

City missed housing point

When you're singing the blues in Sandy because housing construction's down and money isn't flowing, you don't shun a rich stranger who knocks at the wrong door.

City hall in its pompous wisdom seems to have done just that by turning down a godsend Farmers Home Administration subsidy offer for construction of low-cost apartments here.

Their reasons must have been good to act for everyone in turning down all that federal money to buy local supplies and hire local workers to build local apartments to rent cheap, right?

Well, council apparently has decided there's no need for government-subsidized apartment projects here. Council further thinks such a project might create some sort of traffic problem in rustic, little Sandy.

Perish the thought! Better we all should rest easy, while the world passes us by. That's the view FHA and the investment community is likely to take of this sleepy community, if Council doesn't wipe the sleep out of its eyes.

Sandy does little enough to attract developers in its unwillingness to shoulder some of the new systems development costs.

Now three developers, vying for FHA loans, have pitched the council for endorsement to the federal agency. FHA had asked the city to

consider the merits of each proposal and advise them on the matter.

If there's no need for more subsidized low-cost housing here, then how come Sandy's only two subsidized housing projects have experienced waiting lists? How come only 154 of Sandy's 1,321 housing units were built with some kind of government assistance? How come even children of council members are looking for spots in these subsidized units today, if there's no big need the council can see?

Sandy can be proud to the last dying bull. But what of the young calves looking for a fresh piece of ground? Saying everything is fine today and fine for tomorrow—status quo—shows an amazing lack of understanding of the city's own comprehensive plan that predicts a population boom around the bend.

It also slams the door on investors and builders who want a piece of the market that present business persons admittedly find difficult. But that's competition. It's also growth. And Lord knows we need growth.

Now if the council would get the message. They might reread their comp plan and their own Economic Development Commission study before their Monday work session on this issue. (VB)



Here's chance for economic help

Local community boosters who think Sandy and Estacada could do more to attract more commercial business to strengthen sagging economies, take heart. Your federal bureaucracy has YOUR hometown development in mind and offers promotional aid. All you'll need are the proper forms.

The Federal Economic Development Administration is staking big bucks—in fact, \$2 million of them, to help Oregon communities promote location and expansion of small business around the state.

The money is here, but questions hold up any easy handouts. The state attorney general must resolve the questions before the feds can begin looking at individual projects around the first of the year.

Want to tap in? Any interested business person could begin by talking to his or her banker about

a specific project. If the banker is interested in financing part of the project, together they approach county commissioners. If commissioners share the enthusiasm, an application then is made to Economic Development Department. The loans are made to the county, which in turn dispurses the funds.

Acceptable projects would be purchasing land and equipment, building facilities for new businesses or upgrading existing businesses.

Further information is available from Barrie MacDougal of Oregon Department of Economic Development at 1-800-7813.

The more we hurt, the more we stand to gain. The way the program's set up, counties who suffer most serious economic problems will be given top priority. So get going, Mt. Hood builders! (VB)

Has Denny forgotten local roads?

U.S. Rep. Denny Smith's statement that Oregon roads aren't bad enough to warrant a proposed 5-cent-per gallon federal gas tax increase for national road improvements is unbelievable.

It may be our local representative to Congress finds roads especially bad, now that he's back east. But does he remember how bad roads are back in Oregon?

Campaigning here for his slim victory November would have showed him a few bumps in the road, if nothing else. Pity he didn't make the trip.

Clackamas County is a sprawling, but poor expanse of pot holes and broken pavement. Try as they can, small county crews are hard-pressed to stay ahead on road repairs.

County officials have mulled ways to finance the needed road repairs in recent years and found unsuccessful statewide gas tax increase drives the only feasible route.

If you think Sandy roads are bad, you should cruise through downtown war-torn Estacada where main streets are cracking everywhere. Rural roads in the Hoodland and Boring-Damascus areas are best traveled by four-

wheelers with heavy-duty shock absorbers.

The other end of Clackamas County is even worse, in some areas. A driver not practiced in dodge-and-weave precision could lose a small car in potholes in the Oregon City, Milwaukie and Gladstone areas.

But Clackamas County can't claim all the bumps in Oregon's road that Mr. Smith seems to have missed since going to Washington. Here's the real test for you and your car: Try driving through the public streets of Lents in Portland. Now here is a fine old Portland community that government has forgotten in its own sense of moral responsibility. (Or was it the state's burning desire to cut through Lents with Highway 205?) Anyway, some of the side streets of this southeast Portland neighborhood aren't even paved, let alone irrigated. In places, cars must brave very deep puddles and even trees in the middle of the road.

Perhaps a nickle more for gas is too much to ask, the price of gas being what it is. C. the other hand, maybe a nickle spent in Oregon on roads is better than a dime tomorrow, considering how roads are bottoming out. (VB)

Reader laments:

Layered government bolsters Portland

Next January Clackamas County will have its first effective voices in the state Legislature. We must make our views known to Senator Steve Starkovich and Representative Bob Shiprack. These men, our neighbors, promise a welcome improvement over the flat-tire politicians from the wrong side of Mount Hood.

The election clarified some critical issues for these districts. I suggest many of them stem from the tentacles of the Portland establishment, but do our new solons know the extent of this?

The elitists of Portland have created an apparatus, regional government, the "tri-counties" to work their will over us. Typically, they spent scads of money to defeat Ballot Measure 6. Right or wrong (I think it was wrong), the voters in our midst turned out a substantial minority in favor, even aware it was a Draconian solution to our meddlesome land-use laws. (Not, it is their LCDC.)

The voters asserted that much is wrong with LCDC. Everybody knows its horror stories in the mountain

community. Starkovich and Shiprack have said they favor reform, so let us remind them.

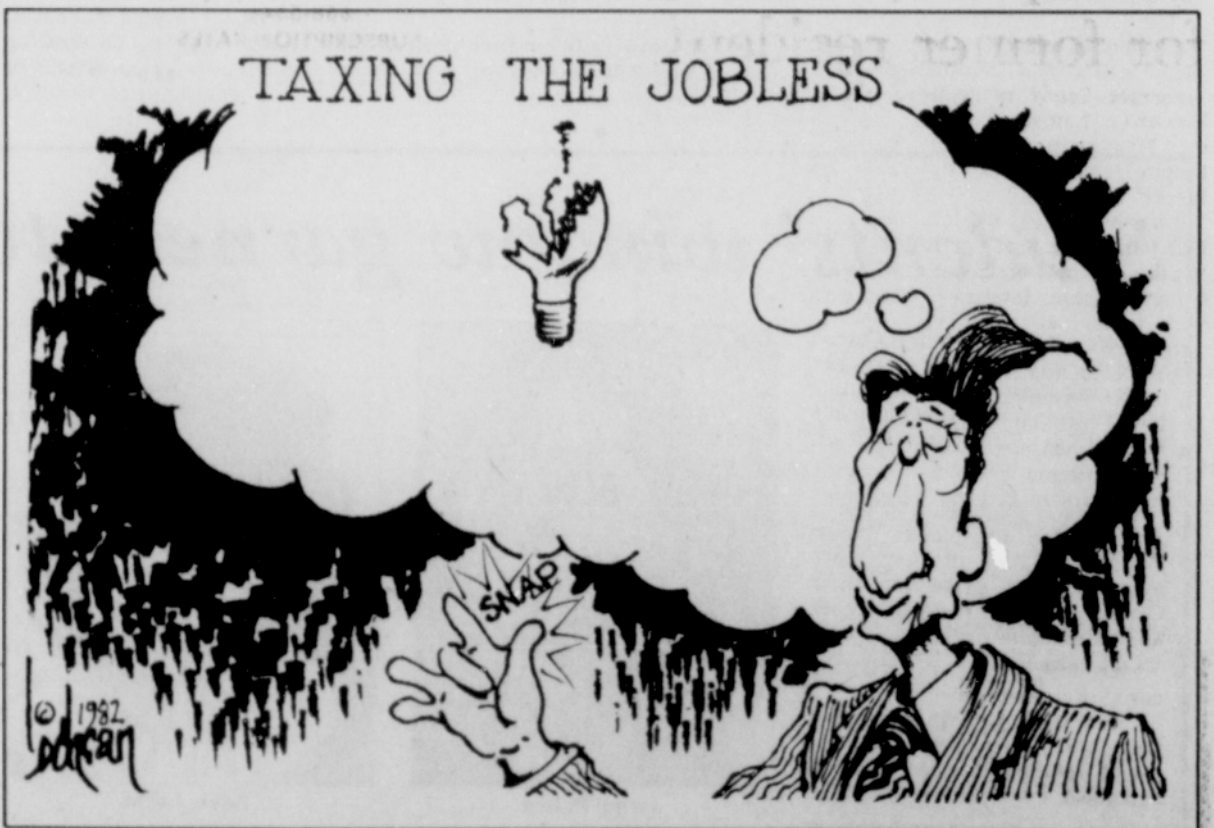
LCDC threatens property owners in our midst, even as it has (Draconian-

style?) with Happy Valley. They mock private property rights. Some of us stand to lose our very homes, because we will be unable to rebuild if the house burns down under LCDC

rules. Something is woefully undemocratic in these and other instances. We need to assert our rights in them all. Let us join in wishing Senator Starkovich and

Representative Shiprack well in their new careers. Their success promises good things, and they should be our gain.

Joseph A. Stein
Zigzag



Personally speaking:

Whole hog, chops dilemma

"Whole hog or no pork chop." Father Boyle smiled contentedly as he passed among the 27 members of our freshman Latin class, handing out midterm exams—a single paragraph of declensions and conjugations acrobatically strung into a passage from Virgil's "Aeneid."

"It's whole hog or no pork chop," he'd repeat, more for his own pleasure than the edification of the minds wondering why "Then Came Bronson" took precedence over studying the travels of Aeneas the evening before.

The whole hog, in that case, was a succinct translation of the intrepid Roman's travails. The pork chop, a semester's grade. Certainly no more passable a path than the split infinitives and colloquialisms of Virgil is the maze the city of Sandy finds itself in pursuing its own pork chop—a paid-for Heritage Square parking lot. The city and property owners, who asked for the lot, have been dickering over the price for some five years.

It's whole hog—pay for the project—or no pork chop—we'll keep it and do with it what we will, the city seems to be saying.

If the property owners balk,



by DAN DILLON

and indications are they will, the city is readying a list of alternatives for the 63-space chunk of prime macadam in the heart of the city.

The city could sell it for a toll lot, put up parking meters or begin a long-range "improvement" project that could keep the lot torn up for any number of years.

Somewhere along the line, someone goofed. The courts seem to point the finger of blame at the

city. At the same time, however, the courts gave the city authority to return to square one and begin the project anew, as if it never existed at all, which started the latest round of city bills for the project.

If the city indeed goofed—and the voters who elected the officials when the goof occurred share part of that blame—it is responsible.

Yet, the city cannot be faulted entirely for making its best effort to provide the lot that property owners requested, regardless of technicalities that point to one side or the other's favor.

The battle over payment has waged through thick and thin almost since the beginning. In and out of courts, the skirmishes have seen the wits of the judiciary carry the case to the extreme—the state Supreme Court.

Principal to the argument: there is a parking lot. The hatchet should be buried somewhere.

The community is choosing up sides now, waiting to see what happens in the parking lot brouhaha. It's a battle that will mark a Pyrrhic victory, at best.

The city could be seen as losers if they give in, after believing it

was only serving the wishes of businessmen and businesswomen who asked for a place for customers to park while they shop, and taxpayers get stuck with the bill.

The businessmen and businesswomen could be seen as losers if they see the once-free municipal lot turned into a park-for-pay venture. It could add another log to the fire that drives shoppers to Gresham for goods.

The whole affair, begun with a sense of neighbors helping neighbors, has turned into the Hatfields and McCoy's. It's a neighborhood war.

War memorials make nice tourist attractions and no one's tried a peace memorial lately, have they?

However, if both sides swallowed some indignation—city officials and the businessmen and businesswomen who wanted the confounded thing in the first place—Sandy could have one of the first-ever draw memorials, with a regular old parking lot just the way it is.

Maybe they could call it Mental Block.

Just a thought about the pig in a poke.