

...a good investment.

Aug. 9 should be remembered

Richland's role in the World War II effort is significant and deserves a fitting commemoration.

The Richland City Council has rejected a joint proposal for the B Reactor Museum Association and World Citizens for Peace, but spokesman Jim Stoffels said they are not giving up.

The city should reconsider its position and be involved in commemorating something that is such a part of the history not just of Richland but the entire Mid-Columbia.

It would be a shame if the 50th anniversary of the U.S. bombing of Nagasaki, an act which helped end the war, passed without a meaningful marker. Hanford produced the plutonium for that bomb.

It is a legacy the community must remember and deal with, particularly as the community struggles to make sure the mess left from 50 years of plutonium production is cleaned up.

This should be neither an apology nor a celebration, except perhaps to honor the healing that has occurred in the United States-Japan relationship and a commitment to furthering peace.

Aug. 9, 1995, should not go unobserved.

No secrets

Richland remains opposed to Japanese sister city idea

By WILL SWARTS

Herald staff writer

Fifty years after Hanford plutonium was used in the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Richland officials say they remain opposed to establishing a sister city relationship with the Japanese city.

Jim Stoffels, a longtime peace activist and a spokesman for the B Reactor Museum Association and World Citizens for Peace, wants the Richland City Council to hold a public hearing on the organizations' joint proposal, which includes creating a sister city relationship with the district of Nagasaki destroyed by the bomb on Aug. 9, 1945.

The other parts of the plan are to convert B Reactor to a museum, develop a museum for a proposed cultural center and build a peace park in John Dam Plaza.

Stoffels plans on Monday to ask for the public hearing, but Mayor Jim Hansen said it won't have a place on the council agenda.

The council rejected holding a public hearing to debate the idea when Stoffels proposed it at a Jan. 23 meeting, and some council members say that's all the discussion the subject merits.

"We already had a council meeting and voted not to support it," Hansen said Wednesday. "Unless I get a council member or two calling me and saying, 'Put it on the agenda,' I don't see why we should put it back on the agenda to reconsider an item which we've already said 'No' to."

Stoffels said he has spoken with community groups in the past three months, and people have been receptive.

"For heaven's sakes, let's hold a public hearing and talk about this," he told the Tri-City Herald editorial board Tuesday. "With every group we've talked to, the response has been overwhelmingly positive."

Councilman Larry Haler said he supports the idea of a museum devoted to the Manhattan Project, the wartime effort to build the atomic bomb, and the role of Tri-Cities in it.

"But for me, a public hearing—I'm still stuck on the point that they're asking us to apologize," he said of the sister city proposal. "They may think it's not coming out that way but to me, as an elected official, that's what it's sounding like."

Ed Frost of World Citizens For Peace said the presentation has not changed since January, but there

have been greater efforts to get community support.

"I don't think Jim's mission has been to go down to city hall and stir up a lot of people," he said.

Del Ballard, secretary of the B Reactor Museum Association, said the interpretive center in the city enjoys public support.

His group has endorsed the peace park and sister city relationship proposal, but said the two plans are separate projects.

Hansen said he believes the two ideas have been presented in a way that alters the intent of the interpretive center.

"I see it more as focusing our history and trying to mend a relationship with the people of Nagasaki," he said. "I don't think that is something the people of this community are responsible for doing."

Stoffels said he still plans to bring the issue up Monday, during the portion of the meeting available for public comment on issues not on the agenda.

"You can't change the nature of the idea," he said. "The council members have not reflected a position we've seen in the community. The only thing we've really been asking for is to allow the city to be heard."