

DARK SKIES:
City wants to step up enforcement now

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Council made addressing the dark skies issue one of their 2021-22 Council goals because they have been aware of community discontent. The current ordinance was adopted in May 2010, with a stipulation that all nonconforming lighting in the city would be brought into compliance within five years of adoption. That never occurred, apparently having been buried by other more pressing issues.

Sisters still has the opportunity to keep the skies dark – if something is done now.

The Council believes the time has come to do something, and Council members indicated to Woodford they want it done sooner rather than later. They have no interest in establishing another five-year period of compliance. They also realize that for some residents, coming into compliance will prove to be a financial hardship and some type of assistance will be necessary.

The first order of business will be for staff to conduct an audit of lighting for compliance with the City's dark sky code. Staff would then conduct education and awareness programs to explain the need

for compliance. For those who continue to violate the code, possible code enforcement would occur.

In addition to retroactive action by those whose outdoor lighting is in violation of the code, stricter standards for new construction could require submitting lighting plans with building permit and land use applications, followed by requirements for better compliance and inspection prior to granting a certificate of occupancy.

Staff also proposed adding a Purpose section to the ordinance that would establish guiding principles for outdoor lighting as well as providing illustrations of acceptable and prohibited types of lighting fixtures.

Council wants to see public outreach and encouraged the involvement of citizens who are adamant and knowledgeable about dark skies. There is a group of students at the high school who could be tapped for inclusion in the process.

Sisters still has the opportunity to keep the skies dark – if something is done now. For some people, it could be as simple as changing out light bulbs to a lower wattage or aiming a light down toward the ground. Does your outside lighting shine past your property line, into your neighbor's yard and/or house? Confine that illumination to your own yard. Turn off outside lights when you go to bed or maybe after a certain time at night. There is a brochure available at City Hall, as well as abundant information online illustrating outside lighting fixtures that protect dark skies.

Light pollution affects everyone

Lighting up the night disrupts the billions-of-years-old cycle of day and night. Plants and animals depend on that daily cycle of light and dark to govern life-sustaining behaviors such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep, and protection from predators.

Artificial light at night has negative and potentially deadly impacts on numerous animals, birds, insects, amphibians, and plants. Migration, nesting, hunting, foraging, mating, and other behaviors are all impacted by artificial light at night as is the human biological clock, our circadian rhythm. Nighttime exposure to artificial light suppresses melatonin production, which helps keep us healthy in a myriad of ways.

The newer compact fluorescent lightbulbs and LED lights are more energy efficient, but they produce more blue light which has adverse health effects like those mentioned above and others.

Glare from poorly shielded outdoor lighting is also harmful to our health because it decreases vision by reducing contrast, which limits the ability to see potential dangers at night, especially in aging eyes.

LETTERS

Continued from page 2

successes, reduces complicated topics to misleading conclusions, hypocritically ignores egregious misconduct by allies, stokes anger and outrage and relies on their domination of mass and social media. Whew! Where to begin?

Deplorables (noncompliant voters), gun-toting bible-hugging rednecks (largely rural conservatives), racists (anyone deemed a threat), terrorists (concerned parents), insurrectionists (demonstrators), yes, incendiary, but not from the right. As far as lumping opponents together, see the preceding.

Peddling lies and disinformation? Look no further than the "Steele Dossier," or the much-maligned Covington High students or the acquitted "racist" teenager involved in a self-defense shooting. Blame game? Whose efforts got us the life-saving COVID-19 vaccine at "warp speed," and was first to delay travel from infected areas into this country to give us critical reaction time?

Exaggerated failures? Does the "successful" withdrawal from Afghanistan ring a bell? Talk about a whopper! I could go on, but you get my drift and could likely embellish, as can I, for pages.

Finally, a word on stoking "anger and outrage." One need look no further than Mr. Biden's ill-advised remarks marking one year since the riot at the nation's Capitol on January 6. Not really a "kumbayah" moment, but an opportunity, yet again, squandered. However, the "piece de malfesance" is the last, the right-wing's "domination of mass and social media"! Huh? Some people need to get out more or be, at least, semiconscious when they do.

Be advised, folks, they walk among us.

Ross Flavel

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Poop bags

To the Editor:
To the dog owner(s) around Sisters who bag up their dogs' poop, and then leave it at the site: Please explain. Thanks.
Larry Griggs

◆ ◆ ◆



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PUBLIC NOTICE

Sisters Urban Renewal Agency Annual Report

The Annual Financial Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 for the Sisters Urban Renewal Agency has been prepared and is on file at Sisters City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Avenue and is summarized here. In FY 2020-21 Sisters URA received \$411,008 in revenue, spent \$12,240 on projects and administration, and paid \$141,466 in principal and interest. Estimated tax revenues and interest for FY 2021-22: \$445,200. Budgeted expenditures for FY 2021-22: \$144,200 (Capital Projects Fund) and \$446,175 (Debt Service Fund). Interested persons may obtain a copy by contacting Finance Officer, Joseph O'Neill at 541-323-5222 or joneill@ci.sisters.or.us. A copy is also available on the City's website, www.ci.sisters.or.us.

An analysis of the tax collection impact on the permanent rate of other tax districts is shown in the table below.

Taxing District	FY 2020/21 Forgone Revenue	FY 2020/21 Permanent Rate Levy	% of Permanent Rate Levy
Deschutes County	36,768	33,195,018	0.11%
County Library	16,581	14,804,942	0.11%
Countywide Law Enforcement	32,596	29,069,551	0.11%
County Extension/4H	669	605,256	0.11%
9-1-1	10,917	9,739,590	0.11%
City of Sisters	79,766	1,281,189	6.23%
Sisters/Camp Sherman Fire District	59,271	2,734,609	2.17%
Sisters Park & Recreation District	6,643	341,131	1.95%
School District #6	123,794	9,322,918	1.33%
School #6 Bond 2001	28,683	2,163,115	1.33%
High Desert ESD	2,884	2,580,390	0.11%
C.O.C.C.	18,693	16,597,072	0.11%
Total	417,266	122,434,780	0.34%