

Plans in play for child-care center near old CMS site

By Josh Mitchell

Staff reporter

Big Horn developer Paul DelRossi said in a public meeting Oct. 29 that he planned to put a child-care center on the former Central Middle School site, but now it appears the plan has changed.

Whitney Benefits Board President Tom Kinnison announced Tuesday that Whitney Benefits has given the former Central Middle School maintenance building site at the southwest corner of Custer and Brundage streets to Sheridan College for the child-care center.

Kinnison said the property is

• Is Loucks Street extension back on the table?

appraised at \$426,000 and is about 1.25 acres.

The site is across the street from the former CMS site, where DelRossi had said he would put the child-care center.

DelRossi also said at the Oct. 29 meeting he opposed extending Loucks Street through the former CMS site to create an east/west corridor for city traffic, because it would interfere with his plans to build the child-care center and homes on the 4.99 acres.

Now that the child-care center is

apparently not going on the site, it is unclear if DelRossi will allow Loucks Street to go through the property.

DelRossi has an option to purchase the former school site from Whitney Benefits. He could not be reached for comment.

Mayor Dave Kinskey said he still thinks DelRossi will oppose the Loucks Street extension.

"I think what he (DelRossi) said is that he didn't want his chunk of property cut in two," Kinskey said. "It was never

about the child-care center."

Kinnison said he does not know if DelRossi will allow the road extension. DelRossi had said he would locate the child-care center on the site at the foot of where Loucks Street now ends.

HKM Engineer Jeff Rosenlund of Sheridan, who is heading the city's new transportation plan, has said Loucks Street is the best option for an east/west corridor for city traffic.

Extending Loucks through the former school site would allow for a connection

with Sheridan Avenue.

Alternatives to Loucks for an east/west corridor are Brundage, Works and Burkitt streets, but those won't work as well, Rosenlund has said.

Rosenlund has also said the City Council should consider taking the site by eminent domain if DelRossi blocks the road extension.

City Councilors Marc Ketcham and Kathy Kennedy have said they would consider eminent domain for the site, while the other city councilors and the mayor say they are opposed.

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CMS site

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The city, Sheridan College and School District 2 have been approved for \$1.5 million in Phase I funding from the State Loan and Investment Board to build the initial 6,000 square feet of the child-care center.

Phase II funding of \$1.5 million to build the

remaining 5,500 square feet is almost certain, Kinskey has said.

The facility is proposed to house up to 178 children and a training center where students can work on college degrees in child care.

Existing child-care providers could also use the center for continuing education.

Sheridan's economy is harmed because some people won't move here due to the lack of child care, Kinskey has said.

Moreover, Kinskey has said people who could normally work won't take jobs, because they are wait-listed at existing child-care facilities and must stay home with their children.