

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor
Kimberly Nelson, advertising representativeLocals should sit
on design board

An opportunity exists for the Sandy City Council to discuss the role of the Design Review Board, but it is possible they will let the opportunity pass because that would be easier than stirring up a controversy.

The Design Review Board was formed in the mid-1970s to encourage originality and innovation of site planning and development, including architecture, landscaping and signage.

The Planning Commission, a separate board organized about the same time, is responsible for zoning decisions, and the layout of new streets, parking areas and sidewalks.

Monday night at the City Council meeting, an item on the agenda pertained to the appointment of a new member of the Design Review Board. City Manager Tom Reber recommended a Gresham resident who works in Vancouver, Wash., as a landscape architect. Reber was following tradition in line to recommend an out-of-town business person for the position. Normally about half the members of the board are architects or landscape architects drawn from outside the area.

Why would a Portland architect want to serve on Sandy's Design Review Board? We believe they are sincere in wanting to help Sandy achieve an aesthetic look and plan for a better future.

Under Building Official Tom Day, who recently retired, we know that members of the board put in countless hours of research and work, visiting sites and making informed decisions.

In other ways, though, the Design Review Board has been an albatross around the city of Sandy's neck. Sandy's sign ordinances have been among the town's most controversial issues, despite the fact that over the years citizens have been given the opportunity to give the sign ordinances a good, hard look.

There is no question that some people in Sandy have been intimidated about taking a sign in to get it approved. Some simply don't bother. Other businessmen complain about having outsiders making decisions for Sandy.

And they have a good point. It is valid enough that four business people wrote letters, given to the City Council Monday evening, asking that a decision on the appointment be put off until a local person could be found.

There is a good chance a local nursery owner will be appointed to the board Aug. 4. The City Council could then drop the issue instead of pursuing it.

In defending its consideration of a Gresham resident and Vancouver businessman, Mayor Deane Wesselink pointed out that it is hard to find local people to serve on the Planning Commission and the design board.

We know that is true, and would therefore recommend combining the two boards. The city of Sandy's staff, with good preparation, could make the job manageable for one active board.

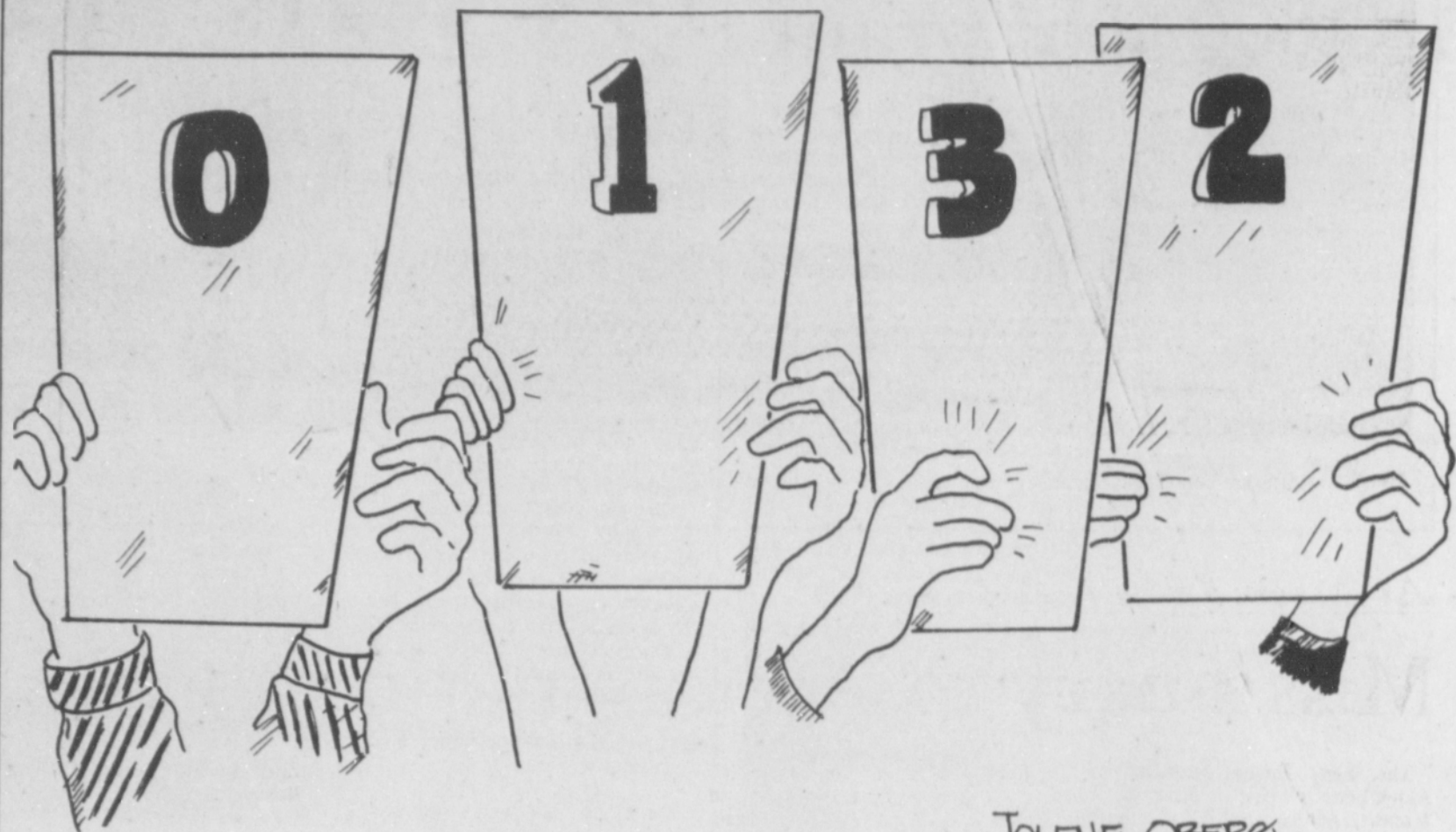
One argument for having architects and landscape architects on the board is that their expertise is needed. We tend to disagree. It is up to the businessman to come up with a good design. The city of Sandy's staff — planner and building official — can give the plans a going-over to look for obvious flaws.

The board that would then approve designs would be expected to use good common sense. Is a sign offensive? Will a driveway interfere with the flow of traffic? Are the recommended shrubs appropriate for a corner lot?

We keep hearing another argument for outsiders on the Design Review Board. Some outside people are needed, we are told, because Sandy people would be under too much pressure and could not make the proper decisions for fear of reprisals from neighbors (unofficial boycotts of one's business, for example).

That argument almost doesn't warrant an answer. Anyone who serves on a board had better be prepared to make tough decisions.

On Aug. 4, we hope the Sandy City Council will give some thought to combining the Design Review Board and Planning Commission, or at least to making the design board — as new positions come open — an all-Sandy board.

CARTOONIST RANKS EDITORIAL ON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD WITH OWN
SIGNS.JOLENE OBERO
7-24-86

Personally speaking

Survey not best, but shows opinions

by SCOTT NEWTON

The Sandy Elementary School District's "Patron Opinions and Attitudes Survey" went out in March of this year, and results were given in July, during a time when a lot of other things were going on.

So the story was missed, to a large extent, by the media. The results probably failed to excite board members or members of the committee that worked on it because of the 95 bogus surveys. In other words, it appears the ballot box was stuffed.

Another problem, admits Larry Sears, survey specialist with Portland General Electric, was the small sample. As it turns out, 368 ballots were considered valid. That is a pretty small number considering that Sandy has a population of 3,925.

Still, there were some interesting points to be considered. One question that stands out: Who has the most influence in deciding budgetary and financial matters? Patrons were asked to pick from among five choices and rank them one, two, three and so on; therefore, they don't total up to 100 percent.

But consider, 77 percent said administrators and principals have the most influence in budgetary matters.

Board members ranked a percentage point less, at 76 percent.

I think this is a significant revelation. I think it means that the public only puts minimal stock in its elected school board members. With no confidence in the democratic process, it is no wonder people are voting against budgets.

How do people rank the programs? Maintenance and cleanliness rated a 3.29 on a four-point scale. The cooperative transportation system rated a 2.93. Asked if the schools gave enough emphasis to reading, writing and arithmetic, the public gave them a 2.8, which is not a bad grade, really.

What does it come down to, then? The big, bad administration. Asked if one area gets too much funding, 31 percent of the respondents said the administration gets more than a lion's share. Sports programs were bemoaned by 13 percent.

One other statistic shows a lack of confidence in both the board and the superintendent. Thirty-one percent ranked the superintendent's problem-solving ability as poor. Thirty-four percent ranked the board's problem-solving ability as poor.

Who took the survey? The group

was divided almost equally among people making from \$10,000 to over \$40,000 a year. Sixty percent were female, 36 percent male and 4 percent were apparently undecided.

Fifty-one percent were in the 36 to 55 age group. Twenty-three percent were in the 26 to 35 age group, 10 percent in the 56 to 64 age group and 13 percent in the 65 and over group.

On a related subject, this comment was overheard at the Mountain Festival: "There are really good people here even if they won't approve school budgets."

Margo Dempster told The Post that the crowd at this year's Mountain Festival was from a wider-ranging area than in the past. She bases her assumption on her talks with people and the addresses they put in the guest book.

People from Longview, Wash., and Astoria read about the festival in a Safeway Store insert, she was told.

The schedules of the Timber Festival and the Mountain Festival were advertised in an insert; I knew that. But it is amazing that it was seen in Longview and Astoria.

Helen Dreves, advertising

copywriter for Safeway, confirmed Dempster's hunch — that the schedules got statewide play. The insert went to over 1.4 million people in Oregon and southwest Washington, Dreves said.

One more thing on the Mountain Festival. Those crowd estimates of 50,000 to 60,000 have always caught my attention. Being of a skeptical nature, I have always wondered if they were accurate.

So, I did some rough, rough figuring. Total pathways measure 2,880 feet (a mile is 5,280 feet), and pathways are from six to nine feet wide. I think it is safe to use nine feet as an estimate. A person occupies, let's say, two square feet when the park is busy. There is, then, the potential for 12,920 in Meinig Park when it is completely full, which it is much of the time. Because there are people in other parts of the park in addition to the pathway, that estimate would be conservative. Also, don't forget Mountain Festival activities occur in other parts of town.

If there was a turnover of people three to four times during the festival, the estimate of 50,000 might just be... Well, you decide.

Salem Scene

Quantity of initiatives raises concern

News that Oregonians will find 16 measures to vote upon during the November general election — 12 making the ballot via the initiative route — will be hailed by those of populist bent.

But despite the fact the state's initiative process is considered by many as akin to motherhood and apple pie, there are those who question its validity in the lawmaking process.

Some in fact, believe creating new laws via initiative petition and popular vote to be the worst kind of lawmaking imaginable. As you might suspect, these opponents often are among those closest to the legislative process, which they perceive as being circumvented by the initiative.

Nonetheless — and despite the fact this nation abandoned lawmaking by plebiscite in favor of an elected legislative body — Oregon is a pioneering force behind the initiative movement and there's precious little likelihood of repeal.

Consequently, there arises during each election year concerted efforts to warn the public of pitfalls inherent to the initiative process and to urge voters to carefully consider measures that make the ballot before voting for or against them.

The current crop of 12 initiatives contains some cases in point. All achieved ballot status by obtaining signatures of registered voters. But signing a petition does not necessarily signify support. Signers often tell signature gatherers they don't favor their measure but believe the public has a right to decide at the polls.

Opponents believe these types are abdicating a serious responsibility of citizenship.

Lawmaking in the legislative arena is tedious and carefully scrutinized. Lawmaking in initiative often falls to chance and just as often is ruled by emotional considerations rather than practicality, they claim.

Validity of the latter complaint tends to be upheld by the fact many initiative measures involve issues that have failed to achieve passage through the legislative process.

One can only speculate on the ensuing confusion should all four achieve passage next November.

Then there are the measures that would close the Trojan power plant, phase-out manufacture of nuclear weapon components in Oregon and force Teledyne Wah Chang to remove some slightly radioactive wastes.

Passage of those initiatives would eliminate jobs and send the wrong signals to those who are being told this state really is open for business and welcomes additional industrial development that creates new jobs.

And there's the measure — No. 5 — designed to legalize the private possession and growing of marijuana for personal use.

If national and international concerns about illicit drugs and their abuse were not enough, Measure No. 5 points up yet another hazard inherent to the making of laws by popular vote.

Wording of the measure already is prompting confusion that likely will befuddle voters who don't take the time to thoroughly understand whether a vote for or against the proposal truly expresses their wishes.

It poses the question: "Shall law forbid permits, licenses and criminal

penalties for possessing and growing marijuana for personal use?"

The wording seems to give voters the option of forbidding or not forbidding possessing and growing. In fact, voting for the measure will achieve its supporters' goals — prohibiting laws against possessing and growing.

But opponents of both this measure and the initiative process believe many who do not favor legalization of marijuana will vote for it believing their vote will forbid its possession and production.

All of which points up the complexity of lawmaking at all levels and the particular hazards involved in an initiative process that is so little regulated as to create such confusing ambiguities.

Reformers would require that initiative petitions be drafted by the Legislature's legal arm, making certain at least that language conforms with established practice.

So the signature-gathering for this election has ended and a dozen initiative measures face voters three months hence.

It's too late to urge voters to carefully read and understand petitions before they sign.

But it's not too late to do some serious homework before you vote.

Letters to the editor

Scout Troop 662
offers its thanks

Sandy Mountain Days are fun days. They are also the days when members of Boy Scout Troop 662 put forth their best efforts to earn money for summer camp, a 50-mile hike and other troop expenses.

The sale of our barbecued beef sandwiches, during this year's festival, was again a big success and we would like to thank the Mountain Festival committee for all of their hard work in preparing for this event.

We are very grateful to everyone who stopped by to enjoy one of our sandwiches. Thanks also to the Scouts and their families for their help in the booth and especially to Jerry and Betty Britton for the great job they did coordinating the fund

raiser.

And on behalf of the Troop committee, I would like to thank Helen Lamke and her family for their support and for the money donated to the troop in memory of Dr. Al Lamke.

Dr. Lamke was associated with Troop 662 for many, many years and his help and friendship will be missed very much.

June Plaster
Publicity chairman
B.S.A. Troop 662

Policy on letters

Letters to the editor should be typed, double-spaced and signed. An address and telephone number should also be provided, although only the name of the letter writer and the city or area he is from will be published.