



ON A STONE WALL, Tod Mastin (above) pointed at something for Brynna Gillund to look at during the Decatur Professional Women's Pond and Garden Tour on Sunday. Cheryl Metcalf (below) looked at flowers as she walked on the path from the Gaylord and Shirley Shields yard to Gary and Mary Ann Erickson's yard.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis



Water use decreases, so may plan Administrator looks into smaller treatment plant

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Plans to build a water treatment plant for the city might be scaled back with water use in the city down in recent years, and a decision on the expensive project has been put off once again.

The Oberlin City Council talked about the idea at its meeting Thursday night, deciding to table a decision on a water-treatment loan application. The city had been looking at a \$4 million water plant, financed mostly by a federal loan.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said Thursday he's been looking at water use over the last 10-11 years, and use is down. He said he talked with the engineers from Miller and Associates about the idea. Mr. Gilley said he would like some more time with the engineers to come up with a new plan.

This is just one way to adjust the

strategy a little, he said.

The city, said Mayor Joe Stanley, has been on water rationing in past summers, which could have something to do with the decline in water use. When the water rates go up, said Chris Miller, with Miller and Associates, the use does go down a little. Normally, though, the use will level off.

The system has around a 10 percent loss of water. Some of that is on uses that aren't metered. Willard Perrin, water manager, with the city water crew, said there are lots of hydrants around town that aren't metered. There are other connections that aren't metered, either.

The trend for water use, said Mr. Miller, is that it's down, so the city could look at a different approach. Instead of drilling another well, the city could build a smaller plant. Everything would be reduced in size.

(See TREATMENT on Page 12)

Women hold tour

Reds, pinks, yellows, oranges, purples and greens filled the yards in the homes visited by about 60 people during the Decatur Professional Women's first pond and garden tour Sunday.

Men, women and children walked through the yards at the five Oberlin homes, looking at the plants, smelling the flowers and learning about the homeowners' landscaping.

The yards were in full bloom, with not only flowers but vegetable gardens full of tomatoes, squash, peppers, eggplants and more.

The tourgoers spent 20 minutes in the yards of Richard and Clara Russ, Eunice Richards and Bernie and Frieda Goetze, Ed and Clara Russ, Bernie and Bernard and Frieda Goetze ending up at Gary and Mary Ann Erickson's and Gaylord and Shirley Shields for cookies, brownies, tea and lemonade.

In past years, the women's group has held a home tour in December. This year, the group decided to try something new, said Kimberly Davis, tour committee member.

Money raised goes for scholarships given in May women graduating from Decatur Community High School and women who are going to college later in life or returning to school.

Airport project moves forward with council's OK

After some discussion about the scope of the airport project and how far in the city is, the Oberlin City Council approved the scope of service agreement which moves things forward.

Councilmen Rob McFee and Bill Riedel voted against.

Although, he knows he asks a lot of questions about the airport, the council actually makes the decision on what to do, Administrator Austin Gilley said. He added that he will be professional about getting done what the council wants done.

Mr. Riedel said he wanted to know what the city is committed to do on the project.

It's important to know that the Federal Aviation Administration pays 95 percent of the cost, said Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer. The administration has required that the old runway be cut back 300 feet, she said. At this time fixed wing planes can't land here.

On the last flight the medical plane's insurance was compromised by landing here, said Mrs. Lohoefer.

The administration has suggested a 5,500 foot runway for the new one. Oberlin, she said, has the shortest runway in northwest Kansas.

In the past and present, Mr. Gilley said he's been critical on the project management. This project needs to rise or fall on its own merit, not on how good or bad the red tape is handled.

At this point, the city has agreed to an aeronautical survey, he said.

Council roundup

At the meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Approved making a \$3,831 donation to the county to pay for sidewalks on the south side of the new Golden Age Center. Story at bottom.

- Approved an ordinance to move forward with a loan and grant for the solar-powered pump to mix and aerate the lagoons at the waste water treatment plant. Story to come.

- Talked about building a smaller water treatment plant as customers aren't using as much water. Story above..

- Approved the scope of service agreement to keep things moving on the airport project. Story at left..

- Talked about applying for stimulus revenue bonds for a new motel, but didn't make any decisions. Story to come.

- Read a proclamation about the stove bought with money from Kent Ploussards memorial. Story to come.

Both the administration and airport engineers, said Mr. Gilley, have expressed that they are concerned that the city is moving too fast.

The construction of the new runway (See RUNWAY on Page 12)

District closes half day for teacher's funeral

The Oberlin School District will be closed Thursday morning, then resume classes at 12:30 p.m., to allow staff and students to attend the funeral of the grade school's vocal music teacher.

Jim Buchholz taught kids at the grade school how to sing for 38 years. His teaching career included

directing the annual sixth grade play and organizing concerts throughout the school year.

The funeral is scheduled for 10 a.m. Thursday at the Oberlin Sacred Heart Church.

Superintendent/Principal Duane Dorshorst said the buses will pick kids up for the late start.

Seniors will get sidewalk

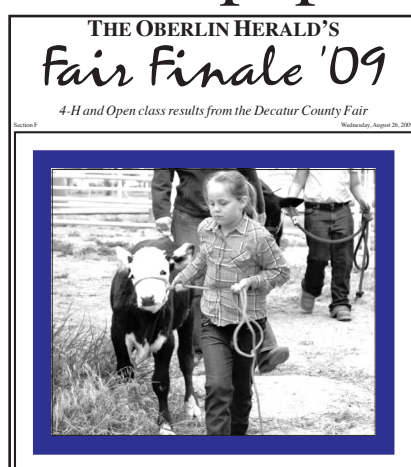
The Oberlin City Council approved making a \$3,831 donation to Decatur County to pay for sidewalks on the south side of the new Golden Age Center.

At the council's meeting Thursday, Max Carman requested money from the city's Community Development Growth Fund to pay for the (See MONEY on Page 12)

County fair results in today's newspaper

Inside today's edition of The Oberlin Herald is the Fair Finale section, with complete results from the 2009 Decatur County Fair.

The edition includes pictures of grand and reserve grand champions in the livestock categories and all of the results for 4-H and open-class competition.



Motion fails to give mayor signing right

With the desire to do away with delay time on signing airport documents or to cut the city administrator out of the project, a council member suggested sending all the documents on the project through the project manager and then be signed by the mayor, but the motion never passed, leaving things the same.

Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer made the motion for all paperwork from the Federal Aviation Administration, the engineers and the Kansas Department of Transportation on the airport project be sent through the project manager's office, Connie Grafel, with Mayor Joe Stanley signing off on the documents.

If everything went through one place, said Mrs. Lohoefer, it would be easier to keep track of it.

Ms. Grafel said she thinks everything is courtesy copied to herself. Administrator Austin Gilley and City Attorney Steve Hirsch.

Councilman Ray Ward seconded the motion.

"This would give the mayor the authority to sign what?" said Mr. Hirsch. "It would include all the documents from the engineers, the transportation department and aviation administration."

There was some question if the documents would still be brought up in front of the council, which Mrs. (See SIGNING on Page 12)