

Project Update 8/23/2023

Each quarter county and city officials gather to network, meet new city officials, catch up with each other, and share what's going on in their respective cities: projects, events, wins/losses and a chance to get new ideas or refine old ones.

Last night (August 17) was to have been one of these quarterly meetings, but it had to be cancelled...I worked really hard on this update and it's actually one that I should be sharing with you anyway, so here we go:

It's been a very busy spring and summer for Carlton, and rather than attempt to share everything we've been up to, I'm going to focus on four projects that have been "on the burner" for awhile and will make a big difference to our community: The first, and newest, is a partnership with one of our new neighbors, Hampton Lumber, who recently became the owners of the Carlton Winemakers Studio.

Now, our city has for several years been looking for opportunities to create a program encouraging "pollinator-friendly" gardens and street plantings, and it turns out Hampton has a similar ethic which they practice on their timberlands, and are interested in helping jump-start a companion program in Carlton.

Council president Shirley Ward-Mullen, Councilor Carolyn Thompson-Rizer, City manager Shannon Beaucaire, and I took Hampton staff on a town walking tour and we agreed on three sites, currently sitting empty and unloved, that have potential for sample pollinator gardens. We're not sure what the timeline will be, but we're hoping to start prepping the sites this fall for spring planting. So if you're interested in getting involved in this program, please keep watch for updates as plans progress.

The second project was the Rail corridor cleanup. When most of us think of the old Union Pacific rail corridor, we envision it going through woods and farmland. This is not the case in Carlton. The UP corridor neatly bisects our town...running north to south bordering residential and business neighborhoods. It has become a popular place for kids to hang out, and for neighboring homeowners to toss yard debris, along with, I'm sorry to say, other unwanted items. Over the years the county has brought in cleanup crews to prune and cut back the growth, but, like all of us, they are doing more with less and always stretching their budget to provide services to our citizens. Councilor Erickson and our city manager approached the County about partnering in a solution to clean-up vegetation for fire and public safety. The County graciously agreed and Councilor Erickson led the effort by rounding up donations of everything from water and gloves, to heavy equipment, and a tree-pruning company that came through to grind up larger trimmings and put them back down for weed control. On July 8 and 15 community volunteers worked on the north section of the corridor collecting trash, pruning trees, and cutting back underbrush. Councilor Erickson is now working to arrange the removal of the blackberry thickets on the south end of the rail bed. We're thrilled at the results of this partnership and we are putting together an after action report for the Commission and Council. We hope to be able to continue this project...keeping the fire danger in the area down as well as discouraging some of the criminal mischief we were encountering.

The pollinator gardens and the rail corridor cleanup are two projects that show, in these days of tight budgets and high expectations, how government and citizens can leverage resources to make improvements without "breaking the bank."

Project #3 was the dredging of Carlton's water supply reservoir. As many of you have heard over the decades, between natural silting, and a mudslide in the 1980s our reservoir was heavily silted and water supply holding capacity limited. In 2018 Carlton received two grants through the Oregon State Lottery Fund – facilitated by Senator Brian Boquist – for replacing our main water delivery line and dredging the Panther Creek reservoir. This year we completed not only the tail end of the main waterline replacement, but also the dredging of the reservoir. The number of improvements we were able to accomplish in conjunction with the reservoir dredging are too long to go through here, but if you ever get a chance to see the slide presentation our city engineer produced of the project, please do! It truly was a remarkable effort, and the end result was an increased water

storage capacity of two million gallons...enough to allow some breathing room to work on a larger, or regional, water supply for our future. That doesn't mean that we have so much water we can go back to the days of all the water we want...we still need to conserve. The increased reservoir capacity means that at times of short water supply, the reservoir is more likely to be able to hold enough in reserve that we won't have the National Guard trucking in water to drink, as they did before. But that's not guaranteed if we don't conserve this precious resource.

Project #4 is still in the process, and that's our new Civic building. Rather than risk jinxing the project, I'll just say that so far it seems to be moving along on schedule, with a minimum of hiccups, and I hope we'll be able to share a new building with you late next year. One fun fact: Our councilors were determined that the brick facing on the outside walls will blend with the brick you see on many of our original downtown buildings – to the point of taking brick samples downtown and comparing them with the existing buildings. Our architects and our brick supplier agreed that if we felt that strongly about it, they wanted to be sure it was right...so rather than rely on existing stock, they created the "Carlton Classic brick." Other folks will be able to buy it, but it will always be Carlton Classic!