

Juniper Ridge: All hopes hang on selling land this fall

by Bruce Ewert

BEND, Ore. -- Following Monday evening's meeting of the Bend City Council, a Work Session focused on budget cutting, I talked to Finance Director Sonia Andrews. We discussed the amount of funding going towards Juniper Ridge (JR) from the General Fund, which she stated as \$180,000 for debt service on a line of credit to cover our obligations per Les Schwab. All potential cuts in the JR budget as presented last fall have been undertaken. We are still waiting on Oregon Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) for a number of trips that can possibly result in land sales this fall. Ms. Andrews characterized the City's position as "crossing their fingers" in hope of everything working out. If not, it's dead in the water for now, and the City is paying debt service on the \$6 million we will end up in the hole until things turn around. Ron Garzini and, to a lesser extent, John Russell are the rainmakers. Ms. Andrews even admitted that even if the trips are okayed, she has no idea where the money to fund the \$40 million Cooley/97 interchange will come from. That's on the Garz/Russell plate. In a realistic aside, Ms. Andrews stated that even if they can sell 50 acres for only \$5 a square foot, half of the \$10 that Russell is promoting, but far more realistic for undeveloped land considering Les Schwab paid \$7 for shovel ready with no System Development Charges (SDCs), that she is off the hook because that \$10 million will pay for costs incurred. There was very little discussion of Juniper Ridge at the actual meeting. Much more time was spent on saving a \$100K here or there than on the big parts of the budget. My guess is that if the voters don't decide to fund the transit system this fall, it's gone. Capell and Telfer already question it's priority, especially considering the deep cuts to public safety. But strangely, no one questions the developers subsidies through unrealistically low SDC's and permit fees, which has led us to this point. Growth has simply not paid for itself. Councilor Clinton is the only one who even brought this up. Low SDC's and permit fees-->Planning/Engineering/Road/Utility deficits-->General Fund hits-->Public Safety cutbacks As an example, consider the city of Troutdale. Per their SDC worksheet, a one-ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) residential hookup costs \$4426, while according to the Bend worksheet, a one ERU hookup to the sewer is only \$2038. Is Bend's cost really less than half of Troutdale's? Or are Bend taxpayers picking up the difference for the developer?

Related information is available at <http://juniper-ridge-info.blogspot.com/Notes> on overall budget are available at <http://bendeconomy.informe.com/bend-cc-work-meeting-on-cutting-budget-dt3898.html>

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