

Testimony by Jerry Herrmann

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Stewardship Approaches to a New Public Works Center

I have been following the discussions, design adjustments and approaches to the Public Works Center located in conjunction with Waterboard Park. I do not claim to know where the park boundaries are or aren't. Seven years ago, I provided testimony to the planning commission on the need to integrate the historic "Company D" Armory, in any and all design ideas.

At that time, I focused on the unique and excellent leadership that came out of Company D at that location in World War II as was described to me by my father, Bernie Herrmann. He and my mother wrote over 4,500 letters to servicemen in WWII, many of whom mustered out of that armory. He and my mother did this to support servicemen then dispersed all over the world with a direct communication from home. Those letters are now archived by year at the Clackamas County Historical Society – Museum of the Oregon Territory. My father and others came to know the General of the Army – General Rilea. His strong association with that armory was unquestioned. Furthermore, many of those servicemen mustering from that facility helped General McArthur win the war in the Pacific. Why is this relevant to my testimony?

In all deliberations to integrate an operations function for Public Works on the "plateau" adjoining the armory, I believe staff have been responsive to the armory history, but more importantly, they are now responding to the natural

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history which has been the focus of my life. Oregon City's Natural Resource Committee was asked to get involved in commenting and protecting significant natural features on the "plateau site".

As a founding member of that committee, I was pleasantly surprised to see Oregon City staff and architects integrating elements unique to that site including:

1. Ancient Ice Age Flood Channels
2. Elevated Prominences with unique assemblages of plants
3. The integration of natural depressions not just for stormwater purposes, but for habitat enhancement.
4. An apparent interest in providing access to what I really think is unique and that is "Oregon's Significant Geologic Area" on the bluffs behind the proposed "plateau site".

The Public Works Department has been located on Center Street since apparently the 1920's. The Armory has been there since the mid 1930's. Any opportunity to link these two historic assets together is certainly a subject of interest to me and hopefully cultural and natural history interests as well.

I believe that the "plateau site" design is responding to those concerns and to interests in focusing ingress and egress of equipment and man power to a Southeast access onto Center Street. This is something that members of the Natural Resource Committee, including myself, requested some four years ago. I am impressed with the efforts to make that happen by purchasing an existing house to improve access to Center Street.

Concerns regarding access on John Adams Street I do not have any opinion on, but think the community in that area should be given due consideration.

Natural, Cultural and Pioneer History of Oregon City has an opportunity to be proclaimed, celebrated and wherever possible, depicted in this “plateau site” and the areas below the bluff presently used by Public Works. I must mention that the research I have done shows that Oregon City’s early leaders (Those of the 40’s-50s) mostly came out of that Company D Armory setting. They included four mayors, the founding executive of a new idea – Willamette Falls Community Hospital (one of the first in the Northwest region) and leaders of county and state government.

All efforts regarding this project should keep these factors in mind:

- Early leadership and institutional advancement in our region began in association with that site
- A natural history carved by Ice Age floods shows “Active Geology”.
- The Public Works Center of our community has been successfully staged and functioning for nearly a century at this site.

Thank you for your consideration!

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