

Local

City Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Owen added, “I’ll be delving into a little more extensive public input into whatever our next step is and DEQ can help us determine what those next steps may be.”

Owen also expressed frustration with recent studies done and prepared for the DEQ with no forward movement toward a permit.

Mayor Mosier indicated, if she had hear correctly, the next steps would be having a consultant give an overview to Council, and perusing a permit renewal target for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Whatever recommendations are made, DEQ does not require all work to be completed by that target permit date; they only require the plan be in place with the understanding movement is made toward completing tasks to comply with the plan.

Ordinance #3346 Amendment #3292 Property Maintenance Dealing With Graffiti

At the October 19 meeting, an issue was raised concerning the graffiti ordinance by members of the community as well as the Public Arts Commission stemming from an incident in which the Eltrym was cited for not removing a portion of what was, according the ordinance was considered graffiti, on their building.

This incident and subsequent citizen requests prompted the Council to look at the ordinance and discuss options to amend it to allow some flexibility regarding enforcement.

The proposed amendments will allow for an appeal process of the ordinance as well as give property owners options to keep “graffiti” that they find appealing or add something without the need for prior authorization

as is stated in the current ordinance.

Council debated over some of the wording in the amendment and Councilor Augenfeld indicated that the use of the term “free art” was needed in the amendment.

Mayor Mosier felt the term “free art” and graffiti were two very different issues and that since the ordinance specifically pertained to graffiti the “free art” issue should be addressed in another ordinance that perhaps the Public Arts Commission, which Augenfeld is the council liaison, could be involved in drafting and bringing before Council.

Kee read the Ordinance in full with the proposed changes.

Councilor Downing made a motion to accept the first reading. Councilor Lewis made a second.

A 6:1 vote was made with Councilor Augenfeld objecting.

Downing then made a motion that Council hear a second reading of the ordinance with a second by Councilor Abell.

A 6:1 vote was cast again with Augenfeld disagreeing. A unanimous vote must be rendered in order for a second reading of an ordinance at a Council meeting.

With the vote not being unanimous a second reading was tabled until the next Council meeting.

City Manager Recruitment

At the October 19 regular meeting Council accepted Kee’s resignation and accepted an agreement that will keep Kee employed with the City an additional six months.

Although that agreement was made, it is necessary to move forward with recruitment and placement of a suitable successor. Kee brought forth to Council options to consider for retaining a replacement.

The first option was

to draft a request for a proposal in the hiring of an outside recruiter to assist in the search at a cost of approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000.

His advised advantages to this as relieving staff of recruitment and screening of potential candidates freeing them up to continue their duties as required and expected.

An outside recruiter would continually and actively search for suitable candidates and is able to dedicate more time to such activates.

An outside recruiter would have better knowledge of available candidates and may be familiar with those candidates as far as successes as to better aid the City in placement of a Manager that will be beneficial to our community and long term city goals.

The second option Kee presented was for the City and Council to pursue the matter themselves. This would most definitely allow more involvement from those that have a vested interest in the matter as well as those in our community.

While most certainly qualified and able the City Human Resource Manager, Luke Yeaton, who also serves as the City Recorder would be additionally taxed adding to his already demanding duties and possibly put in an uncomfortable position seeking out an employee that would ultimately be his supervisor.

After discussion the Council came to the consensus that an RFP (request for proposal) be sent out immediately to help gain insight as to which direction they wished to go on the matter. No commitment would be made by doing so, the proposals would just give council a better idea of options.

Kee also advised that a committee composed of

Councilors and staff be created to attend to this matter. Council agreed to discuss formation of a subcommittee at the Nov 10th meeting.

City Manager/Director Comments

City Manager advised council of a letter that had been sent to the Forest Service concerning maintenance of the fence protecting the City’s watershed. Cattle have been found to have breached the fence and wandered into restricted areas on several occasions. Damaged fences can also allow wildlife to access the area. The City upon those occasions has repaired the fencing.

In the letter, the City is advising the Forest Service that the agreement made was that they would also be active in their role to keep the watershed safe and they were lacking in their responsibilities.

Kee also said he was looking into the option of reinstating a city municipal court.

Currently there is an agreement with Baker County Justice Court to handle the City’s traffic cases. That agreement allows the County to split revenue generated by the City 50/50. Kee wants to investigate whether it would be financially sensible to consider making that change.

Council Comments

Mayor Mosier stated she had been contacted by a student from EOU about doing some intern work.

She distributed his resume among Council and advised she thought she might be able to utilize him for research prior to Council meetings.

Councilor Abell reminded everyone of the downtown trick or treat on Halloween, this Saturday from 4-6 p.m. and Mayor Mosier advised everyone to watch for trick or treaters and to be safe and have fun.

NRAC topics: East Face project, water rights, public meetings law

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, to discuss Oregon Public Meetings Law, Baker County’s response to the East Face Vegetation Management Assessment (EA), and to further review and edit the Water and Water Rights section of the county’s Natural Resource 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, Dick Fleming, Kody Justus, Cynthia Long and Laurene Chapman.

Also in attendance were Craig Bruland, Ed Hardt, Wanda Ballard, and Bobbie Danser.

Documents were passed out to the group after the meeting was called to order, including the agenda, the minutes from the September 10 and September 22 meetings, the proposed changes to the Water and Water Rights section of the NRP, and a draft response to the East Face Vegetation Management EA.

Bruland asked if there were any public comments from the attendees, and there were none voiced initially. Each member of the public is granted five minutes to speak on natural resource topics only, during two separate segments of Public Participation during the meetings.

She discussed Oregon Public Meetings Law (Oregon Revised Statutes 192.610 through 192.690) with the group. “Because we (the NRAC) are appointed by the Commissioners, we have to follow all full laws with the State of Oregon (even in advisory positions)...At any time, as soon as this meeting is over, and, at the discretion of Heidi (Martin, Executive Assistant to the Commissioners), we always have recorded the minutes,” she said. She went on to explain that the abbreviated minutes Bruland supplies the group have to, according to law, include how each member votes.

The minutes from the September 10, 2015 meeting were approved, with a motion from Fleming, and a second from Long, and the minutes from the September 22, 2015 meeting were approved, with a motion from Justus, and a second from Fleming.

Long discussed with the members the East Face Vegetation Management EA, and said that, after contacting the U.S. Forest Service ((USFS), she was immediately sent a hard copy of the document, which she received the next day via United Parcel Service (UPS).

“Basically what it is, is there are five alternatives, and it is to do (fire prevention) management from, basically Ladd Canyon up to Anthony Lakes. A lot of it is in Union County, but, some of it is in Baker County, so, obviously, it will have an impact on Baker County,” she said.

She explained that she had drafted a letter to Josh White (jpwhite@fs.fed.us, 541-523-1340) of the USFS, and she suggested the more ambitious alternative, that the project is a “good start,” and she urged the other members and the public to also draft similar letters, in support of the project. She also mentioned that comments need to be submitted by Friday, November 6, 2015.

Wuntz discussed a three-page draft document, copies of which he provided the group with, regarding a response to the East Face Vegetation Management EA. “I spent several days pouring through this (the original project EA), again, mostly on Chapter 2, where the alternatives are, and they’re spelled out,” he said.

Among the issues he addressed in the EA were: lack of mention of thinning for fire hazard reduction; large, blank areas on the maps with no forest health treatments planned; over planting discrepancies; lack of riparian treatments; lack of post and pole removal; lack of biomass removal; lack of mortality limits for differing tree size classes or species; lack of road access mention to mining claims; connectivity corridors issues; road closure issues (he provided a copy of an East Face Vegetation Project Post Sale Road Management map to the group to view); and issues with elk cover/forage ratios.

He also suggested that designation by prescription be considered with harvest tree selection, to reduce marking costs in appropriate stands, and that precommercial thinning be completed between the ski runs at Anthony Lakes ski area.

Ballard, speaking during the final Public Participation segment of the meeting, said, “I like what I heard here today. As always, my concern is the roads, and the loss of roads, and it (the EA) doesn’t mention the roads that have already been lost up there...It’s very important for us to comment...I don’t understand why it takes 10 years to do this project...”

The group also discussed Water and Water Rights section corrections/additions, using the copies handed out during the start of the meeting. The changes made during the meeting included grammar and more appropriate wording, and the copies included suggestions by Oregon Water Resources Eastern Region Manager Jason Spriet. Spriet was invited to speak with the group, be he was unable to attend the meeting because of other commitments.

Further discussion regarding the Water and Water Rights section, and other topics, will be at the next NRAC meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, 2015, at 3 p.m. The December meeting has been canceled.

Cattlemen ask for wolf comments

On November 9, 2015 ODFW Commission will meet in Salem to consider the status of gray wolves under the Oregon Endangered Species Act. Specifically, the Commission will determine if sufficient information exists to justify delisting the wolf from the

Oregon List of Endangered Species and in making this determination the Commission will review the best available scientific information and other data to determine if the criteria set forth in the OESA have been met.

In an effort to consult

with agencies, organizations, local governments, tribes, other states and interested persons. The Oregon Cattlemen invite comments.

Of interest is any information, materials or input which is related to the biological status review

document. Please submit any comments and materials by October 30, 2015 to: Russ Morgan, Wolf Program Coordinator, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 107 20th Street La Grande, OR 97850

Points that address delisting include:

1. Wolves have met the population threshold for delisting,(4 breeding pairs/3 consecutive years).
2. In order to expect human tolerance, the expectations and rules must be followed.
3. Wolves that originated in Oregon have dispersed to four different States,Washington,Idaho,Montana,and California. The Cascades are rapidly populating.
4. Wolves are in the first year of seven or more breeding pairs, (the threshold for phase three).
5. Wolves are present, and reproducing in all three neighboring States.
6. There is a federal ESA that protects wolves over 2/3 of the State.
7. Ranchers have played by very restrictive phase 1 rules. It’s time to move forward.
8. Ranchers that didn’t want wolves here to begin with, have already made the biggest compromise.
9. By asking ranchers to tolerate wolves, everyone needs to understand, you’ve asked them to have livestock killed by wolves.

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Published weekly every Friday.
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas,
e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery,
Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue,
mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only.
Payment in advance.

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