police fund was just short of being self-sustaining, with only 25 percent of the department's budget provided from the general fund.

Library Bond

Harry Bodine, a retired Oregonian editor, gave a brief presentation for People for Libraries. Bodine is organizing support for a library bond that will appear on the May ballot. Passage of the bond would

increase revenue for the Banks library by about \$19,000. The committee is looking for six volunteers to assist in efforts to pass the bond, Bodine said, and reminded everyone that donations of up to \$50 per person (\$100 if filing jointly) to this type of political action committee are eligible for a state income tax credit.

City Trees

Following up on concerns about the condition and care of trees in the city, and after reviewing several arborists and talking to other cities, Councilor Katie Murdoch recommended that the city contract with David Hunter. Murdoch said she was impressed with Hunter because of his conservative and thoughtful approach to meeting the city's goals within the available budget.

Hunter told the council that the mature stand of oak trees around the scout cabin has a minimal number of dead limbs large enough to cause damage. According to Hunter, a mature stand probably does have disease but acts as a unit to prevent the failure of individual trees. He recommended pruning in high-use areas and removing wood chip mulch from the base of the trees to allow them to dry out, stopping insect damage and potential access for disease. He will examine the trees while pruning and inform council of any

findings. Hunter recommended regular maintenance, at least every two years, and watching for tree failure, but said he saw no need for an injection or root disease treatment. He estimates the age of the scout cabin trees from 95 to 175 years old. Additional work needed, Hunter explained, is pruning the trees along the highway for proper street and sidewalk clearance, safety and appearance. One tree near the scout cabin needs to be removed and another may need removal if pruning cannot improve its appearance.

Orłowski told the council that state law allows the city to award contracts without a bid process if they are under \$5,000. He also assured council members that he and Murdoch had looked at several contractors and checked Hunter's references. Council awarded a \$1,125.00 contract to Hunter.

Liquor license renewals were approved for Banks Billiards, Brown Derby, Main Street Pizza and Jim's Market. Alcohol related problems at Sunset Park were discussed but no decisions were made.

Council met briefly January 21 in executive session to consult with their attorney concerning potential litigation. They also approved initiation of eminent domain proceedings to acquire an easement for the city's water system.

Public hearings scheduled on Disability, Aging, Vet Services

The Washington County Disability, Aging and Veteran Services Advisory Councils will conduct two public hearings on the 2004 - 2005 Area Plan Amendment to allow community input in planning services for people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans in Washington County. The Department will receive comments from the public on advocacy, administration, coordination, outreach activities, as well as Medicaid and non-Medicaid services for transportation, congregate and home delivered meals, in-home services, abuse investigation, and protective services.

Both meetings will be held February 18; the first will be 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the Beaverton

City Hall Council Chambers at 4755 SW Griffith Drive. The second meeting will be 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the Linda Earle Room at the Forest Grove Senior Center, 2037 Douglas St.

A synopsis of the Area Plan Amendment will be available at the hearings. It may be obtained at the Beaverton, Hillsboro and Tigard offices of the Disability, Aging and Veteran Services, or at the department's administration office at 133 SE Second Avenue, Hillsboro, or by phoning Sue Becraft at 503-615-4653. Written testimony will be accepted.

For special accommodation needs, call Ms. Becraft or TTY, call 503-640-3489 and ask for Ms. Becraft.

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