

Plans to Move Post Office to Teton Rd. Facility Thwarted



Several members of the Tualatin Area Aging Task Force (L to R) Larry McClure, Debbie Waalkes, Dale Potts, Beverly Phelps, Susan Noack, Amanda Ballard, Linda Moholt and Ed Casey.

BY REID IFORD, TUALATIN LIFE

The United States Postal Service is a pretty formidable organization, but they had no idea what they were getting themselves into when they announced they were moving the Tualatin Post Office from its longtime downtown location to an industrial area on SW Teton Avenue. They quickly found out.

When a flyer announcing the move was posted in the window of the Tualatin Post Office, it was brought to the attention of Susan Noack, chair of the Tualatin Area Aging Task Force. Susan marched right down to the post office and requested a copy of the flyer, and then she called together fellow task force members and they decided to roll up their sleeves and put a stop to this nonsense.

“We never questioned the need to move the facility,” Susan explains, “but there are lots of reasons we opposed moving the post office to Teton, off the Tualatin-Sherwood Road down toward Sherwood. It’s a heavily trafficked

road, with poor sidewalks and no public transportation. This would have been a great hardship on people who do not drive, not just seniors. There are lots of big trucks in that area, and it is not a place I would want to visit after dark.”

Susan and most members of the Tualatin Area Aging Task Force attended a public meeting

held by the USPS for input on the proposal. They were told the USPS would need to receive at least 400 letters from concerned citizens for it to reconsider the planned move.

“From August 1 to August 19 we were directly responsible for 341 letters, and letters sent in by others, including our congressional delegation, pushed the total up to 400,” Susan says with pride. “A decision was made on August 31 not to move to Teton, but to meet with the community to find a location that is accessible and acceptable to the people of Tualatin.

“We lobbied that they stay downtown and be accessible to everyone, and they listened! And we did this in 2 ½ weeks.”

Susan is the first to say that USPS representative Greg Shelton, out of their Denver,

Colorado office, took a leadership role in listening to, and working with, the people of Tualatin.

“Mr. Shelton is an extremely nice person and very accessible,” Susan says. “He was forthcoming with information, and very helpful. I know he has a difficult job, but he was willing to take time to listen to the people of our community and understand our concerns. This was a very positive venture, and no one shut a door on us. I’m very excited that we did this, and we can do it again if needed.”

People we spoke to within the community uniformly give credit for the win to Susan Noack, but she will have nothing to do with that.

“This was a true grassroots project,” she explains. “We have a great committee, and everyone on the committee did their part. That, along with the willingness of the post office to work with us, is why we succeeded. While the task force led the charge, it was a community effort, from the city council writing a letter to the Chamber of Commerce, to involvement by neighborhood associations, businesses and citizens. We didn’t do it alone, which is how grass roots works, isn’t it?”

