



Vernonia Schools – Oregon Solutions Steering Committee
Scout Cabin, Vernonia
January 10th, 2-3:30pm
Minutes

Attendees: Sharon Bernal, VEDC; Dan Brown, Community Action Team; Carol Cox; Ken Cox, VSD; John Donovan, Metropolitan Group; Gretchen Dursch, Oregon Solutions; Steve Effros, Project Manager; Mark Ellsworth, Governor Kitzhaber’s office; Bill Haack, Vernonia City Administrator; Josette Hugo, Rep. Witt’s office; Tony Hyde, Columbia County Commissioner; Senator Betsy Johnson; Jim Johnson, Oregon Solutions; David Kim, ODOT; Greg Kintz, VSD School Board, Oregon School Boards Association; Bill Langmaid, Vernonia School Board; Heather Lewis, Vernonia Health Center Board; Kelly Marks, PCC; Mary McArthur, Col-PAC; Larry McKinley, ODOT; Vernonia Mayor Josette Mitchell; Randy Parrow, Vernonia City Council; Sharon Parrow, Vernonia Planning Commission; DeAnna Pearl, Vernonia Prevention Coalition; Mike Pihl, Pihl Logging; Dawn Plews, VSD; Marc Siegel, Rep. Merkley’s office, Gordon Smith, Retired; Donna Webb, Vernonia City Council; Wendy Willis, PSU

Vernonia High School Leadership: Teacher; Teri Willard, teacher, Students; Amanda Mikalow, Ashley Archer, Dakota Henson, Krystina Fields,

Community Projects

Bill Haack

Three years ago, when Jim Johnson was first in the city he coined the phrase, “rebuild the city” – we are still working on that.

Bill handed out information and discussed: wastewater facility improvement project; waste rate study; Oregon Park and Recreation department; USDA Woody Biomass Utilization Grant; Rose Avenue Project; Vernonia Health Board; California Avenue and Photo Solutions; COV Natural Resource partnership; SDC Fee Schedule; EPA Brownfield Grant.

Vernonia Health Board

Heather Lewis

Heather reported that the Vernonia Health Board (VHB) has contracted with Dr. Brian Miller, Hillsboro. Dr. Miller plans to open a new practice at the old clinic site in February 2012. Community members are happy that there will be minimal disruption to services. VHB continues to pursue a buyout through the FEMA process and is looking at three different properties to either build or move out of the flood plain.

Heather reported on a new partnership with Pacific University, VHB and Vernonia Prevention Coalition, the three will be doing free dental exams for students in the district for students in grades K-12. This is an exciting new partnership through the Oregon Solutions process. Betsy Johnson congratulated the VHB, noting that the new clinic will provide an enormous stabilizing effect and that thanked the board for their hard work.

Construction

Steve Effros

Ariel photos of the new school and wetlands will be forwarded to the committee. Five projects are currently underway. Two are in the design phase - demolition and park design. Three projects are currently under construction - school, wetlands and road project. The school project is working on installing major electrical and mechanical portions of the building. The biomass boiler is on site, but is not yet connected. Wetlands is a major project, grading is complete; landscaping portion is being done now. 150 trees will be taken from school to wetlands site, Vernonia students will be planting trees. Road project – the underground utilities portion is almost complete. David Kim is in Vernonia today and will meet Wednesday with the contractors to go over final drawings for above ground utility portion.

Senator Johnson discussed opportunities to cement good public relations – like the fact that the biomass boiler was built in St. Helens. She encouraged press opportunities of the kids planting trees for the wetlands site. Senator Johnson suggested a public relations plan and responsible people to execute it. Senator Johnson noted that one of the values of an Oregon solutions project is that resources are developed that can be exported to other communities.

There is a tremendous opportunity for Vernonia to take advantage of amenities needed by walkers, bikers and people who ride horses. This is the kind of energy that keeps the community vital. It is a big deal that Miss Rodeo America – Mackenzie Carr, is from Vernonia, it is one of the things could make others aware of Vernonia.

Budget recap

Ken Cox

\$38.3 million dollars was the first price of the new school construction set before the guaranteed maximum price from the contractors; total project cost is now \$40 million. Several factors have influenced the price increase. This Thursday the Vernonia School Board will take action on approval of bridge financing to complete the project. August 1, 2012 should be the first we can move in furniture. September 15, 2012 is the start date of demolition of current school site.

Senator Johnson requested that information about the school opening be sent well in advance so government officials, donors and community members would be able to attend. She mentioned a possible Trailblazer exhibition game for opening ceremonies.

Resource Budget & Upcoming Fundraising Activities

John Donovan

John reported that 77% of needed funds have been raised to date. We have some exiting leads that are in the works. Tim Woods, Oregon State Parks, visited Vernonia. Oregon State Parks is helping with the park system for Vernonia. Two years ago we talked about this fundraising that is a little different than most, it has all been done at once, major donors,

small donors, federal, state, county and local. The (state) community phase of the effort is underway. Clear Chanel ran a great series of press releases this fall, they would like to come to Vernonia and work on more press release information/concepts.

Mark Ellsworth asked in the midst of tough times, how do we compare to other national efforts of the same or similar types? John spoke about TFFF challenge grant. 90% of the challenge match is in, \$250k has been raised over the last six weeks.

The Gordon Smith/Sentry challenge match, was matched through several local businesses and the efforts of the Wauna Federal Credit Union.

Student Fundraising

Amanda Mikalow/Krystina Fields

Amanda and Krystina reported that the VHS leadership class has done a school to school state wide challenge. Scappoose high school has already met their goal. The VHS Leadership class has a goal of \$2,012, if all schools that have pledged to assist reach their goal, it will raise \$11,000. The students showed the school to school video produced by VHS students.

John discussed the ark of the community campaign structure saying that from here forward, we are going to be putting in place a partnership with the Trailblazers, spring push to community efforts and statewide direct mail program to pre-qualified direct pitch. We plan to make sure to go back to Clear Channel to coincide with direct mail campaign. Outward statewide grass roots fundraising efforts. Columbia-Willamette and Columbia County United Way have agreed to assist with spring campaign.

The Soejima family is an example of a family that has been making donations through the athletic department for years. Mr. Soejima's daughters made a donation for his 88th birthday to name the Boys Coaching Office in his honor. This is one of the stories that we have not told.

Marc Seigal suggested that for elected officials, the earlier the request for attending an opening event and the more details provided the better. The third week in August was offered as possibly a good time for elected officials to attend.

Endowment for the Arts grant – Bill discussed possible opportunities for this. NEA grant forwarded for The Arts. Local job creation important component of the grant. Tony Hyde suggested a foundry.

Wendy Willis suggested activating kids and families statewide. She suggested activating the Department of Education involvement for assistance.

DeAnna Pearl suggested that adding the part of the bigger picture, positive community norms can include using volunteer resources of time. People are past needing assistance; they are ready to begin to help again. She suggested a group of people that would like to be part of the celebration. DeAnna offered, in her capacity of Vernonia Prevention Coalition, to assist with needed volunteer coordination.

Ken reported on current project collaboration efforts; landscaping – PCC and VHS students will help with landscaping. The move needs to be coordinated, volunteers will be needed.

Aaron Miller, Ken Cox and John Donovan will be visiting with the John Gray Foundation – Vernonia will be one of only four groups invited to speak for 2.5 hours. Aaron has compiled a wonderful presentation for the upcoming colloquium.

Gordon Smith reported that Teevin Bros. Land and Timber Company discounted over \$85k in products and donated \$10,000 in cash.

Students have offered an incentive; a logging demonstration completed by Ax Man Mike Pihl and Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde.

Discussion was held regarding donations of time and equipment to assist with completion of athletic fields, Gordon Smith suggested that fuel vouchers could be offered for those who work on the athletic fields. He also suggested requesting from Steve Wilcox for fuel so those donating equipment and time can afford to donate.

Adjourn: 3:37pm

Next meeting: to be scheduled