



Vernonia Schools – Oregon Solutions Steering Committee
Scout Cabin, Vernonia
October 26, 2010, 1-2:30pm
Minutes

Attendance: Steve Anderson, P&C Construction; Sharon Bernal, VEDC; Dan Brown, Vernonia Recovery; Dr. Ken Cox, VSD Superintendent; Steve Effros, Aadland Evans Project Manager; Bill Haack, City of Vernonia Administrator; Stephanie Hallock, Oregon Solutions; Sally Harrison, Mayor of Vernonia; Josette Hugo, Rep. Witt’s office; Tony Hyde, Columbia County Commissioner; Alissa Keny-Guyer, Oregon Solutions; David Kim, ODOT; Gayle Lee, IBEW Local 48; Heather Lewis, Vernonia Health Center Board; Leo McCloud, Mainspring Marketing; Kelly Marks, PCC; Steve Marx, Rep. Wu’s office; Betsy Miller, VSD; Marc Siegel, Sen. Merkley’s office; Gordon Smith, Vernonia Sentry

Introductions by Co-convener /Commissioner Tony Hyde

School Project Update

Dr. Cox reported on the Chalkboard Project staff meeting and tour of the new school site on September 3, attended by Alissa Keny-Guyer and Betsy Miller. VSD held a town hall on October 14, announcing that P & C construction has been awarded the construction contract. There will be a contractor’s summit October 26, 3-6pm. A neighborhood meeting is planned on November 2 with OA hill residents regarding construction timelines. P&C has weekly design meetings with Boora and others. Actual groundbreaking will be as soon as permission is given by FEMA; the official groundbreaking ceremony will be December 2, 10am, on the new school site. Governor Kulongoski is expected to attend.

Steve Effros reported that the FEMA “finding of no significant impact” (FONSI) should be done by mid-November. It is usually tied to award of funds and marks the start of construction. Steve is working closely with the contractor on mitigation and other issues in a phased approach. We will move on a set of structural documents to full build-out next year. The process is moving very quickly. It is a great team: P&C, Boora and environmental design team. Full document and short summary are available for review at VSD office. Summary information is also available on the Vernonia School District website.

The comment period on the document is open until November 2. With offices in Portland, P&C just finishing Scappoose school district upgrades and has four current projects in Columbia County. When the RFP for contractors went out, four qualified for step one, but only P&C qualified for step 2. VSD is asking for a guaranteed maximum price from P & C –

including adjustments, concrete tilt-up construction. The process has been a little different in that the contractor is on board and is working with actual architect. By the time there is a 100% document, there should not be many change orders because of the process of working together. Wording in the contract has been strengthened to add significant language identifying areas open for bid to the community. That is part of the contractors summit meeting slated for today, 3-6pm in the cafeteria.

Parallel design and permitting efforts are underway with Highway 47 and Missouri Avenue. Bill Haack will start a special public works request through OBDD.

Tony Hyde asked if wetland monitoring will be done. Ken reported that in an agreement with City of Vernonia, VSD will provide wetland monitoring for a period of 7 years. This time could shorten once everything is established. Mayor Sally Harrison noted that the city council wondered about the monitoring, which led to the agreement that city staff spend 10 hours a week on maintenance. Tony Hyde suggested wetland monitoring/testing may be of interest to potential funders. We should pursue wetland partnerships among school classes, the City, granting partners and others.

Campaign Update

Commissioner Tony Hyde reported on the Oregon Forest Industries Council presentation on October 11, where he was accompanied by Steve Effros, John Donovan, Senator Betsy Johnson, Tony Hyde and Catherine Mater. Senator Johnson flew our team and Tim Nesbitt, Chief of Staff for Governor Kulongoski, to Sunriver to meet with 75 Timber industry executives. Senator Johnson introduced the presentation; Tony Hyde outlined Vernonia's two floods and historical economic challenges; and Catherine Mater presented information on a forest/human health initiative.

Co-Conveners Tom Kelly and Tony Hyde, Mark Ellsworth and Alissa Keny-Guyer gave a Vernonia project update to the Oregon Solutions Advisory Board and Ray Naff, the Governor's director of Intergovernmental Relations, in Governor Kulongoski's office on October 13.

USDA Oregon Director Vicki Walker and Catherine Mater accompanied Sarah Bittleman, Senior Advisor to USDA Secretary Vilsack, on a tour of Vernonia on Sept. 27. As a result of that visit, Catherine submitted a proposal to USDA's Portland office to seek a Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant to fund a KLS survey. The grant will help this rural business build capacity to use 3-D laser technology in the forest to survey 360 degree angles up to 50 meters out to determine biomass and add a carbon calculation to that. The grant includes match from Regence and Lora L. and Martin N. Kelley Family Foundation.

Tony Hyde, Dan Brown, and Bill Haack presented the Vernonia story to the Grant Makers of Oregon and SW Washington (GOSW) biennial conference during the opening session October 13, 2010 in Astoria. Alissa, who went as an attendee, said they did a great job.

Mayor Sally Harrison reported that the City of Nehalem, through Mayor Shirlee Kalkhoven has donated \$1,000 and challenged others cities to do the same. Mayor Harrison reported that the city of Maupin met the challenge and donated \$1,000.

Donation Update

Saquish Family Fund, through Deborah Werly Steffen: \$10,000

Lora L. and Martin N. Kelley Family Foundation: \$50,000

Portland Trail Blazers' Make it Better Fund: \$10,000.

Two cultivation events were held: Sept. 20 in Hillsboro and Sept. 30 in Portland.

Local businesses: Gordon Smith reported that he is working on having a high percentage of businesses that donate to the \$10,000 challenge grant he is making from Sentry Grocery. Goal is 100% participation. Gordon offered to speak to the VEDC and Vernonia Chamber membership. Sharon Bernal and Bill Haack will help him reach out.

Mr. Webb reduced the price of the property purchased by VSD by \$50,000, which is an in-kind donation.

Federal update

Marc Siegel reported that a \$300k request is in the bill passed by the Senate Energy and Water committee. It likely will be a Dept. of Energy bill for energy efficiency measures.

FEMA

Dan Brown reported that the FEMA application is done and has had minor adjustments. The only thing missing is a letter to be signed by Bill, Tony and Ken today or tomorrow. November 15th is still the target date for issuing the FONSI. Release of funds will occur shortly thereafter. National Parks timeline information will hopefully be finished at the same time.

Dan and others thanked Dr. Ken Cox, who joins the weekly FEMA phone calls every Friday, for his continued hard work on behalf of the school system and the community.

State Update

Steve Effros reported that the campaign has worked with ODOT's David Kim and the City of Vernonia for Tiger II grants; we did not get the US-DOT award for the estimated cost of \$3.2 million to improve the roads around the school. Environmental effort will add cost savings. Preliminary plans have been reviewed; a lot of legwork is done. David Kim and ODOT leadership are working aggressively to support Vernonia and look for state resources for the project. Timeline for design is 2011 and for roadwork to be completed by the end of 2012. Acquisition of land from owners is a process that takes time. Region I environmental unit is doing some carbon sequestration work and is interested in the Vernonia project.

Alissa handed out campaign updates for Fall 2010 and reported on the opportunity last week for co-conveners Tony Hyde and Tom Kelley to thank the governor's staff and state agency partners, including ODOT at the Oregon Solutions advisory meeting, for their support and proactive cooperation.

Vernonia Rural Sustainability Committee (VRSC)

Stephanie Hallock said that the VRSC committee has met several times. On Sept 14, OSU and PSU faculty toured Vernonia to visit and the watershed, school sites, curricular and economic development opportunities. PCC had a workforce development day but will do a similar field trip at a later date. Follow up with PSU and OSU faculty regarding projects continue. A collaborative community survey in January will be sent to look at center usage and other questions from the watershed council and health board. The design team will draw up options for the center. The VRSC did not receive Miller Foundation grant for planning. Oregon Solutions will still be involved actively; Alissa and Stephanie will be involved through at least June 2011.

Community Project Updates

Mayor Harrison asked Bill Haack to report on the Rose Ave. project, which is moving forward and looking at construction in a few years. The transfer of 2+ acres from Oregon Parks and Recreation needs final DEQ analysis level 4 due to a 25,000 gallon storage tank there. The City expects a “no further action” letter from DEQ, which will reduce the City’s liability. DEQ and Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD) partnered to turn in an application for partial cleanup efforts. If successful, many properties from Nehalem Ave. north to Columbia Street will benefit from the clean up.

An agreement for land transfer is in place. Once land comes to the City, the City is in a quandary because the state Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application slowed due to a previous grant. This could be a timing problem for two of three possible projects: Only one active CDBG grant is allowed at a time; currently Vernonia has four open.

Bill Haack warned of the long-term challenge and need for upkeep of so many open spaces, parks and gardens. The wastewater project has been in motion since 2003, but the unfinished project was flooded. An elevated dike system is needed.

The health clinic is partnering with the coastal family health center in Astoria as a federally qualified access point, to apply for the Federally Qualified Health Clinic status (application due in November) to increase access and reduce costs for patients. This should bring in some construction as well as operating funds for the new clinic on Rose Avenue.

Mary McArthur, discussed a business incubator model – physical housing for biomass boiler heating hub for Rose Ave project. Photo Solutions would like to move into that incubator.

Questions, Comments and Next Steps

Steve Marks asked if the federal delegation could help with a USDA after-school lunch program.

Everyone expressed great appreciation to Mark Ellsworth, this region’s Economic Revitalization Team (ERT) manager for his efforts on this campaign.

*Steering Committee meetings: 4th Tuesday every other month, 1-2:30pm, Vernonia
NO MEETING IN DECEMBER, so we'll resume alternate months beginning with
our next meeting in January, 2011.