

City wrestles with competing values

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Two different visions for the city are creating a potential quagmire for the Sisters City Council.

At their August 6 workshop, councilors took another look at proposed modifications to ordinances dealing with licenses for temporary businesses, transient merchants, and public events.

That is no easy task when needing to consider the impact of any modifications on all those possibly effected.

City attorney Steve Bryant reminded council it is their job to determine what they are trying to accomplish through the ordinance modifications.

“You have two separate visions right now (for the city) — economic vitality and a clean appearance,” Bryant pointed out. “You have to determine your vision for the city... Staff can write it (code) the way you want it but council has to verbalize the vision.”

He went on to remind the councilors that more exceptions to code create complex code situations.

Jeri Buckmann, representing the Chamber of Commerce, sees the transient vendor issue causing huge problems.

“It’s always going to be messy. It’s a dog and pony show when you start to get all this clutter,” she said. But she also thinks that local businesses should be able to have vendor spots for events like the Quilt Show.

Ken Merrill of Canyon Creek Pottery on Adams Avenue thinks most transient vendors on Quilt Show weekend are local businesses.

“I don’t feel like I should be excluded from Quilt Show weekend,” he said. He went on to explain that when Cascade Avenue started being closed for Quilt Show, no one could park in town like they used to. His business went from thousands of dollars that day to \$200. So

this year he set up as a transient vendor right downtown to make his pottery available.

Chamber president and managing director of the Sisters Folk Festival, Ann Richardson, reiterated, “It is a super-difficult balance. Vendors can be additive.” It allows businesses who are losing customers during events like Quilt Show to rent space in front of their store to a vendor, which allows them to make up some of their lost revenue.

The discussion went on and on and deeper into the swamp as possible loopholes were identified. The question was raised of where the Gem Show fits (being on school district property); whether transient merchants should be concentrated in specific locations in town; and concern should be focused on preserving the appearance of Cascade when other streets are also being refurbished.

Councilor David Asson attempted to bring focus to the discussion by asking, “What is it we want to see?” He insisted that council must start with a vision.

Mayor Chris Frye believes council needs to start by getting as much feedback as possible from the citizens.

“I am not comfortable with four councilors making this decision. We have to do public outreach,” he said.

Before council takes any final action, a public hearing will be held at which time citizens will be able to voice their concerns, opinions, and support.

What is needed, it was decided, is a global view of how to put all the interrelated code items together to create ordinances that support the overall vision of what the people of Sisters want for the city, both physically and functionally.

Some specific options to present in community outreach were chosen. Option one would be to not allow transient merchants on Cascade or within a specific number of feet off Cascade. Because the 1880s theme is very difficult to define and enforce for a transient merchant, that would not be a requirement.

Option two would move the transient merchants totally off all city streets and locate them in the parks. Again there would be no 1880s theme requirement. A third option that was later eliminated would allow transient merchants anywhere in town, subject to the 1880s theme. Asson stated that he thought there is another and better (but as yet unspecified) option that he is willing to develop and bring to the table.

“We need to get our act together,” he concluded.

Councilor Nancy Connolly would like to see attorney Bryant work with staff to clean up some of the wording in the proposed modifications. She encouraged all councilors to go out and “walk the streets” to survey the businesses and residents for their views.

Newest council member, Amy Burgstahler, concurred that outreach to the community is needed.

Frye would like to see more potential loopholes in the code fixed. He also pointed out, “No matter what we do, someone will be negatively impacted.”

Council is tentatively scheduled to revisit this issue at their September 3 workshop after they have conducted informal outreach, staff has reworked the modifications, and Asson has developed another option.

Tiny Oregon school to reopen after 10 years

By Abby Spegman
The Bulletin

BROTHERS (AP) — From behind the counter at Brothers Stage Shop, Jerrie Hanna has watched crews come and go this summer preparing Brothers School to reopen in September after sitting empty for a decade. Hanna looks forward to kids coming to her store for snacks after school, to having some life across the street again in this town so tiny you can drive through it without realizing.

“Everybody is really, really, really excited about it,” said Hanna, a former teacher herself. She hopes having a school in town will draw more families, knowing their children won’t have to spend hours on a school bus to Prineville. “That makes the

community grow.”

Brothers School is set to reopen with — as of now — five students in first through fifth grades as part of the Crook County School District.

Officials expect enrollment to be steady or even to grow in the coming years based on demographics in the area. They’ve hired most of the staff and the building is ready for students. But a bigger issue still looms: Can the district afford to open a school so small?

Brothers School was the only school in the Brothers district. It had three students in the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years and no students going into the 2005-06 school year, according to *The Bulletin* archives. State law

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