

City of Monmouth

City Manager's Report

A Report on City of Monmouth News, Happenings, Successes and Other Items

February 7, 2013

Police Station Bond

The City is working hard to provide information to our community regarding the May bond election to fund a new Police Station. The new station would be built in the former Forest Capital building. The \$4.0 million project would move the department from a very deficient building (that was never designed as a Police Station) to a building that would meet the needs of the department now and into the future. Financially, with the upcoming expiration of the Library bond, the additional tax (if approved) above the Library tax rate would be \$0.20 per thousand. This equates to a tax bill increase of about \$36.00 a year on a \$180,000 home.

We recently received results from a survey on the Police Station issue that was conducted by a professional polling firm. The Police Department received a high rating of 4.3 on a 5-point scale for the quality of its services. The City received a high mark of 3.8 on a 5-point scale for how efficiently we use tax dollars. The poll indicated strong support for the proposed bond, with the pollsters predicting that it will pass. People that were in favor of the measure really liked that timing this measure with expiration of the Library bond brought down the financial impact. They also liked that we can save up to \$1.0 million in construction costs by moving into an existing building and that the new building would accommodate needs to 25+ years. Another interesting finding from the survey was that Monmouth voters' best source of information on election issues is our own Community Notes, which is the insert in your utility bill. The polling firm had never seen a City newsletter score this high.

Fountain Construction

Construction of the new Main Street Park Fountain and Splash Play area will begin this month. The contractor has a target of June 1 for completion. The new fountain is going to be a wonderful new asset for Monmouth. The splash play area, which will feature water jets that shoot up from the ground, will be a first in our area.

New City Councilors

The City Council swore in two new City Councilors to start 2013. Steve Milligan returns to the Council after a brief hiatus and Jesse Shafer was elected for his first stint. As the terms of Councilors Chris Larsen and Kenn Lehto ended, they were both recognized for their contributions to all the significant progress Monmouth has seen.

Monmouth Holding Company Building

The new building at Monmouth Ave. and Main St. was dedicated on February 6 in front of a large crowd. As you may recall, this is the site of the former Taste of India restaurant, which was lost to a fire. Rather than just rebuilding a basic building, the owners set their sights high and built a building that is a gorgeous addition to our downtown, with way more commercial and residential space than the previous building. Although built new, the owners have an appreciation for historical values, so the new building looks historic, although it decidedly is not. The new building features three commercial spaces on the ground floor and six studio apartments on the second story. The City worked diligently with the building owners from start to

finish and provided an incentive package to help defray some of the costs of this exceptional project.

Amphitheater Design

Because we don't seem to be able to stop all the progress we are having, now we're going to design an amphitheater complex in Main St. Park. The amphitheater will be located in in the Northeast corner of the park, diagonal from the current Police Station. Design considerations will include how to shape the seating area, what kind of stage we would like and how this new facility will fit in with the rest of the park. The City will use a project advisory team made up of Monmouth citizens to guide the design process. As this is a very important project, we will be actively engaging citizens on design issues. Stay tuned!

City Accomplishments

I mentioned in the last City Manager Report that the City has done a lot of things to make Monmouth a better place over the past five years. During this time, we have completed \$16.0 million in capital projects. This is a lot of work for a city our size. Over the past five years, we have: built a new electrical substation and transmission line; acquired and developed new water supplies and constructed new treatment facilities; completed a major upgrade of our wastewater facility; completed several transportation projects; improved our parks; replaced several water lines and undergrounded lots of electrical lines. While we could take a break and relax a bit after all this success, we won't. Progress is too much fun.

Travel Salem

The City has been working for several years to promote tourism in our area. We have some very nice things to offer, but this previously wasn't a focus of our economic development efforts. As we aren't looked at as a tourist destination like Lincoln City or Bend, a first order of business is letting the world what we do have. Once we had a good "inventory" of things to do documented, we needed to get out the word. We previously have focused our efforts on improving our City

website and working with the Chamber of Commerce on how they advertise our area. A new idea that we will be trying this year for the first time is placing an ad in the Travel Salem tourist guide. Travel Salem makes a strong effort to promote Salem and its surrounding areas. Our first ad will be a joint effort of the Cities of Monmouth and Independence.

Downtown Parking

As our downtown area has grown more active and Western Oregon University has grown, parking in the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods has become more congested. Based on concerns from downtown businesses and neighborhoods, the City took a look at how we could alleviate this issue. Rather than looking at parking enforcement as the only solution (which can be effective, but also has its negatives) we decided to see if we could create more parking spaces. We wanted to see if we could alleviate congestion by expanding the parking "pie". After careful research, the City Council approved changes that will create an additional 107 parking spaces in the Downtown area and near campus. New spaces were created either by adding parallel parking to no parking zones or changing parallel parking to diagonal. Restriping will occur this summer

If you have any questions about items in this report or anything related to the City, please call me at 503-751-0146 or e-mail me at smcclure@ci.monmouth.or.us.

Scott McClure
City Manager