



City of Oregon City

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Staff Report

File Number: PC 14-038

Agenda Date: 4/8/2014

Status: Agenda Ready

To: City Commission

Agenda #: 3c.

From: Community Development Director Tony Konkol

File Type: Planning Item

SUBJECT:

Willamette Falls Legacy Project Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):

The City Commission will hear an update from staff on the status of the site, the recent Partners Group meeting and revised Land Use timeline.

BACKGROUND:

For the past nine months, thousands of Willamette Falls Legacy Project supporters have helped shape a vision and master framework plan for the former Blue Heron site. That work is nearly ready to go before the Oregon City Planning Commission and City Commission in the form of a zone change and a master plan. The first public hearing of the Planning Commission was scheduled for April 21, 2014. Since then, several developers have made offers to purchase the Blue Heron property. The current interested buyer is studying the site and framework plan, and meeting with Legacy Project partners to explore how their ideas for the area fit our community vision. Last week, the bankruptcy trustee for the site, Peter McKittrick, sent a letter requesting that the City postpone the land use hearings to give the potential buyer more time for due diligence. As the trustee and the project partners have been working in good faith for many months, the partners are happy to accommodate this request. Mr. McKittrick's letter describes the value of the visioning and planning effort, stating "I believe this planning project has already created increased recognition and value for the site."

A new date for the first public hearing has not yet been determined. However, the City will host a public Open House on April 21st from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at City Hall, 625 Center Street, to display the proposed master plan. This informal event will offer a chance to chat with City staff about the Willamette Falls Legacy Project prior to public hearings. In the meantime, momentum is not slowing down - the partners are hard at work on implementation of the plan. We are beginning to seek funding for a riverfront walkway that will catalyze the entire site and downtown area. In addition, more than 150 people have signed up as community champions. The champions have pledged to lend a hand to the project by writing letters of support, volunteering to organize site tours, and being part of a "Friends of Willamette Falls" group in the future.

