

# Local

## City Council has 22-minute meeting

BY GINA K. SWARTZ  
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Mayor Mosier called to order Tuesday evening's City Council meeting as the clock chimed the seven o'clock hour in the background.

City Recorder Luke Yeaton called role with all councilors present. Councilor Ben Merrill tendered his resignation approximately two weeks ago and therefore was not present.

City Manager Mike Kee was also absent.

Facilitating the meeting was Public Works Director Michelle Owen.

The first order of business was the consent agenda approving the minutes from the regular council meetings of August 25, 2015 and September 8, 2015.

Mosier asked if there were any amendments to which there were none.

Councilor Downing moved to vote to accept the consent agenda with a second by Councilor Thomas. A unanimous vote was cast. Mosier then stated, "This is the time in the agenda where we reserve time for citizen participation. Is there anyone here who would like to speak to anything not already on the agenda?" Seeing none, she moved on.

**Ordinance #3344 Proposed Changes to the Tree Board**

Owen read the ordinance by title only for the third time. This ordinance is to change the tree board from five to seven members and was brought in front of the Council at the request of the tree board. The last City Council meeting saw both the first and second

readings of this proposed change in the ordinance. Downing made the motion to accept this third reading with a second by Councilor Abell.

Council voted unanimously to accept this third reading, passing the ordinance. "I ask anyone interested in filling those two new positions on the tree board to contact Mr. Yeaton," said Mosier.

**Ordinance # 3345 Amending Ordinance # 3264 Regarding Prohibited Park Activities**

Owen addressed council stating that this ordinance, amending the park rules ordinance, was being presented in an effort to curb certain activities from occurring in the Parks.

The ordinance states specifically that no skateboards, bicycles, scooters, roller skates or other conveyances be allowed in the parks except on pathways, prohibiting the use of those types of things on the structures such as picnic tables, playground equipment, the bandstand or the Lyon's shelter.

Councilor Augenfeld questioned wording of pathways in the ordinance. "What about the grass?"

Owen responded, "That would be unauthorized. It is very clear in this ordinance that they are to use those conveyances on paved pathways in the city parks and the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway itself. So they are not to ride in the grass. This ordinance is just kind of clarifying that and updating that."

Owen then read the proposed ordinance in full. Included was an emergency clause.

Mosier asked if there

was any further discussion. Downing moved to accept the first reading with a Second by Abell. A unanimous vote to accept the first reading was made.

Mosier asked, "Do we need to have an emergency clause to have a second reading?"

Owen responded, stating, "We don't. The idea of the emergency clause is to accelerate the passage of this ordinance. With the addition of the bandstand we have had substantially more activity in the park with conveyances and we would like to this updated sooner rather than later to discourage that. If it is the Council's desire it would be appreciated to accelerate the package by having a second reading tonight."

By a nodding of heads on the Council, everyone with Owen on the matter.

"In order to have that second reading a unanimous vote of the Council is needed," she said.

Councilor Langrell said, "I think you've got it."

Owen informed the Council she need and actual motion and vote to move forward.

Downing made a motion that Council hear a second reading of the ordinance that was seconded by Abell.

Council voted all in favor of hearing a second reading. Owen then read the ordinance by title only for a second time.

Thomas made a motion to accept the second reading.

Downing made the second and all councilors voted to accept unanimously the second reading.

Owen indicated that new signage would begin being



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Former City Council member Ben Merrill's seat remains empty while Michelle Owen filled in for City Manager Mike Kee at this Tuesday's meeting.

prepared in anticipation of the ordinance being passed with the third and final reading at the next meeting.

**Council Member Resignation**

Luke Yeaton, City Recorder/Human Resources Manager addressed council on the resignation of Councilor Ben Merrill. He told council, "Merrill resigned approximately two weeks ago stating 'As the father of two busy children, my schedule does not allow me to continue my commitment to this elected position.'"

As Yeaton advised the Council, he cited city charter that allows the Council to appoint, by a majority vote, a person to replace Merrill.

Merrill was elected in the November 2014 election with his term not set to expire until December 2018.

With only three candidates running for four positions in the last election, the Council cannot fall back on the next highest candidate voted for as they have in past when a situation such as this occurred.

Yeaton explained to Council he had modified a volunteer application that could be utilized.

Yeaton also suggested a letter of interest accom-

pany applications.

After some discussion council agreed that Yeaton's revised application would be used and applications would become available in the next couple of days and remain open for a total of 10 days.

Council is expected to make their decision for the replacement at the next council meeting.

**City Manager/Director Comments**

Owen said to Council, "I was left a list."

She advised Council work with the planning department on the City owned Salmon Creek property is moving forward toward selling.

The City Council and the County Commissioners had been scheduled to have a combined meeting together on October 13, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. for a work session to discuss the interchange management plan.

However a county commissioner was not going to be available so that meeting has been canceled and tentatively rescheduled in November.

Owen asked all councilors to get back to her as soon as they could to let her know so a date could be solidified

Owen also told Coun-

cil that the Sam-O-Swim Committee would be meeting again October 6 to go over bids for pool resurfacing and Council could expect to see the committee recommendation, should they feel one is worthwhile, at the Council meeting following the committee's meeting.

Owen also said she had secured a bid for the sand filters at a lesser cost than the council had approved and those filters have been ordered.

**Council Comments**

Mosier stated that she hoped community members stepped forward to fill vacancies discussed and encouraged her fellow councilors to mention to community members they felt qualified to apply for the open Councilor position.

She said, "If anyone has a question about what it means to serve I'm sure anyone sitting here would be happy to answer any questions and all of our contact information is on the city web site. With that if there is not anything else and this may be a record, but we are going to close this Council session."

"22 minutes after seven," she added in disbelief.

## NRAC talks weeds

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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The Baker County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) met on Tuesday, at 3 p.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Courthouse, joined by County Weed Master Arnie Grammon, to discuss proposed changes to the County's Natural Resources Plan (NRP).

Present were County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, NRAC Chair Doni Bruland, NRAC Coordinator Eric Wuntz, and NRAC members Ken Anderson, Jan Kerns, Alice Knapp, Jan Alexander, Chuck Chase, George Keister, Lyle Defrees, Craig Ward, Dick Fleming, Emily Braswell, Kody Justus, Eileen Gyllenberg, Laurene Chapman, Jake Bingham, and Cynthia Long.

Also in attendance were Craig Bruland, Lorrie Harvey, Tork and Wanda Ballard, and Bobbie Danser.

Bruland called the meeting to order, and she handed out copies of the agenda, along with copies of a draft Weeds section/invasive species amendment, proposed by Grammon, and a draft Watershed section/water and water rights amendment, proposed by Kerns.

No comment was offered by those present during either the initial or

final segment for public participation (each member of the public is granted five minutes to speak on natural resource topics only).

Bruland informed the group that Bob Parker and Leticia Varelas, from the Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service, were scheduled to be guest speakers, but were unable to attend.

Grammon began with an overview of the County weed program, and said, "This is my 15th year working for Baker County. I have a background in noxious weed ecology, and I enjoy my job. I have a passion about it, I really care about the people, and dealing with their noxious weed issues. I am represented, or directed by, the three Commissioners (Harvey, Mark Bennett, and Tim Kerns), as well as my Weed Board. Craig Ward is Vice Chair of my Weed Board, and he's been on it ever since I can remember. A lot of very good individuals, with a lot of collective knowledge, work on my Weed Board."

Weed Board meetings are held during nine months of the year, Grammon said; they're not held during November, December, and January). He said the weed program is funded primarily through a local, four-year, voter-approved weed options levy,

similar to a Vector Control mosquito levy, and it will be included on the May 2016 elections ballots.

"I have three or four major (weed) programs I work with. I spray road sides for the County, and generate some income that way, for the County Road Department. I also work with the general public, and go out to meet different landowners, as they try to address their weed issues. We have a cost share program through the County, and supplied by those County weed levy dollars, and it's supported by those, and we only cost share herbicides... We also have a herbicide giveaway, that, in my view, is one of the more effective ways we can provide just good, solid, basic herbicide use for landowners, at the right time, with the right method, using the right mix, and they go out and take care of white top, or spotted knap weed, as the case is in Sumpter, here, in three weeks or so. I'll be giving away herbicide there."

He noted the decision recently by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service not to list the Greater Sage-Grouse as an endangered species, and said, "I heard that the sage-grouse is not going to be listed, and that's a great thing, but, on the other hand, it's



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Members of Baker County's NRAC heard updates from Arnie Grammon on weeds and herbicides before moving on to additional topics.

going to right there, and hovering over us. The concerns associated with sage-grouse habitat, almost exclusively, deal with the loss of sagebrush, but, the invasive species are huge issues, especially with medusa head. We have got to address medusa head in a proactive manner."

Ward interjected that educating the public about invasive species and weed control has been, and will continue to be, very important, and he praised Grammon and the Weed Board for their efforts so far regarding that goal.

Grammon spoke about the local effort, and said, "There are a lot of folks who have spent a lot of money--thousands of dollars--even on my Weed

Board, I might add, on weed control, that I know about, and they're doing a good job with what they have, and the message needs to be, 'Yes, we have an answer here, folks. To anybody who wants to listen to us, even federal agencies, and so on. We're starting to get a pretty good approach on how to deal with some of these tougher, hard-to-deal-with issues.'"

Chase said he thinks the herbicide giveaway is a good program, and Grammon said, "We have pretty good overall support of that. People really like that... We're not here to kill every weed personally, myself, I can't, in Baker County. I can't do it. But, I can affect change through

getting people to get that concept in their mind."

Harvey asked Grammon about issues with the Tri-County Weed Management Area (TCWMA) partnership, and Grammon responded that, "There have been some bumps in the road recently, and you know about them, and what I would like to see in the future is better communication, as it relates to Tri-County and federal agencies. It hasn't been very good recently, with federal agencies dealing with noxious weeds... What I'd like to see, is more coordination and cooperation with local counties, and right now, it's minimal."