

Opinion / Politics / Local

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Marijuana part of ‘all about me’ mentality

To the Editor:
We live in a society which is focused on “it’s all about me—feel good at any cost”. For many it is all about the money, personal responsibility be damned. Nothing is more indicative of that than the legalization of marijuana. Every assertion I will make here is backed by sound studies which, due to the need for brevity, will not be referenced.

Clearly there is money to be made by legalizing marijuana, a substance which is still illegal under federal law. Money, however, is not everything if the following facts are considered.

1. In states that have “legalized” marijuana injury and fatal traffic crashes have increased significantly

2. Marijuana is far more addictive than alcohol or cocaine

3. Its use reduces critical learning skills, memory, and the ability to focus

4. Use leads to increased (non traffic) injuries, accidents and absences from school or work

5. Inhalation of marijuana smoke is 20% more harmful than regular tobacco

6. Use of marijuana alters brain structure. The American Medical Association reports that marijuana use increases anxiety, harmful mood swings, and depression. The argument that “medical marijuana” is more effective than legitimate pharmaceuticals is bogus. Proponents of legal-

ized marijuana ought to at least be honest, and positive claims about its medicinal value are clearly not truthful. The original legalization of marijuana for medical purposes which preceded the current Oregon law was nothing more than a not too cleverly disguised means of achieving the ultimate goal of total legalization.

Ask any honest, experienced cop about weed and he or she can tell you of its linkage to a long list of other criminal behaviors none of which is in the best interests of society. Finally, for those pot heads who like to combine getting high with use of firearms be advised that as of January 16, 2016 the new DOJ/BATF form 4473 specifically asks about marijuana use. Answer it honestly and you can’t buy a gun. Lie, and you become a criminal.

While it appears that some of Baker County’s smaller cities are opting to legalize marijuana vending for economic reasons I hope the County itself, and the City of Baker City do not. Their responsibility to the citizens they serve is more important than economic gain.

Jerry Boyd
Baker City

Editor’s Note: We’ve had a couple calls about letters to the editor that weren’t printed. We didn’t make a choice not to, but they never arrived in our post office box. Emails sent to editor@thebakercountypress.com are by far the best way to submit your letters. Thank you!

Sumpter: No marijuana stores within 1,000 feet of local parks

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
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Sumpter City Council met in regular session December 13th.

Items on the agenda included the second reading of the marijuana business ordinance.

Mayor Cary Clarke and Councilors Samantha Rowan and Greg Lucas were in attendance.

Robert Armbruster was out of town but was contacted via phone by Clarke for a couple of items.

Utility Manager Report
Clarke stated Utility Manager Jeff McKinney’s report is that he is out plowing snow getting ready for the next big storm.

Fire Department Report

Jim Sheller reported no call outs and said both trucks are chained up ready to go. The QRU runs on studded tires.

Planning Report

LeAnne Woolf stated at the last meeting the Planning Commission finished their preliminary review of goal nine of the Comprehensive Plan: economic development.

At their next meeting they plan to tackle goal ten: housing.

Josh Stump

Clarke stated there is a wage dispute happening in Sumpter. The City attorney does not want to get involved as he is not up on this type of issue. Clarke suggested hiring Stump for this one matter as it is all he does. His name was given by CIS, the insurance company for the city. This passed unanimously, including Armbruster’s vote via speakerphone.

William Cullum asked the cost to hire this attorney. Clarke stated it is \$350 per hour, but CIS says he is fast and thorough and won’t drag things out.

New Year’s Eve

Sumpter Valley Blue Mountain Snowmobile Club requested the use of Volunteer Park for their annual New Year’s Eve party and bonfire.

Lucas asked what hours the event would run.

John Young stated they start serving about 5 or 5:30 p.m. and are done by 7:30 p.m.

Clarke stated, “We’re all old. We go to bed by eight.”

Council unanimously approved the request.

2nd Reading of Marijuana Business Ordinance

Lucas stated that the survey results counted in a special meeting prior to the Council meeting were not an official vote.

The purpose was to see if sentiment in the town leaned overwhelmingly one way or the other.

There was one more vote for denying grows and manufacture than allowing them (75 yes, 76 no, 12 neutral).

There were six more votes for allowing retail than for not (74 yes, 68 no, 7 neutral).

Lucas stated that his thoughts were the survey did not give the Council a definite direction to go.

He said as builders and other agencies have to go with the most stringent code, whether state, local, or international, he felt the Council should do the same thing at this point.

The more conservative direction would be leaving the ordinance as is and leaving the issue to a general election vote.

Clarke said he felt the Council should do some rewriting of the ordinance due to the outcome of the poll.

He specifically referenced the section banning marijuana businesses from being within 1,000 feet of a State park, effectively eliminating the entire Sumpter commercial district.

Armbruster stated the survey has nothing to do with the ordinance.

He asked where the 1,000 feet element came from.

Clarke stated it has been used in other cities and is a common item. He said it had just been brought to his attention that on August 23, the OLCC removed the 1,000 foot rule from parks, though it is still in place for schools.

Armbruster stated there is not a direct path to follow. The Council’s requirement is to conduct themselves to the benefit of the community. He said his opinion is that Council should take on the task of determining how this should come out regardless of the poll.

Catherine Dodgens stated that there were three workshops on this ordinance and they were open to the public. Anyone could voice what they had to say and this is how this ordinance came into being.

Clarke stated they got the opinion of those who were at the workshops, but with the survey results they now have three hundred and some opinions.

Woolf stated that this involves a land use issue, changing zoning for some commercial businesses, but not all.

She said as well as going through the City Council process, this must go through the Department of Land Conservation and Development and hearings.

Lucas stated there are two opinions on land use issues, gleaned from talking to lawyers and other experts. One says if a business will be denied us-

age of their building, there must be hearings. The other says if the business will be allowed to go in, there must be hearings, but if not, no hearings are necessary. He stated the Council is in kind of a conundrum.

After further discussion along the same lines Clarke motioned to read ordinance 2016-3 as written.

Three voted in favor with Rowan against.

Over the next thirty minutes, City Recorder Julie McKinney, spelled by Lucas and Rowan, read the ordinance in its entirety.

Lucas motioned to pass the ordinance as read.

Clarke was unable to reach Armbruster for his vote. The motion passed with two in favor, Rowan opposed.

OreTel Franchise Agreement

Motion to adopt this contract passed unanimously.

Public input

Denny Vincent shared about his son’s experience battling cancer. He was not able to physically take chemo anymore but using cannabis shrunk his tumors and reduced cancer markers. When he stopped using cannabis, the cancer came back.

Myrna Clarke stated the issue has become a terrible thing for everybody, no matter which side and that Council has gone through hours trying to do what they thought best.

Dodgens said when they moved up in 2000, there were three meth houses in Sumpter and their biggest sales were marijuana.

She stated everyone on High Street and the area was getting robbed and could keep nothing in their yards or pickups.

She started a Neighborhood Watch and it took six more years to shut the meth houses all down.

Clarke said he wanted to share his opinion as a citizen and came out from behind the Council table to do so.

He said part of him thinks the Council did the right thing tonight and part of him thinks differently.

The Council put a lot of time and effort into getting 320 opinions. He said when it comes to a vote of the people, he hopes everyone votes and everyone is happy.

Jenny Long stated their business is proposing to sell a product that’s legal in the state of Oregon.

They are not selling meth. They are working with the Sheriff’s Office on training to know if people are intoxicated on any substance and are not catering to “meth heads.”

They are still planning to open in January and within 21 days will file an appeal with LUBA (Land Use Board of Appeals).

Ferrioli reelected Oregon Senate Republican leader

SALEM-Monday night, Senate Republicans elected as their leader state Sen. Ted Ferrioli, of John Day.

Ferrioli released the following statement:

"It is both a privilege and an honor to serve as the Republican leader in

the Oregon Senate. We look forward to fighting for PERS and budgetary reform in the upcoming session. The outrage of the governor’s budget proposal is that she wants to create over a dozen new tax hikes on Oregonians,

while also slashing senior services, like Oregon Project Independence, and veterans services. Through working together we can accomplish a solution that protects our most vulnerable and brings us to a more solid financial future."

Brooklyn Elementary School holds budget night

BY SAMANTHA O’CONNOR

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Monday, December 12, Brooklyn Elementary held their annual community budget meeting. The meeting allowed parents to give feedback to Brooklyn faculty concerning budget priorities for the 2017/18 school year.

The meeting began with a presentation by Brooklyn Principal Phil Anderson. He began the presentation by discussing some of the board goals, beginning with literacy, a top priority at Brooklyn.

He discussed the three modes of writing they focus on at Brooklyn—ex-

pository, persuasive, and fiction their students learn. Anderson explained that Brooklyn focuses on having their students leave Brooklyn reading at a third grade level.

He explained that students in first grade who cannot read at a third grade level yet will have that be their goal to reach when they leave Brooklyn.

He also discussed expanded learning opportunities such as summer school, full day kindergarten, and Friday school opportunities. This is the second year they have had full day kindergarten.

This year, they have also created an Inquiry Block, which is 45 minutes at

the end of the day where teachers are able to do science, arts, and social studies. He said they are hoping to build on that next year.

For the ongoing professional development, Anderson explained they had Oregon RTI visit with Brooklyn, South Baker, Haines, and Keating to discuss how they support struggling readers.

Anderson also explained that attendance is a critical component for student success and they look at classes to see if there are any attendance issues.

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