

The Linking Letter

March 6, 2017: Town Hall With Paul Evans; Indy Station Revisited; PIN REPORT; Date-to-Note

By Anne Scheck

*[Please note: the February issue of The Independent is attached by PDF; The **March** issue of **The Independent** is now available at the Ovenbird Bakery, The Golden Horse, Elite Cleaners (downtown) and The Starduster (at the airport)]*

TOWN HALL: New Corporate Tax Being Explored, Says Rep. Paul Evans

Reforming the state's corporate tax structure may be one way to help rescue Oregon's ailing budget, according to State Representative Paul Evans, who met with about a dozen people in a town hall meeting at the Ovenbird Bakery in late February. "The budget is everyone's most important topic to talk about," said Rep. Evans, who answered questions about the legislative session's struggle over a nearly \$1.5 billion budgetary shortfall, as well as fielding individual inquiries ranging from how to beat the high cost of living as a retiree to ways to raise more city revenue.

He and other democratic lawmakers have been holding meetings at cities and communities across their districts to determine their constituents' views on the state's current financial dilemma. Attendees at the bakery gathered around a long makeshift table, and, over coffee and pastry, several residents expressed worry over how the state budget might impact the public pocketbook.

A top cost driver is the Oregon Health Authority, with a cost increase of about 50% since the last budget session, said Rep. Evans. Several business tax reforms — some simple, some more complex — are being discussed in the current legislative session, he noted. The concept for a new corporate tax is being investigated again, as well, Rep. Evans said. The last proposed corporate tax was put to voters this past November -- Measure 97 -- and was roundly defeated in all counties except Multnomah and Benton.

OLD EYESORE: Councilor Calls for Report On Independence Station

Labeling Independence Station "an eyesore," City Councilor Ken Day called for a report on the status of the unfinished downtown building during the last city council meeting — and pushed for that information to be available the next time the council convenes.

The still incomplete structure is an issue that needs to be addressed, Councilor Day said. "So how about in two weeks?" he asked. City Manager David Clyne declined to confirm that city staff could meet that timeline, but he noted that "we hear about it every day."

This year, Independence Station marked its 13th anniversary since the foundation was laid for the proposed LEED Platinum energy-efficient building, which stalled mid-way through construction. Three years ago, the city attempted to foreclose on it, citing allegedly unpaid system-development charges owed to the city. The owners reportedly secured a loan and paid their debt to Independence, but no significant construction has taken place since that time.

PIN REPORT: *New Code Enforcement Officer*
Public Interest News

Julio Navarro, who has been working part-time for the Independence Police Department, was officially sworn in by Police Chief Robert Mason at the last city council meeting. Officer Navarro, who is fluent in Spanish, grew up in Independence and works in code enforcement.

Date-to-Note: A public hearing on the facilities for producing and processing cannabis in the Stryker Road Industrial Zone will be held Monday at 7 pm, March 13, before the Independence Planning Commission at the Civic Center, 555 S. Main Street.