

Banks City Council agrees to spend money on play equipment

Banks City Council approved spending \$29,619.30 on playground equipment at their October 9 meeting. Of the total, \$24,629.50 is for the equipment and \$4,989.80 for freight and installation.

The play set that was approved is configured to appeal to the widest age group, with a structure that includes a giant wave climber link, incline cosmic climber, zip slides, and slides and climbers to accommodate 5 – 12 year olds of all skill levels.

While Councilor Craig Stewart was attending the annual League of Oregon Cities Conference, he was approached by Doug Buell, a representative of GameTime, a playground equipment manufacturing company. Buell provided information about a grant that is available to smaller communities in an effort to lessen childhood obesity, nationally, by providing exercise playground equipment.

GameTime has earmarked approximately \$1 million nationwide for qualifying small communities to purchase Powerscape equipment at a 50 percent discount. The grant program will end November 30, 2007, and is on a first come, first served basis. "The faster the city acts, the more apt we

are to procure the funds; once the money is gone; it is gone," Stewart said.

Council has been working on the park improvement project for some time, with a Parks & Recreation Master Plan adopted last April. The 2007-2008 budget provides for a transfer of \$30,000 from the General Fund to the Parks Fund to purchase playground equipment, which leaves limited resources for installation, excavation, and bark chips.

Councilor Short commented that having the playground equipment purchased and in storage will generate a lot of momentum. Council expressed optimism that the Banks community would step forward to donate extra funds and volunteer their time and talents in order to prep and install the structure.

The Banks Chamber of Commerce discussed the venture at their last meeting, and has received calls from local excavators willing to donate their time and equipment.

Mayor Branstitre told Buell not to expect a check tomorrow, however; there will need to be some budget shuffling.

City Attorney Jim Lucas introduced two representatives from Verizon, David Mielke from Texas and Gene Eng of

Beaverton, who appeared to answer any questions the council may have about their franchise agreement. Banks has been negotiating a franchise renewal agreement with new terms; all parties were happy to report that they have entered into a new 15 year contract. Mielke hopes to appear at the next council meeting to seal the deal.

Lucas had little to report on an agreement between the city and NW Natural Gas. Lucas said they "guarantee that they will have something back to us by next month; they are working on 30 franchise agreements; however, I feel like they are only working on 29."

Communication between Lucas and Swatco has been productive, with little remaining to be negotiated. Consumer rates

will remain the same.

Mayor Branstitre stood in by proxy for Laura Reisinger, a senior at Banks High School, who has collected signatures to have the state consider changing the intersection on Hwy 47 and Verboort/Perdin Road, after the death of a recent classmate. The mayor says that City Manager Jim Hough and Forest Grove City Manager Michael Sykes have been in communication and both would like to see a change. Hough and Reisinger will attend the Northwest Committee of Transportation in November, a meeting that helps ODOT develop priorities on intersection changes.

Denise Holmes, Banks Library Director, gave a demonstration on how to use the Library website (<http://www.wc-cls.org>).

New features have been added as part of the user-friendly update. Photographs featuring Washington County are displayed and change each time a new link is looked at. Holmes said that there are several more downloadable audio book titles available, as well.

Councilor Brian Biehl asked Holmes about a complaint he

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