

Ore. senate considers gun-control bill

By Jonathan J. Cooper
Associated Press

SALEM (AP) — An Oregon Senate committee will hear public testimony this week on a proposal by gun-control advocates to require a background check any time someone sells or gives a firearm to another person who isn't a relative. Here are five things to know about Oregon's universal background-check proposal:

The bill requires gun buyers and sellers who aren't related to visit a licensed gun dealer that can, for a fee, run a background check through the Oregon State Police. Oregon law prohibits giving a gun to minors, felons, people

with recent convictions for violent behavior or those who have been found by a court to have a mental illness.

If someone tries to buy a gun but fails a background check, the state police would be required to notify the local sheriff and police chief.

Background checks would not be required when someone transfers to a gun to these relatives: spouse or domestic partner, parent or stepparent, child or stepchild, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt or uncle, first cousin, niece or nephew.

The seller of a gun would face a misdemeanor for a first offense, punishable by up to 90 days in jail.

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GRANTS: Council could decide Thursday morning

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controlling blight.”

Urban renewal districts are usually formed based on a finding of “blight” in an urban area. However, grants have been issued in Sisters that have a more extensive reach than rehabilitating specifically “blighted” properties. The small-project grants are “designed to encourage private investment by commercial property owners and tenants. The goal is to improve the appearance of businesses through façade rehabilitation and restoration that emphasizes uniqueness and historic value.”

Proposed projects include work such as replacing or repair of siding, replacing decking with pavers, building a shade structure, some landscaping and handicapped access work, exterior painting and signage. Both Connolly and Asson expressed discomfort with funding signage, though signage was included in the grant criteria that was sent out to the public.

“Yeah, they do need signage,” Asson said, “but to me, that’s a business expense, not urban renewal.”

At Thursday’s meeting, Connolly noted that one property owner has gone “to the well” multiple times for grants and questioned whether there should be some sort of cap on that. McKibben

Womack said he had no problem with the owner of multiple properties seeking multiple grants.

A larger concern for Connolly is what sort of projects urban-renewal funds should be used for. She noted that urban-renewal funds could also be used for off-street parking and land acquisition for multifamily affordable housing.

“Do we value off-street parking and multifamily residential housing less than this kind of urban renewal...”

— Nancy Connolly

“Do we value off-street parking and multifamily residential housing less than this kind of urban renewal and is this the route we’ve taken because it was a clear policy or is this the only option that was presented to us as an urban renewal project?” she said.

City Manager Andrew Gorayeb noted that “this process of doing grants was at the behest of the URA (Urban Renewal Agency).”

The Sisters City Council acts as the City’s URA.

Asson acknowledged that he voted in favor of similar grants that were issued along

Cascade Avenue, though he said he had concerns about those as well. However, he felt that the Cascade Avenue rehabilitation projects had put property owners and businesses through a lot.

He also acknowledged that property owners had gone to considerable effort to make their applications at the City’s behest and recognized that some of those property owners were concerned about the last-minute tabling of the grants.

Still, he wants more time to look at the program and square the conflict he sees between the public interest and businesses getting help. He also said that he is not determined on voting against the grants.

“It’s not black and white,” he said. “It’s a tough decision.”

The Council is expected to address the issue in its Thursday workshop. The agenda calls for an official meeting of the Council acting as the URA at 8 a.m., which means the Council can vote on approval.

“The next step is that I put it on the agenda for this next Thursday’s workshop, and I intend to ask why these grant applications were tabled,” Mayor Frye said. “I then hope to move forward with these applications with the money that we as a Council decided to make available and award those applicants who meet the criteria for which this grant was established.”

Plans dropped for big wind farm in Oregon

BEND (AP) — State regulators say plans for a big wind farm in north-central Oregon have been scrapped.

The Bend Bulletin reports the Brush Canyon development would have had as many as 223 turbines in Sherman and Wasco counties. It would have been in an area of 76,000 acres, or 119 square miles.

In December, the U.S. Congress let lapse a tax break enacted in 1992 to subsidize wind power.

The project was proposed by the North American arm of a German utility, E.ON (EE'-ahn) AG. The state Department of Energy said the company has withdrawn its application.

Calls and messages to the company’s Chicago and German offices were not immediately returned.

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Holy Thursday: Mass of the Lord’s Supper, 7 p.m.

Good Friday: Stations of the Cross, 3 p.m.
Celebration of the Lord’s Passion, 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday: Easter Vigil, 8:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday: Mass, 10 a.m.

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