



THE CITY NEWS

VOLUME 5, NO. 1, SEPT. 2007 255 N. MAIN, BROWNSVILLE, OR 97327
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“SO FAR SO GOOD”

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Work on the City’s wastewater improvement project continues at a steady pace. The City, Westech Engineering, Emery & Sons Construction and Pacific Excavation have all been working hard to complete the project on time and on budget.

The Phase I Contractor (Emery & Sons) completed the second month of construction work on the treatment works portion of the project. To date, work has focused on the construction of the dikes for the new lagoon at the South Treatment Plant. During the next two months, the Phase I contractor will accelerate the pace of work to take advantage of the dry summer and fall weather conditions. Much of the work included in Phase I is weather sensitive and must be completed before the onset of winter rains. During the next two months, the Phase I contractor will have several crews working at both the South and North Wastewater treatment plants as well as the new effluent forcemain running from the north plant to the south plant. The Phase I project remains on schedule for a completion date of March, 2008.

After a fast start for the Phase II contractor (Pacific Excavation), work has slowed during the last month. Phase II includes all the collection line improvements. The Phase II contractor completed work on the North collection system ahead of schedule and moved on to the trunk sewer along Hwy. 288 about a week earlier than expected. Work along the highway has been slower than expected due to challenging ground conditions. Though not uncommon, the ground conditions have slowed the rate of work and the Phase II contractor is likely going to need to mobilize a second mainline construction crew to regain the lost time. In the coming weeks, the Phase II contractor will continue to work east along Hwy. 228 toward the intersection with Washburn. One crew will then turn north along Washburn Street and work toward the Calapooia River siphon. If mobilized, the second crew will work south along Washburn Street to the end of the Washburn Street sewer line. The completion date for the project has been moved back to December, 2007, to provide time for some needed waterline relocation work that has been added to the project.

It has been a joy to work with City staff, the City Council and the residents of Brownsville on this project. The amount of support from the community is unique in this industry and in this State. All parties involved will continue to work toward delivering a successful project for the City.

Christopher J. Brugato, P.E.
Westech Engineering, Inc.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

City Council - September 17, October 15, November 19 and December 21. All Council meetings are upstairs in Brownsville City Hall. Please watch the message board by City Hall for other meetings.

Surplus Sale - City Shops - Hume St. - Sept. 15 9-11 a.m.



WATER SHUTOFF POLICY CHANGE

Upon reviewing the use of resources and services provided to the public over the last six months, it has been determined that a few changes are needed in order to maximize limited resources. One area that needed immediate attention was the way in which the City handles water shutoffs. Employees were being sent out to customer's homes multiple times, communication with tenants and landlords was not interfacing adequately and staff was having a difficult time keeping up with the demand generated by requests for service. It was evident that a change needed to be made to make the process more efficient and effective for both the customers and the employees.

Below is a list of what the City is doing to improve in this area:

1. For all accounts, water shutoffs will occur between 11 a.m. and 12 noon.
2. Public Works will turn water on between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.
3. Landlords will be responsible for the utility charges until a new tenant signs up for service.
4. Landlords need to make sure the tenant, 1) completes an application for Water & Sewer Service and 2) makes the \$100 deposit.

WATER AND SEWER RATES

Rates have been increased by 3% for water service and 5% for sewer service. Historically, Council has adjusted rates annually based on the rising costs of prices for services used in the production and treatment of these utilities. However, with the advent of the WWIP, Council has to ensure that revenue streams are structured appropriately to retire the debt. The City will not have actual operational numbers for the new Sewer Treatment Works until fiscal year 2009-2010. The plant will come online in April or May of 2008 and until we have a year of experience we will not truly know our costs of operation.

plan that would retire the debt on the Water Bonds which were encumbered in 1998 sooner than the original term for those bonds. Steps must be taken to retire the debt while operating and maintaining the existing system. The City's water and sewer infrastructure is a multi-million dollar asset and must be maintained in accordance with Federal and State law. Since these are known as "enterprise funds," the only way improvements and maintenance of the infrastructure can take place is through user rates. The City will be looking for assistance from the Oregon Association of Water Utilities in conducting a rate study to determine current and future rates based on all the variables.

The City is exploring the implementation of a

SURPLUS SALE SEPTEMBER 15

On Saturday, September 15th, the City Shop will be open from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. for the public to view items to be sold. The following are examples of what is available for sealed bidding:

Flail mowers, Dodge service truck, Ford boom truck, play equipment, Patch King Hot Box, floor buffer / sander, miscellaneous office & computer equipment, portable partition

wall, large table jointer, Kubota lawn mower and bagger, gas powered manhole blower, cylinder scale, small table, irrigation equipment, tires and parts, concrete boxes, metal table frame and old street signs.

All bids must be received at City Hall by no later than 4:30 p.m. on Monday, September 17th, 2007.



BUILDING AND PLANNING UPDATE

It's been a while since the last newsletter, and quite a bit has been going on around town with proposals for new projects. At the moment, there are several major items approved, but not a great deal is happening in the way of actual construction.

There are currently two approved subdivisions in Brownsville. The first one approved is located west of Washburn Street with the bulk of the development being west of Kisling Avenue. This project, known as Olsen Fields, would create 81 building sites and would include the development of a 3 acre park which would be given to the City. This was approved by the Planning Commission last year but we haven't seen much action from the owners and no construction has occurred.

The other big subdivision project is known as "River's Edge" and would be located south of Henshaw Drive and west of Depot Avenue. This project was submitted by Smith Custom Construction and would create a total of 85 lots in two phases. A large portion of the property would be developed as open space and would involve the creation of two large ponds. This would remain as private property but the park would be open to the public to use. There is a section of the property reserved at this time for a possible senior residential facility. The owners are hoping to find a partner with expertise in this field to partner with as this is a very complex business. The owners have started some of the grading for this project with the plan being to start construction on the streets and infrastructure next Spring.

Smith Custom Construction also has an approved RV park project located at the old Commons Gravel site at the far north end of Hume Street past Coachcraft. This is a large piece of property with mature trees and river frontage and should make an excellent site for an RV park. They're working on construction plans and intend to start work next year.

Finally, McFarland Cascade has purchased the old Bohemia Mill Site south of Hwy. 228 at the west edge of town. They plan to use the property to process incoming logs and store them for use at their Eugene treatment facility. Before they begin operations at the site they will be constructing a berm along the highway and landscaping to

reduce the noise leaving the site, but they may be storing a few logs at the site over the Winter. They will be employing around 15 people when they begin operations and should make the site much more attractive than it is currently.

The number of new home starts has been tapering off after the frenzy of the last couple of years as the nationwide real estate market works its way down in to our local area. We're still seeing new homes, but at a more typical long-term rate, rather than the 30 or so per year we have been seeing.

One last point, I keep hearing rumors running around town about Brownsville's property taxes being higher than that of surrounding communities. While we all wish taxes were lower, the fact is that ours are about the same as most other towns in Oregon. Last year our total tax rate was \$21.14 per \$1000. The taxes in Lebanon were \$21.21 and in Sweet Home were \$20.87. The ballot initiatives of Measures 5, 47 and 50 capped property taxes at \$15 per \$1,000 back in the 1990's, other than voter approved bond measures, and almost all cities in Oregon are at that cap. The variations from district to district are generally only a few percent. Incidentally, remember that Brownsville's portion of that amount is \$6.96, most of it goes to Linn County and to pay off some capital improvement bonds.

One reason for a lot of the misunderstanding is the strange tax situation created by these property tax measures where an older home of identical value to a new home may only be paying one third or less of the taxes of the newer home. In Oregon, property taxes were frozen (other than a maximum 3 percent per year increase) in 1996 when home values were much lower than they are today. The average assessed value on which taxes are paid is only around \$80,000 in Brownsville, so newer homes pay a disproportionately higher share of the property taxes. There is a real tax incentive in Oregon to buy an older home, as the frozen property tax value attaches to that home forever, it does not get adjusted with the sale of the home as it does in other states.

As always, if you have any questions please give me a call or drop by.

Bill Sattler, City Planner



AROUND TOWN WITH PUBLIC WORKS

It has been another fun filled Summer full of warm sunshine and different activities taking place. From Pioneer Picnic to the Stand By Me event to the Festival of Tents and everything in between, public works and the park caretakers have been very busy assisting with all the activities to keep them safe, welcoming and enjoyable for all. We would like to thank all of the vendors, volunteers, organizers and attendees for making these events successful. We would like to thank the community for your patience during the construction of the wastewater improvement project. We understand that construction projects are chaotic, disruptive and frustrating at times, but the end result is a much improved sewer system capable of better serving the community as a whole. The wastewater collection line replacement portion of the project is scheduled to be completed in mid-December.

Aside from all the events taking place and the construction projects going on, Public Works has been very busy around the community maintaining and making repairs to our water, sewer, streets and parks systems to keep them operating properly and to better serve Brownsville. Some of our upcoming improvements include repainting and landscaping the library, upgrading the restrooms in Pioneer Park and repairing and upgrading the downtown restrooms. With all the events and activities taking place in the park and town, our facilities receive a tremendous amount of use and due to normal wear and tear are in need of improvements to

maintain their functionality to the community.

In closing, we would like to thank you again for your cooperation and patience during the wastewater construction project. During construction, we occasionally may have to shut down a waterline to prevent damage to the water system as well as to preserve safe working conditions for the contractors while performing their work. In the event a waterline must be shut down, we will attempt to notify all affected customers as soon as possible to allow time for you to prepare. In general, shutdowns are only for a few hours, and water will be restored as soon as it is safe for everyone involved. It is not uncommon for water line shutdowns to stir up sediment in the lines and cause temporary discoloration of the water after the line is recharged. The discoloration is not harmful, but concerning when seen and not expected. Another problem associated with line shutdowns is air in the water. Air in the water will appear cloudy white, which will then dissipate when allowed to rest for a short period of time. Trapped air in the lines may also cause a spitting and sputtering action when attempting to use your water following a shutdown. In either case, simply turn the water on and allow it to run for a few minutes and allow the air or discoloration to pass through the line. This may have to be done from more than one faucet at the residence. If the problems don't clear, contact public works immediately for further assistance. Our 24-hour emergency contact number is (541) 409-3700.

Karl Frink, Public Works Director

HOW TO CONTACT US -

Emergency: 911

City Hall During Office Hours: 466-5666

After Hours Public Works Emergency: 409-3700

City Library: 466-5454

Fire Department: 466-5227

ON THE INTERNET -

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IMPORTANT DETAILS CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Here are some important items that can make a difference around your house in the event something goes wrong with your utility services:

- 1) **Water Shutoff Valve.** The City provides a customer water shutoff valve located in your water meter box, usually a handle on the house side of the water meter that you simply turn 90 degrees and the water is off. Not all water services have this valve, so you may want to check in advance to see if your service does. If you do not, you may want to consider having a shutoff valve installed and know where it is. This is something we don't think about until a leak has occurred and you don't know where to turn your water off.
- 2) **Sewer Cleanout.** It is important to know where the sewer cleanout is located for your house. When sewer backups occur, they are very unpleasant and can be expensive to unclog if you do not have a cleanout. If you do not have a sewer cleanout, we highly recommend installing a two-way cleanout near your house in the event it is needed. In Brownsville, property owners are responsible for their own sewer lines, so it is better to be prepared ahead of time.
- 3) **Natural Gas Shutoff Valve.** It is also important to know how to shut off the natural gas to your house in the event you develop a leak. Natural gas is highly flammable and can be deadly if an excessive amount is inhaled.
- 4) **House Numbers.** It is vital that your house number is visible from the street! This is important so emergency, delivery and utility services can locate your address in the event of an emergency or other service requests. You may experience undesirable delays

from emergency services if your house number is not visible from the street. In some cases, such delays can be the difference between life and death. We highly recommend investing in large numbers placed in a conspicuous location so that your residence may be found as quickly as possible in the event of an emergency. This is very important for everyone and planning ahead can make a big difference.

- 5) **Breaker Panels.** It is also important to know where your electrical breaker panels are located. Often breaker panels are covered up or obstructed by items, making it difficult to locate or access when needed (usually in the dark). We recommend that you locate your breaker panels, familiarize yourself with them, and make sure the breakers are labelled. Again, planning ahead can save a lot of frustration and expense down the road when you least expect it. It is also a good idea to keep a working flashlight in a key location so you know where it is when needed.

- 6) **Fire Extinguishers.** Nothing seems to cause more panic than fire, the ones we aren't expecting! Being prepared is crucial, because once a fire breaks out there is no time to waste. Keep fire extinguishers in key locations around the house so you know where they are and how to use. Check your smoke detectors, make sure they work all the time. This can make the difference of life or death for yourself or your loved ones.

Just remember that unexpected things happen in our homes and being prepared can make a big difference, whether it be in minimizing damage from a water leak or having a medical emergency. Be prepared, check on the items listed, and have these tools in place before an emergency!



ADMINISTRATOR'S CORNER

Moving to Oregon has been exciting, challenging and rewarding. I have learned and adapted to deal with many additional layers of government and bureaucracy that are seemingly never ending. Oregon is perceived by the rest of the United States as being on "the cutting edge" of new ideas and creative techniques for governing, so it has been very interesting learning new ways to address public policy and concerns. Council has implemented and funded a variety of projects with the help of the Budget Committee. Council is also working towards developing a long-range capital improvements plan for the maintenance and development of facilities and infrastructure. The City is constructing the largest public works project in its history this Summer, the Wastewater Improvements Project. So far the project is moving along nicely.

The City is in the process of replacing the filter media in the filters for the water plant. We completed one filter earlier this summer and intend to replace another filter this Fall. Every ten years the sand is required to be replaced. We will also be making upgrades to monitoring equipment at the water plant as well. The new Council has developed a strong working relationship

with Staff and continues to make strides in developing relations with State officials, intergovernmental agencies and the public. Meetings have been formalized and Council chambers received a slight makeover at the beginning of the year. Several internal processes have been implemented to streamline operations and policies and procedures are currently being defined and clarified for both Staff and citizens.

The Library Advisory Board is attempting to look at policies and procedures to meet the recommendations of the audit which was completed in 2005. The Library is in the process of completing the installation of new software which will assist in inventory control and how materials are checked out. The Parks & Open Space Advisory Board continue to develop plans for the parks and the tree inventory for town. Brownsville was recently named a Tree City. The City has also made strides to reclaim the history of the cemetery with grant money and efforts organized by Kathy Nida. The City will continue to make improvements in order to serve the needs of our community. I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome extended to my family. I look forward to working with you in years to come.

S. Scott McDowell, Administrator



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