

The
LINKING
LETTER

By Anne Scheck

Oct. 19, 2017

Coverage: City Council

Tuesday, 10/10/2017

City Council: Lone Vote Cast

City Council: Water Fund?

PIN Report: Vets Roundtable

DATE-TO-NOTE Oct. 24, City Council

Editorial Note: Why not viral?

Finale: Marijuana Licensing

SINGLE NO VOTE
TO MORE FUNDS

City councilor Marilyn Morton cast the first dissenting vote to date on a new funding resolution for *Independence Landing*, saying “I’d rather see the cap *not* keep going up on this.” She then voted “no” to a newly proposed financial plan.

Councilor Tom Takacs voted with the affirming majority -- but he inquired about one discussion point: \$100,000 for refurbishment of the parking lot between the former city hall and the post office, which wasn’t part of the original loan agreement. Is including the parking lot appropriate, he asked, given that “we haven’t definitely decided about the (future) of the old city hall?”

“It doesn’t make sense to take it off the table,” replied City Manager David Clyne. “A hundred thousand is just not very much.” Landscaping and repairs are needed on the cracked parking surface of the old city hall, Mr. Clyne said.

The initial cost to the city for *Independence Landing* was about \$1.2 million -- to purchase the riverfront land and grade the property. Then, street-paving and other shovel-ready projects -- which the city guaranteed to the

developer -- added an estimated \$3.5 million. However, only \$3.25 million is necessary, even with the additions, said Shawn Irvine, the city's economic development director.

Under the terms of the loan with the state, the city cannot exceed about \$2.9 million. "Once you get over \$3 million, it's a much more extensive and time-consuming process for approval of the financing," Mr. Irvine said. By taking advantage of another lending agreement, some additional money can be freed for a "second phase" of improvements – with the projected cost savings of more than \$200,000 compared with the original estimate, he explained.

(The October issue of The Independent covers Independence Landing in its most recent issue; It is now at downtown outlets and at the airport's Starduster Restaurant).

WATER RATE PLAN **FUNDS QUESTIONED**

A plan to fund part of the needed water-treatment improvements through system development charges (SDCs) from *Independence Landing* was presented by the water-rate consultant to the city council, but he was unaware there will be no SDCs collected from the hotel development.

"Now you've got a plan," said Steve Donovan, the Portland-based expert hired by the city to present the funding plan for upgrades to the city water and sewer system. "This is why last month I was such a pain in the neck – saying we need to get a plan," he told councilors.

Asked outside the meeting why the plan seemed to depend, in part, on \$2 million in SDCs that weren't going to be collected from the hotel developer, Tokola Properties, Mr. Donovan said he wasn't aware of the "specifics" of the contract with Tokola.

Under terms of the contract with Tokola, the city agreed to waive the SDCs. City manager David Clyne – when asked about it after the September city council meeting – said the money will be repaid by future lodging and property taxes from the development, once it's built and operational.

Water-sewer rates are expected to increase \$4-to-\$5 a month, depending on use, based on the recommendations (2.53% annual increase for drinking water; 4.15% annual increase for waste water). "This is what you can roughly

expect, year in and year out, for the next four-to-five years,” Mr. Clyne told councilors.

PIN REPORT
Public Interest News

Rep. Paul Evans kicked off his first “veterans round table” this year at the Independence Library last night -- with an ambitious agenda that includes a state-wide conference in January at Western Oregon University and re-introduction of a bill this winter that will prohibit mandatory sales of military medals to help pay the bills of deceased indebted veterans. The legislation also includes new assisted-living space for veterans in Roseburg. Joining the round table was local author Billy Whisenant, who recently became commander of Post 33 American Legion in Independence.

DATE-TO-NOTE: **October 24**

CITY COUNCIL TUESDAY 6:30pm

Changes to the city’s development code to be discussed.

Editorial NOTE by Anne Scheck, publisher of *The Linking Letter*

Today is a special day for me -- of the saddest kind. Ten years ago, I got a phone call in the middle of the night, a sure sign of bad news. My niece had died by suicide. A wonderful cousin to my children, a beloved pal to all, and an outdoor enthusiast who always appreciated rugged nature more than I could. She lives on in vibrant memories, though they're clouded by grief.

So it puzzles me why a locally-produced *youtube* video – a short, astounding combination of art and action -- isn’t going viral. Central High School (CHS) students, in a wordless drama that nonetheless speaks volumes, made a suicide-prevention message with disarming poignancy. It’s so good it makes me wonder if we have future Pulitzer prize-winners living here. I urge you to watch, and pass it on. It can be viewed at the link below. Thank you, CHS.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3KO-xtQt3c>

Anne Scheck
Editor and Publisher,
The Linking Letter, *The Linking Loop* and THE INDEPENDENT

October issue is here: PICK UP AN ISSUE OF THE

INDEPENDENT featuring coverage of Independence Landing.

Issues are available at The Golden Horse Restaurant, Elite Cleaners, The Ovenbird Bakery, Brew and Tap House – all downtown. And at The Starduster Restaurant at Independence State Airport. AND NOW also at ROBIN’S ROOST, across from the old city hall building.

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FINALE: Marijuana Business License Amended

Regulations for business licenses governing retail sales of marijuana in Independence were loosened to allow stores to operate lawfully if they are meeting restrictions required by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, the Oregon Health Authority, or both. In a unanimous vote by the city council, councilors passed provisions aimed at ensuring compliance without unnecessarily duplicating the legal processing for licensing set forth by the state agencies.

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The Linking Letter is a publication of Trammart News Inc., mailing address 3760 Market St., #409, Salem, Oregon 97301. Phone [503 409 9204](tel:5034099204)