



Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
October 6, 2009
7:00 p.m.
Irrigon City Hall
500 NE Main Avenue

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair David Wood called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Planning Commission members present were: David Wood, Dale Beamer, Stacy Nordquist Absent: Tanna Dole, Amy Sandy

Staff present: City Manager Gerald Breazeale

Citizens present: Mayor James Ray, Laura Clark, Bonnie Baxter, Bill Cooley, Irene Fetsch, Arnold Theisen, John Swanson, Sherman Brown, Patsy Rodnque, Leta Palmore, Wayne Huwe Jr.

3. Approve Minutes from the September 1, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Nordquist moved to approve the September 1, 2009 minutes. Commissioner Beamer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Public Hearing**

Chair Amy Sandy **opened the Public Hearing Umatilla Army Depot Reuse Opportunities.**

Vice Chair David Wood asked City Manager Gerald Breazeale if he has anything to say regarding this subject. City Manager Breazeale stated that this hearing was the main purpose for the meeting. He explained that the Umatilla Army Depot would be closed when the last of the chemical agent is disposed of. Currently they have burned all of the agent with the exception of the mustard gas. The good thing is that the chemical stockpile will be destroyed and that threat removed. The bad new is that the jobs that were created by the demolition will be gone along with the chemical agent. There were approximately

800 people employed on the base. When the base is vacated there is a process to go through to obtain where local communities can make proposals for the reuse of the property. The communities can request to own portions of the property or make other proposals regarding the property and real estate. Two years ago the Irrigon City Council adopted as one of its goals to obtain the Depot property once it is vacated for industrial development. Since that time the Umatilla Army Depot Reuse Authority has been formed. This is a group made up of two members each of Morrow County, the Port of Morrow, Umatilla County, the Port of Umatilla, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and two exoficio members. The two exoficio members are Scott Fairley from the Governor's Economic Revitalization Team, and Col. Rock Chilton from the Oregon National Guard.

He explained that it looks like the Base will be closed and empty by the first part of 2011. There have been some delays with the start up of the mustard gas destruction or the Base would be projected to close earlier. According to public law, there has to be a process followed for the disposal of the real estate. There must be an LRA (Local Reuse Authority) formed to make decisions as to the future uses of the base. That LRA has been formed and the process can now go forward. The time window has been opened for the submission of Notice of Interest that allow local agencies to make requests to use the property. If you don't submit a notice of interest, you don't have standing once the window for submission closes. The period will close November 23rd. If the City of Irrigon has not submitted a notice of interest the City can still make comments and participate in the meetings, but the standing in the record is not there. There will not be the opportunity to submit a formal proposal in the future. In order to submit the notice of interest a couple of things need to happen. One is to have a public hearing to gain public opinion and the other is to have a resolution of the City Council supporting the submission of the notice of interest.

Because there is very little time now to submit that notice of interest, in order to obtain public opinion, the City sent out a flyer (showed to the audience) requesting comments. Eleven returns had been received to date. The results were: Wind turbines 4, Industrial area 7, housing 0, rail 3, utilities 3. The way those questions are laid out is because of the proximity of the depot to Irrigon and some uses appear more reasonable than others. City Manager Breazeale then went and pointed to a topographic map taped to the wall and pointed out the various features on the base and their relationship to Irrigon. For reference he pointed out I-84, I-82, the Columbia River and the north gate on the south end of Division Street. He pointed out that the City's new domestic water reservoir sits just north of the north gate and close to the well and water tower on the Army Base. He also pointed out that the road that runs through the north gate is paved and traveling south you can access the 100 and 200 block industrial buildings. Traveling east from there you can access the administration area and I-84 interchange. City Manager Breazeale described the rail facilities that run through the base property. Of particular interest is the rail access that once was provided to the buildings on the west end of the base. There used to be a switch from the Union Pacific rail line to access the base rail. That switch was removed. It will need to be restored before the rail access to the base buildings can be used. He described the buildings in the 100 and 200 block buildings that he, Mayor Ray and Public Works Director Keith White had toured earlier that day. Although they are generally in a degrading state, they are still repairable and capable of being renovated for industrial use. A question from the audience was fielded about the condition of the buildings that was reported in the East Oregonian article. The article indicated that the buildings were beyond repair and that they were contaminated with asbestos. City Manager Breazeale stated that the buildings needed roof repairs and some siding, but otherwise they were sound. The asbestos was in the siding panels, was not friable, and was not an immediate hazard. He further stated that there was rot in some of the roof sheeting, but was repairable. The structural members were in good condition. The buildings have not been maintained since at least 1997. There are pigeons in the buildings and a lot of droppings. However, he did not believe that it was anything that could not be cleaned up.

City Manager Breazeale pointed out that the well and water tank on the north end of the Army Base was less than a mile from the City's new domestic water reservoir. There was a 12" waterline on the Army

Base within less than ¾ mile from the City reservoir. It would not take a lot of work to intertie the two systems and the water could be pumped either direction. The wells on base could help supply Irrigon and the water line from the City wells near the river could supply water to the base from the City wells. He reviewed the water rights and well capacity on the base with the audience. He then described the existing sewer system on the base. The current system is adequate to serve the needs of the Army Base. A question from the audience about where the water comes from on the on base wells. City Manager Breazeale stated that the wells were all from the deep basalt aquifer. The deep wells are much less likely to be contaminated from surface conditions. Another question from the audience related to the water supplied by the City of Irrigon and the testing done. Breazeale explained that the City water system is tested frequently for a host of potential contaminants. The water from the news wells is of excellent quality and meets all State and Federal standards. It compares favorably with what you would expect to find in bottled water.

A question regarding whether the airstrip on the base was still usable was brought up. Breazeale stated that it is not usable in its current state and that he had been told that the stacks from the power plant to the east caused a problem with the glide path for planes. There is suitable terrain for a new strip further to the north however. Another question was raised about the size of the property. Breazeale informed the audience that the area was about 20,000 acres. The City is not promoting asking for the entire property as there are a lot of competing interests and it would also be too much for the City to take care of. There was also interest in preserving some of the shrub-steppe habitat that is on the base. Perhaps many potentially competing interests could be accommodated by careful planning.

City Manager Breazeale talked about the potential for harvesting wind and solar power on the property. Another question from the audience asked about whether the City would be incorporating the land being asked for. Breazeale explained that there are a number of scenarios that could be used which may or may not include incorporation into the City. Currently that would not be practical as the property would need to be contiguous. The City would be able to provide services outside the city limits, but would not be able to expand the sewer without it being in the Urban Growth Boundary.

A question was raised about the igloos. Breazeale explained that they would be great for storage of any kind. The temperature varies little year round. They are concrete with an earth cover. They are extremely secure. There are more than 1,000 igloos on site. John Swanson stated that if the City owned them, there would be very little expense in renting them out for revenue.

Breazeale reviewed the relationship of Irrigon to the Depot and that the proposal the City is considering would be to own the west two miles of the base. That would take in the north gate and the 100 and 200 block buildings along with many igloos. Arnold Theisen mentioned that the Administration Area has considerable development. This is a key area. Breazeale stated that some ideas that had been tossed out were a fairgrounds for Eastern Oregon and a possible racetrack. There are many potential uses for the property. He stated that what the community was being asked to do now was to let the City Council know what they wanted from the Army Base if anything. Citizen input would be passed on to City Council for their resolution as to what the City's interest is in the property.

After receiving a question about the process, City Manager Breazeale explained that the City would submit a proposal based on what the citizens of Irrigon said that they wanted. That proposal would be reviewed by the Local Reuse Authority and the LRA would use that information when making their plan for the Base reuse. The submission of the Notice of Interest will ensure that the voices of Irrigon citizens are at least considered when the LRA develops the final plan for the disposition of the property.

Arnold Theisen asked if the City was considering the 100 and 200 block area buildings for the industrial park. Breazeale stated that is the case. The area is served by a road system and by rail. The existing buildings are in disrepair, but reclaimable. The area is much larger than it would appear from the map. A question from the audience about how would the City pay for the improvements was answered that the City would need to prepare a financial plan. At this time however, the City is asking for thoughts about what can be done with the property and what the citizens of Irrigon want to get out of it. The City knows

how to operate the water and sewer systems and that is one area that the City is looking at. Grants and loans are available for many of the improvements that may be needed. David Wood stated that the restoration of the rail and the development could have significant impact on

5. Downtown Development Plan and US 730 Streetscape Plan Report

Acting Chair David Wood asked City Manager Breazeale if he had anything to report. Breazeale reported that the recommendation by the Planning Commission to the City Council for modification to the plan was given to the City Council. This modification would be to compromise with the demands of the freight industry for wider street sections through Irrigon than are called for by highway design standards. The City Council did not agree to the compromise and felt that they would rather take the issue to the Transportation Commission. Patrick Knight suggested that a meeting be set up with the Freight Committee and see if there were areas that could be agreed to. He did recommend that the City submit the 45 day notice to DLCD and then we could theoretically adopt our plan in December. Even if the City and the Freight Committee can not reach agreement the City can hold the required hearings and then decide what to do next. With submission of the 45 day notice to DLCD the City would have met all the legal requirements for adoption. Breazeale stated that the legislation that requires the City to go through this process with the freight people merely states that the City must CONSULT with the Freight Committee before adoption. It does not require the City to agree to their demands. The main issue for the City is safety.

6. Additional Discussion

There being no further discussion Commissioner Nordquist moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beamer. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Adjournment:

Next Regular Meeting: City of Irrigon Planning Commission – November 3, 2009
All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.

Tanna Dole
Planning Commission Secretary