

CEREMONY

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tee who spoke at the ceremony, said it was appropriate to have the ceremony during the camp so the youth could experience the historic event.

“We are tied to the Homeland and we want you young people to know about this so when you become leaders you can think about the future,” Miles said.

For hundreds if not thousands of years, indigenous people camped on the shores of Wallowa Lake. Not long after the Nez Perce War in 1877, the lake became a popular destination for tourism, fishing and canneries. By the early 20th century, visitors to the lake moved out of their wall tents and into accommodations like the Wallowa Lake Lodge, built in 1923.

According to Greg Nelson, communications director for the Methodist Church, in 1922, the church realized the value of building a camp and retreat center in this idyllic setting. The church purchased 100 acres, but with the growing market for privately owned cabins at

the lake, the church initially sold 10 acres to help pay for the camp. Over time, more parcels were sold off for private home development, leaving a landlocked, undevelopable 1.5-acre parcel of river shoreline.

At the ceremony marking the return of this parcel to the Nez Perce, Methodist Bishop Elaine Stanovsky — who oversees the United Methodist churches of Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon — said in 2012 the church began talking about the damage done to Native Americans and subsequently spent four years of repentance and education.

“Now we have a new heart and spirit of forgiveness and healing,” Stanovsky said Wednesday. “Since 1922, the Methodists have cared for the land and now we return a portion to its prior inhabitants. This marks a new relationship for this place and people for a life of peace and plenty.”

Gifts were exchanged among tribal members and church representatives and each in attendance was given an origami coyote and

a “Wallowa Land Return” button. The Nez Perce elders were presented with a deed to the land, and all in attendance recited a litany for promoting peace and friendship.

Wednesday’s ceremony also included the Lord’s Prayer recited in Nez Perce, drumming and singing of a 163-year-old song that Nez Perce elder Wilfred Scott said is the equivalent of the Star Spangled Banner.

Following the ceremony in front of Bailey Hall the crowd gathered on the bank of the transferred parcel of land. Scott burned sage to bless a stone symbolizing the land transfer and a sign written in Nez Perce that translates to “Let all of us people of the earth come together in peace.” The ceremony concluded when the eldest of the campers returned the symbolic stone to the river’s bank.

The Joseph Office of Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries will manage the tribe’s new land parcel adjacent to the Wallowa River, which is prime kokanee and bull trout habitat for spawning and juvenile rearing.



Courtesy photo

The cottage development, more commonly known as “tiny homes,” offers homes with a smaller footprint. They are typically between 500 to 1,000 square feet. The homes displayed above are from a community in Detroit, Michigan.

COTTAGE

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egy in the city’s comprehensive plan.

The intention of cottage home development is to encourage affordable housing, innovation and variety in housing design and site development while making sure the development fits within the existing neighborhoods. It also gives more options for the variety of families living in La Grande.

Right now, there aren’t any homes that are specifically classified as cottages, meaning under 1,000 square feet.

However, some property owners have applied for conditional use permits to build a single cottage with the intention of using it as an Airbnb, Boquist said. Airbnb is an online service for renting accommodations to travelers.

Another area of focus for the meeting was the section of the city’s land development code dealing with camping within the city limits.

With the passage of the amendments, the code allows a guest to camp on a person’s property for no more than 30 cumulative days in any 12-month period.

At Wednesday’s meeting, Audrey Smith, who is the Community Connection manager, and Cami Miller, who helped organize the Warming station

last winter, said criminalizing homelessness is not the answer.

Miller said putting a deadline on the amount of time someone can dwell on a person’s property is punishing the most vulnerable population. And it doesn’t fix the issue.

“Where should they go?” she asked the council, adding if they find someone who is willing to let them stay on the property, the council should let them.

Boquist clarified for the council that the countdown only begins when a complaint is filed.

The third major conversational piece at Wednesday’s meeting concerning the land development code was the livestock permitted section.

The updated code would allow landowners within the city to have a total of six adult rabbits, ducks and/or chickens (not roosters) on their property, provided they live on a lot that is at least 10,000 square feet. The original code suggested a minimum of 5,000 square feet, but some councilors suggested that was too small of a property to support and contain the livestock.

Livestock that are not allowed within the city limits are swine, peacocks, guinea hens and roosters.

Beekeeping was also added to the code. The updated code would allow beekeeping on a lot of

10,000 square feet or more with a maximum amount of two colonies per acre.

The code requires landowners with hives to put bee warning signs around the perimeter of the property visible to the public.

If the colony exhibits aggressive behavior, the beekeeper must re-queen the colony. For those colonies that continue to be aggressive even after corrective actions are taken, the entire colony must be eliminated.

Finally, Councilor Gary Lillard was the sole councilor who voted against approving a liquor license for a local business wanting to sell alcohol during an upcoming event. He said he felt it was “hypocritical” to approve liquor licenses, citing the public input taken in opposition to recreational marijuana.

“(If) you’re not going to allow one substance, then you shouldn’t allow any of them,” Lillard told the council.

The majority of the process for liquor licenses is done through the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. The city is asked for approval, but it was described on Wednesday night multiple times as a formality. Some of the councilors asked whether they really had any authority to say no. City Manager Robert Strobe said he will ask the La Grande Chief of Police to clarify the issue.

LIBERTY

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last year, Oregon Community Foundation awarded the organization \$20,000; the Oregon Arts Commission granted \$200,000; the Wildhorse Foundation awarded \$7,500; James F. Miller Foundation awarded \$20,000; Northwest Farm Credit Services awarded \$1,500; and the Union County Cultural Enrichment awarded \$500.

“This Travel Oregon grant award is pivotal in the progress of the Liberty Theatre toward a state of utility,” Jaeger continued in the release. “Final plans adhering to historical standards are being completed. The next work phase of restoration is commencing in August and (the) Liberty can now plan further ahead to complete the project. This is a huge boost to the Liberty effort.”

Farnham said the work planned for August will be to finish removing the asbestos and final demolition.

“The final plans for the construction permit are days from completion, and then a permit can be applied to move ahead with final restoration and operation,” he said in the email.



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

The Liberty Theatre’s blade sign was installed in 2015. The Theatre’s Foundation has been slowly restoring the building using grant money.

“We are moving into the finish lap after many years of hard work.”

Major restorations of the Liberty Theatre have been unveiled slowly but surely. The 55-year-old ceiling located in the lobby and lower east wall are now exposed. The ceiling and walls had not been seen since 1959, according to a previous Observer article.

The walls and ceiling were created when the theater was built around 1911. The facility was first known as the Orpheum and then the Arcade before it was renamed the Liberty Theatre in the 1920s. It

was closed in 1959.

Another major step taken is the installation of the blade sign.

In November 2015, the blade sign, which reads “Liberty,” was installed. It is a reproduction of one of the theater’s former signs.

The installation of that sign show those who pass by the theatre that progress is being made.

In a previous Observer article, board members of the nonprofit said the installation of the sign was a moment they had been waiting for since they began exploring the idea of restoring the theatre.

DAR

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Air National Guard and dedicated a historic marker at the Wingville Cemetery in Baker County.

The Lone Pine Tree DAR chapter is hoping to recruit more members to help with promoting American history education in the local area. One way in which the chapter promotes history is by sponsoring an essay contest. The topic comes from the National DAR, and the Lone Pine Tree Chapter invites all schools in their counties to participate. A fifth-grader from Keating Elementary School in Baker City won the most recent essay contest.

At the group’s monthly meetings, a member often gives a presentation on her American Revolution ancestor. Some of them have found out they are distant cousins through tracing back their lineal descent.

For Smith, who has been a DAR member since 2002,

she knows only that her ancestor was a private in the Revolutionary War. Wilma Johnson, who has been a member of DAR for seven years, has traced back her lineage to Captain Samuel Ransom, who at one point fought alongside George Washington. Ransom died in the Battle of Wyoming, also known as the Wyoming Massacre, in Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania.

Another of the chapter’s members, Lynne Zwanziger, a 10-year member of the DAR, is a descendant of Philip Syng. Syng was a silversmith who made the inkstand the founding fathers used to sign the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Zwanziger has visited his grave in Pennsylvania.

“In our families, the young people have lost a sense of history,” Johnson said.

The DAR, she said, provides a way for families to connect young people to

their ancestry and history. Johnson also said educating young people in history helps them to not repeat the mistakes of the past civilizations.

The local DAR chapter welcomes anyone interested in history and ancestry to attend their meetings, which happen once a month, except July and August, on the second Friday, with lunch at 11 a.m. and the meeting at noon. The meetings rotate between La Grande and Baker City. The next meeting will be on Sept. 14 at the Sunridge Inn in Baker City. On Oct. 12, they will hold a meeting at the Flying J in La Grande.

Zwanziger said she hopes other women will join DAR. She recommended using online tools such as Ancestry.com to trace their lineage.

“Start digging and hope for the best,” Zwanziger said.

Contact Max Denning at 541-963-3161 or mdenning@lagrandeobserver.com.



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