

Banks Lumber tells of plans to mitigate traffic, noise problems

The centerpiece of the Banks City Council meeting February 8 was a presentation by Doug Pritz, mill manager for Banks Lumber Company (BLC). Council also agreed to open negotiations with Washington County Sheriff's department.

Pritz was invited by Mayor Mike Lyda to explain BLC plans for regarding noise, loading and parking on Sunset, and dust issues.

The mill has no control over when lumber or log trucks arrive, Pritz explained, and because they can load only one truck at a time, trucks often back up onto Sunset Avenue. Equipment breakdowns can also cause a back up. In order to ease the situation, Pritz said, the mill has purchased property south of the railroad for a truck turn-around and truck parking. They also plan on fencing and paving the area, which should help control dust. The mill paved some areas last year and plans to pave more this summer to further reduce dust.

Pritz said that drivers are told repeatedly not to park, load or strap loads on Sunset Avenue. The mill agreed to make and post signs requesting that truck drivers comply with city ordinances. Council members noted that issuing tickets for violations would also do a great deal to alleviate problems.

All effluents have been tested and meet standards approved by Clean Water Ser-

vices, according to Pritz, and noise levels have been found to be in compliance. Records are on file in the BLC office, and Pritz agreed to share them with concerned citizens.

Responding to a question from Councilor Pete Edison, Pritz said the mill loads trucks from 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He said the mill would rather load railroad cars than trucks, but "the railroad is in serious disarray" and has not been able to provide cars. Fred Benefiel, who originally brought complaints about the mill to council's attention in November, asked how trucks were loaded before 6:00 a.m., but Pritz said, unequivocally, that loading did not occur before that time. Benefiel responded that he "must be imagining it."

When Councilor Kirk Andrews raised the subject of a second road, Pritz said the mill is attempting to get more of the adjacent property and would very much like to have access to Banks Road, which would require the cooperation of the city, county, Clean Water Services and mill owners. While there is general agreement that another access road would resolve many problems, finding a solution will be difficult.

Contract with WCSO is under consideration

Mayor Lyda began discussion about contracting with Washington County Sheriff's Office for police services by

summarizing the presentation made by Sheriff Rob Gordon at the January 27 workshop. He told council that he had reviewed the budget and determined that funds were available to contract for two three-quarter time (or 1.5 full time equivalent) deputies for the remainder of the fiscal year.

After discussion about the availability of funds, Councilor Ryan Birr said, "We would be doing the community a disservice by leaving [the police situation] where it's at." We know that the funds are available for the remainder of this year, Councilor Teri Branstetter pointed out, and should make a decision now, instead of waiting another two weeks, and that discussion on a continuing contract with Washington County could be included in the budget process. It is expected that 1.5 FTE coverage will cost the city about \$183,000 per year, in addition to other police related costs including 9-1-1 service. The total for law enforcement needs, with two officers each working 30 hours per week, would be about \$240,000 per year. The current budget will cover needs for the remainder of the fiscal year, but funding at that level will eventually require

either a levy or an increase in the tax rate.

Special meeting set

The council will meet again on Thursday, February 17, to discuss a contract with Washington County, and to conduct other business as needed.

Greenville Park

Council approved completion of improvements in Greenville Park for lighting in the gazebo. Damage by vandals to the gazebo railing will be repaired at the same time. Arbor Village Homeowners Association, which pays for maintenance of the park, has budgeted \$2,238 for repairs to the sprinkler system. However, after inspection, the landscape contractor recommended installing seven additional sprinklers and an automatic control system. The control unit is expected to pay for itself in water savings. Because it would be economical to make improvements at the same time repairs are underway, council approved an additional \$1,563 for sprinkler system improvements.

Scout Cabin

Candy Deeth brought a brief

outline of a proposal for the city to lease the Scout Cabin to the Banks Historical Society. The historical society wants to use the cabin to display historical documents and general information. After discussing general terms and conditions, council directed city attorney Jim Lucas to draft an agreement for consideration at next month's meeting.

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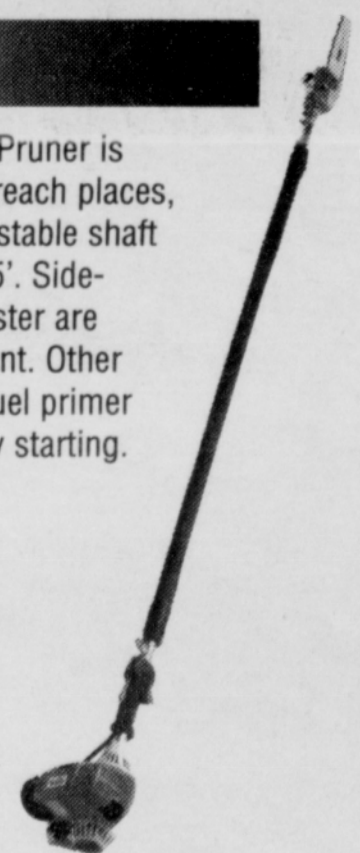
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