

# Commissioners reject SH mill site bids; to offer separate parcels

ALBANY — The Linn County Board of Commissioners rejected four bids for the former Willamette Industries mill site in Sweet Home Tuesday morning and agreed to consider offering for sale individual parcels of the 150-acre property.

Commissioners Roger Nyquist and Will Tucker voted in favor of the proposal and Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger voted against it.

The commissioners put the property out for Requests For Proposals in June and received four responses, but commissioners Nyquist and Tucker said they were not satisfied the bidders had presented a clear vision about their development plans.

Sprenger said she trusted the process.

“I’m comfortable with the process and believe we should move forward,” Sprenger said.

Nyquist and Tucker were serving on the board 11 years ago when the county foreclosed on the property due to \$500,000 in back taxes. It was part of a failed housing development known as the Western States Land Reliance Trust.

Nyquist said then County Assessor Mark Noakes said the county really did not want the property and Commissioner John Lindsey wanted to sell the property as quickly as possible.

Nyquist said both men look like prophets today.

“We’ve spent years cleaning up the property and by and large the cleanup is done,” Nyquist said.

Nyquist said the housing market is hot and it is unknown how long that will remain so. He would like to see individual parcels

that have no environmental issues put on the market. Tucker concurred.

Sprenger said she believes there would be greater value selling the property as a whole.

The property is valued at \$1.6 million and none of the four bids rose to that level.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved a \$214,006 change order with North Santiam Paving for the Mill City Downtown Revitalization Project for biocell thrust collars, a trench drain, concrete stairs and revisions on Wall Street.
- Approved two permanent easements for the Mill Creek Bridge project on Folsom Road for \$600 and \$657 and a temporary easement for \$2,190, all with Lori and Stanley Boshart.
- Approved vacating a portion of Shoreline Drive.
- Held a public hearing concerning modifying the city of Millersburg’s Ambulance Service Area. Since 2018, Millersburg has contracted with the city of Albany for fire protection services. The city would now like to do the same for its ambulance service, which has been provided by the Jefferson Rural Fire District for part of the city.
- Approved First-Time Youth Wage Grant agreements with Irvinville Enterprise, Phelan Enterprises, The Coffee Hut, Miller Grass Seed and Cala Farms.

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