



The Friday Update

Bringing you a summary of weekly news from City Hall

March 9, 2001

CITY OF COOS BAY

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DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION - In the city's behalf, Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs has made application to the Regional Investment Board for \$15,000 towards a \$32,000 Downtown Strategy Review and Recruitment Plan. The balance comes from \$2,000 from City funds. Shanda is working with the Oregon Economic and Community Development Dept. (OECDD) for the remaining \$15,000. The plan includes two components. The first is a three-day visit by Oregon Downtown Development Association (ODDA) to (i) review that which has already been completed downtown, (ii) obtain feedback and ideas from the ODDA resource team, and (iii) secure ODDA recommendations for future steps needed to produce the results we want. A significant portion of the effort will entail developing a recruitment plan for downtown that looks specifically at what is missing from downtown that cities our size typically have, then determining how best to connect those gaps to work already happening in downtown (historic museum, etc.). A second component is an architectural/structural engineering assessment of the American Building and First American Bank (North Point Realty) Building to determine how much money is necessary to revitalize those buildings for 2nd and 3rd floor usage. This "supply" would then be one of the places to start with the "demand" portion from the ODDA study. Shanda has held additional discussions with the Oregon Arts Commission and is seeking ways to secure a consultant provided by them to look at opportunities for facilitating development of other buildings in downtown using the cultural/arts theme.

JURISDICTIONAL EXCHANGE INSTALLMENT ARRIVES ON TIME - Pursuant to the City's agreement with the State of Oregon, last week the second installment of "jurisdictional exchange" proceeds arrived on time. Finance Director Janell Howard deposited the \$1.4 million with the local government investment pool where the funds are being held in trust pursuant to the voter-approved Coos Bay City Charter amendment. Last week's check brings the total proceeds received to \$3.4 million. One final installment of \$1.4 million remains scheduled for March 1, 2002.

TAXI ORDINANCE DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE THIS WEEK - Councilor Judy Weeks, Chief Knight and City manager Bill Grile met taxi companies this week to continue discussions about a proposed ordinance regulating taxi businesses in Coos Bay, and whether to proceed with a recommendation to the City Council about there is need or lack of need for an ordinance in our community. Discussions about this have gone on for months now. After revisiting some elements of the proposed ordinance that had been thought settled in earlier discussions, a decision was reached to send the matter to the City Council and to schedule a public hearing to gather public input about the issues surrounding taxi cab operations in Coos Bay.

WE'RE SHOPPING FOR HEALTH INSURANCE - The City's insurance agent of record, Harry Abel, is looking around to see if there is any way the Coos Bay can acquire comparable health insurance coverage for its employees at a lower cost than that expected to accompany the Regents BlueCross BlueShield prices under existing coverage extended into Fiscal Year 2001-02, which could climb as much as 28-30% on July 1st according to information confirmed last week in a conversation with City/County Insurance Services. City Manager Bill Grile has been cautioned to not expect too much though as the industry has been seeing increases in the 20-25% range with other groups as well. When the BlueCross HMO dissolved two years ago

the City went shopping for replacement coverage and CCIS was still the best value at that time. Nevertheless, Harry Abel agrees that it doesn't hurt to look around again this spring. Most carriers don't announce their July 1st rates until the first of next month. We should have a better idea where we stand after then.

AFSCME CONTRACT BARGAINING . . . is scheduled for March 16th at 9:00 a.m. in the library. As with other contract talks and the Council's direction, the AFSCME negotiations will be open to the public.

FIREFIGHTER BARGAINING . . . has been scheduled for March 21st and is expected to last throughout much of the day. The morning session will be devoted to "impact bargaining" related to the departmental reorganization that has been upheld by the Oregon Court of Appeals. The afternoon session will be a continuation of the talks needed to produce a contract to succeed the one that expires June 30th. Again, these meetings will be open to the public.

MINGUS STAGE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCEEDS - The City has retained MacSwain and Woods with a \$1000 contract to have a master plan drawn for phased development of the seating area north of the new Mingus Park Stage. Funding is from parks resources in this year's community services budget. Phased implementation of the plan will depend on grants and donations. Nothing fancy is expected, but terraced seating around the grassy area fronting the stage and a concrete surface for wheel chair "parking" is definitely needed. Security Bank and Larry McCabe's new non-profit corporation will be leading the charge for fundraising. We hope the plan will be available in 60 to 90 days. Mayor Benetti has appointed Councilor Larson to work with the volunteers on the project, and Councilor Weeks is helping coordinate the effort as liaison to the Parks Commission. Stay tuned (pun intended)!

FRONT STREET DESIGN REVIEW - Front Street planning has taken a back seat to the work that has occupied the Planning Commission's time during development of the Empire design standards, but the City is ready now to proceed and hopefully conclude the Front Street planning and zoning effort. Details will follow.

OCEAN BLVD. SIDEWALK GRANT - Community Services staff has submitted an application to ODOT for a Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvement Grant. The application is to construct sidewalks, curbs and gutters on both sides of Ocean Blvd. between Central Avenue and West Hills Blvd. Total estimated cost of the project is \$154,600. The City is offering a 10 percent match. Matching funds are currently available through a combination of our Bike/Pedestrian Path Fund and State Gas Tax. Next year, with the new required transfer to the Bike/Pedestrian Path Fund, all match will be available from that fund. The project appears on the City's Street Capital Improvement Plan.

FORWARD PROGRESS WITH THE NEWMARK AVENUE PROJECT - Last Friday Community Services staff and the city manager met with consultants Larry Lewis and Howard Stein to review the draft recommendations they have completed that will allow Coos Bay to move ahead with the planned improvements to Newmark Avenue. City staff was impressed with the analysis that went into the consultant team's planning and the statistics that support their recommendations. Cost estimates for construction are being prepared and not yet available, but in short, the public can look forward to seeing a five-lane project with new signals at both ends of LaClair in the recommendations. Here's the next step. The Council will be meeting in a special work-session on Thursday, April 5th at 7:00 p.m. in the Coos Bay Public Library. The work-session will open with a town hall meeting to allow public review and comment on the consultants' findings and proposals. Please mark your calendars.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FORUM - The Chamber Forum for March will feature South Coast Development Council's Executive Director Melinda Anderson speaking on SCDC's vision for the Bay Area.

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The forum will be held on Wednesday, March 21st at the Red Lion. Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. with the program beginning at 12:00 noon. Cost is \$9 for Chamber members, \$12 for Non-members. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 269-0215.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM - This year's Department of Environmental Quality sponsored Household Hazardous Waste Pickup Events will be held in Coquille and Reedsport on September 30th and October 1st. These collection events give local residents a chance to dispose of leftover cleaners, solvents, pesticides, automotive and paint products in an environmentally friendly manner. The events also provide an opportunity to learn more about ways to reduce, recycle and reuse household hazardous waste.

ROTARY GROUP STUDY EXCHANGE UPDATE - Coos Bay Police Officer Dan O'Loughlin has e-mailed his greetings from Sri Lanka where is a team member on Rotary District 5110 Group Study Exchange. Officer O'Loughlin has gained a great deal of insight into policing in a third world country. We look forward to O'Loughlin's return to Coos Bay in the next couple of weeks. Officer O'Loughlin was sponsored by the Coos Bay - North Bend Rotary Club and Rotary District 5110 which includes Rotary clubs in both Oregon and California.

THANK YOU LETTER FROM STUDENTS - The following excerpts are from letters from elementary school students Officer Babb read to last week as part of the Read Across America Campaign. "...I really think you did a good job reading." "You talked to us after every paragraph or page like we do in our class. I thank you. You did a good job, I think you need a reading badge." "Thank you for reading at Madison School and come back," and "Thank you for reading to us, I really enjoyed it, and I think when I have children they will too." Several letters were received by Officer Babb from students. Members of the Coos Bay Police Department are proud to be participants in helping to encourage reading skills in our local schools.

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS - The Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors will be holding a business after hours mixer on Thursday, March 22nd at 5:30 p.m. at The World, 350 Commercial Avenue, Coos Bay. All interested parties are invited to enjoy hors d'oeuvres and beverages and take tours of the news, advertising, production and Internet operations at the newspaper. Tickets for the event are available from the Chamber office at 269-0215 and cost \$4 per person or \$15 for five people. Tickets will be \$5 per person at the door.

COOS BAY OIL RESPONSE BOAT - The Coos Bay City Council approved a request from the Coos Bay Response Corp to moor their 35 foot oil response boat at the city dock. The boat is maintained by various local companies. The boat had been moored at Sause Brothers, but it could not get out from the inside moorage during low tides due to the location of their dock and the City's Tug Pavilion. The new location at city dock will provide for a quicker response time to any spills located on the bay.

NORTH BAYSHORE STREETScape UNDERWAY - Work has begun on the second downtown streetscape project as local contractor, Bracelin & Yeager, prepares the east side of North Bayshore Drive for new sidewalks, period lighting, landscaping and irrigation. The historic light poles will be equipped to support banners and hanging baskets and the landscaping will include trees, grass, and flowering color. This beautification project, which stretches from Taco Time to Fir Avenue is funded through the Downtown Urban Renewal Agency and is slated for completion by the beginning of June - just in time for the tourist season.

SPORTSMAN PEDWAY - The design for the plaza connecting South Broadway to the public parking beyond South Second Court is on a fast track as local architect, Lon Samuels, puts the finishing touches on the space now occupied by the Sportsman building. The transformation will begin with the demolition of the existing structure and then proceed with the creation of a pedestrian walkway through the site. Plantings, benches, and period lighting will open up the area and make the parking area more visible from South Broadway. This safer connecting passage will encourage use by tourists and downtown shoppers alike.

Hopefully, the construction portion of the project will be ready for bid as early as April and the work completed by the end of May.

BAYSHORE THEATER STREETScape PROJECT - The Urban Renewal Agency continues to improve downtown Coos Bay as the design moves forward to expand the core area lighting and sidewalk treatment. The new area will cover the west side of South Bayshore Drive between Curtis Avenue and Anderson Avenue, the north side of Curtis Avenue and both sides of Anderson Avenue between Bayshore and Broadway. Benches, sidewalks, and period lighting will continue the present downtown theme and welcome the public by early summer. Any questions concerning upcoming beautification projects may be directed to the Community Services Department at 269-8918.

COOS BAY CITY DUMP STATION - The new City Dock Pump Out and Dump Station Project has been completed and is now ready for use. This is a free service to the boaters in the area to help keep the bay and local waterways clean and free of sewage. The Oregon State Marine Board paid for the new station at a cost of approximately \$42,000 and City staff oversaw the project during construction..

EMPIRE DESIGN REVIEW APPROVED - On Tuesday evening the City Council approved design review standards for the portion of the Empire District that fronts Newmark Avenue extending from the “Y” to Empire Boulevard. These standards were approved in an effort to improve the overall appearance of the area by adopting a “historical waterfront” theme where the buildings would evoke the appearance of buildings as they might have existed in the Empire area during the mid-to-late 1800s. According to the new standards, maintenance to a building is permitted; however, if you plan to change a building’s style, including details, such as windows or doors, or COLOR (174 colors to choose from!), some review may be required. Any questions, please contact Laura Barron at the Community Services Department at city hall (269-8918).

LONG-AWAITED FRONT STREET REVIEW - MARCH 20TH - A public hearing is scheduled before the City Council for March 20th at 7 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers for the rezoning of North Front Street. A master plan was completed in 1998, but obstacles, such as changes in the law, kept pushing the schedule back. It is being proposed to rezone the area from Commercial Avenue to Ivy Avenue, east of Bayshore, to “Waterfront Heritage” which would allow a mix of commercial and residential uses along with water-dependent uses. The historical buildings and water-dependent uses that are located there now, create an aura that is important to the area. Proposed design review standards for the new zone, intend to evoke an appearance of buildings as they might have existed in the area between the mid-to-late 1800s. This was the time period when Front Street flourished as the center of the community. Contact Laura Barron at 269-8918 if you would like a copy of the design review standards or rezone plan.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS COMPLETE - Coos Bay City Council voted unanimously Tuesday night to endorse the OR 38 and OR 42 Corridor Plans that have been in development for several years. The endorsement will show the Oregon Transportation Commission that Coos Bay supports development along these critical transportation corridors to the remainder of the state. The plans do not appropriate funds, but they do provide a prioritized list of all types of necessary projects along the two corridors. The plans will assist the Oregon Transportation Commission in development of its policy and funding plans.

SKATE PARK FUNDRAISING HAS BEGUN! - City Councilor Cindi Miller and Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs met on Monday with folks interested in fund raising for a new skate park for the Bay Area. A possible location has been identified, and its availability and appropriateness is being analyzed. The kids are starting with a candy sale, sponsored by the Boy Scout Adventurers Troop which is supporting the skatepark. Watch for those candy bars in your area! Teams of kids willing to complete yard work and brush clearing in exchange for donations to the skate park fund are being established. Contact Paul George at the Rocky Point Surf and Sport at 266-9020 to request a team. Other fund raising ideas are in development. If you have great ideas for a fund raiser, or you are interested in helping with the fund raising for this great project, please contact Paul George, or Shanda Shribbs at 269-8918.

CITY COUNCIL EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR ALISHANEE FAMILY RECREATION CENTER -

The City Council unanimously voted to direct City Manager Bill Grile to prepare and send a letter supporting the Alishanee Family Recreation Center project of the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians. The project would be located at the old Safeway location near downtown Coos Bay. Phase I of the project includes development of a 24-lane bowling alley and should provide 12 to 15 full time positions and 30 to 35 part time positions. Phase II includes development of Native American theme retail shops and is expected to create 20 full and part time positions.

BIENNIAL STUDENT ART SHOW - Opening Friday, March 9th with a reception at the Museum from 5:30 - 7 p.m. the Coos Bay Museum's Biennial Student Art Show features work from South Coast students in grades K through 12. More than 40 schools located within ten districts from throughout the region have been invited to submit works for the exhibit. On display are the products of the talents, hearts, and hands of young artists from around the region and across the K - 12 age spectrum. The often colorful and vigorous paintings, prints, drawings, and three dimensional objects project great energy and enthusiasm. This dynamism is reflected in the broad selection of works, which fills both the Museum's downstairs Maggie Karl Gallery and the second floor Mable Hansen Gallery. The show continues through March 24th.

MINGUS PARK POOL MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT MODIFICATIONS - After hearing presentations regarding programs and operations at the Mingus Park pool from City staff, Mingus Park Pool Management's President, Cathy Danielson, and several community members, the City Council directed the City Manager to modify the Management Agreement for operation of the pool the city has with MPPM. The modifications will transfer responsibility for utility and chemical additive costs from MPPM to the City and MPPM will be responsible for only management of the pool programs and operations. The agreement will allow MPPM to focus on continuing and growing the wonderful swimming programs available to community members, and the City will maintain its facility.