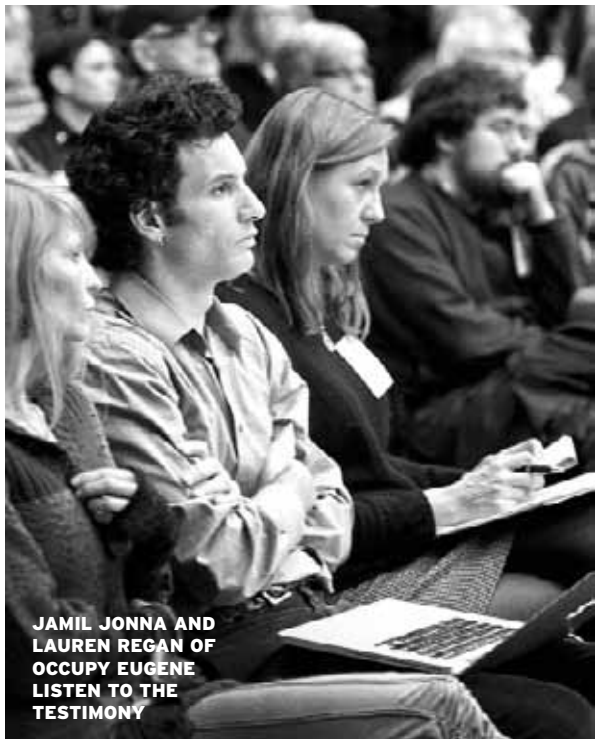


WHITHER MUST OCCUPY WANDER?

Occupy Eugene might be a camp for the “unhoused,” but it is as much a protest movement as ever, Occupiers told the Eugene City Council Dec. 12.

The council voted 7-1, with only Councilor Mike Clark in opposition, to delay a vote on what to do about Occupy until City Manager Jon Ruiz could meet with OE representatives. That Dec. 14 vote will occur after *EW* goes to press and only hours before the Dec. 15 camping permit for Occupy Eugene expires.

Prior to the City Council meeting, Ruiz outlined options for the camp from terminating the camping permit on Dec. 15 to extending the permit and providing transition services. After a work session, an hour of sometimes emotional public comments in a crowded public hearing and even more discussion, Councilor Alan Zelenka proposed an option that incorporated several of Ruiz’s suggestions. Zelenka suggested that the camp be allowed to remain for 45 more days, or another amount of time that would allow for transition from Washington-Jefferson Park and include options such as hiring a social services agency to provide coordination, support and oversight of a transition away from services that have been provided by the camp.



JAMIL JONNA AND
LAUREN REGAN OF
OCCUPY EUGENE
LISTEN TO THE
TESTIMONY

PHOTO BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

MAYOR KITTY PIERCY CALLS FOR QUIET AT
THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING



PHOTO BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

There was no second for Councilor Betty Taylor’s motion to extend the camping exemption unconditionally until May 15.

Occupy Eugene has been providing an estimated 1,000 meals a day as well as a place to sleep for those who would otherwise not stay somewhere like the Eugene Mission. Eugene does not currently have a “wet bed” facility that provides a place for chronically homeless people who use alcohol or drugs.

There was not enough time, according to Mayor Kitty Piercy, for all 70 people who had signed up to speak at the public hearing to have their say. The City Council heard testimony, limited to two minutes a person, for an hour. The council, with the exception of Clark, walked out of the room when the Eugene Peace Choir used two people’s testimony time to sing from the back of the room. When Clark was thanked for remaining in the room, he commented, “a little Facebook time is always good.”

The vast majority of the speakers were in favor of letting Occupy Eugene continue its protest and homeless, or as some Occupiers preferred, houseless, outreach. Pro-Occupy speakers ranged from those who live at the camp — including a woman named Lotus whose young daughter invited those in attendance to her birthday party at the camp on Friday — to Teri Ferguson, who identified herself as a middle class taxpayer who goes to church on Sunday.

Council members expressed concern over whether the camp as whole would agree to move, along with concerns over costs and health and safety issues. Water disposal from dishwashing was brought up by Councilor Pat Farr. Donna Riddle, who has a long history of working on social issues in Eugene and has volunteered as a dishwasher at the camp, said after the hearing that water is used and reused at the camp before being stored in a gray-water barrel and pumped out when the portable toilets are pumped each day.

An Elmira resident called the camp a “criminal infestation” and spoke of “repeated open sexual acts” to hoots of laughter from the crowd.

Ruiz noted in his memo that “within the last 7-10 days, conditions in the camp have been deteriorating more

rapidly, requiring an increasing level of police resources.” But civil liberties attorney Lauren Regan said in her testimony, “Safety and health care issues are grossly overblown,” and said the site has become more safe over the last two weeks, not less so.

Occupier Scotty Perey said, “You call our village a mess! You want a mess? Our health care system is a mess. Our environment is a mess. The endless wars on which we bestow trillions of our oh-so-precious tax dollars on is a bloody mess. Our government and the corporations who promote all of these messes is a gargantuan mess.”

When those testifying made a statement the Occupiers agreed with, support was shown by putting hands in the air and twinkling fingers, a consensus signal used in general assembly meetings.

Eugene’s attempts to work with the Occupy camp and deal with the homeless issue that it has highlighted stands in contrast to many other cities that have controversially and sometimes violently cleared out the camps associated with the Occupy movement.

“Occupy Eugene has captured people’s imaginations, or at least it has captured their attention,” Zelenka said. — *Camilla Mortensen*

MEGALOAD ACCIDENT STALLS HAUL

The various tentacles of tar sands extraction haven’t been cut off, but they are currently frozen. Environmentalists, concerned about the greenhouse gas effects of the toxic processes used to extract oil from the earth near Alberta, Canada, have been fighting to stop the oil companies from using U.S. lands and highways to enable the process.

The tar sands oil equipment, some of it weighing more than half a million pounds, is barged up the Columbia River and then driven along scenic byways in Montana and Idaho. Last week, an Imperial Oil megaload struck a van, causing it severe damage, and that van was pushed into another vehicle. The Idaho Transportation Department

biz beat

The old **Taco Time** building downtown at Broadway and Willamette changed hands a couple of months ago when Steve Master bought the building from Jack Roberts and his siblings. Master says he is planning a major interior and exterior renovation, preserving a lot of the historic brickwork. The building will be tentatively called First on Broadway, a reference to its history as First National Bank. He declined to say how much he paid for the building, but back in 2007 the city negotiated an option to buy the property for \$1.2 million. Three commercial spaces will be available at street level, along with 16 boutique apartments upstairs. Paperwork is expected to go to the city soon and he hopes to have permits by February. Architect is Rowell Brokaw and financing is by Summit Bank. Master had earlier planned a more ambitious \$10 million, five-story building on the site with 5,000 sq. ft. of commercial space on the ground floor and 50 apartments above. See story in our archives at <http://wkly.ws/156>

Master is also working on the new **Park Street Apartments**, 24 residential units next to Full City at 8th and Pearl in an old Public Works office building purchased from the city. Master is taking advantage of city loans and the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption that encourages downtown housing construction.

Cascadia Wildland’s annual Wonderland Auction Dec. 10 at the UO’s EMU Ballroom generated a record \$60,000 for the environmental nonprofit, covering about one-fourth of the organization’s annual budget, according to campaign director Josh Laughlin. About 200 items and services were offered in silent and live auctions, and all expenses of the evening were offset by event sponsors. See cascadawildland.org

The **Village Inn** on Mohawk Boulevard in Springfield changed hands about a year ago and we hear the new owners, Helen and Sean Kim, have remodeled every guest room and completed a total renovation of the old restaurant and lounge, now called The Cottage House. Karaoke is happening Friday and Saturday nights, lottery games are awaiting state permits. Manager Shannon Jones tells us the inn has been “super busy” over the summer

and during the football season and is already booked out for the Olympic Trials next summer. Call 747-4546 or visit www.springfieldvillageinn.com

A new office for **Country Financial** at 1700 Valley River Dr. was officially opened with a ribbon cutting with Mayor Kitty Piercy Dec. 12. The new office will house 19 representatives providing a full range of financial services. Office phone is 344-4215.

Saturday Market honored General Manager Beth Little Dec. 10 with an award created in her name. The annual Beth Little Micro-Enterprise Award goes to an individual or organization that advances the cause of micro-business in Lane County. “Micro-enterprises start small, but have a huge impact on the financial health of our community,” says Kim Still of the Market.

Eugene-area **cartographer David Imus** has new maps available at local retailers and online at imusgeographics.com including the *Essential Geography of the United States of America*, just in time for holiday gift-giving.

Send suggestions for Biz Beat items to editor@eugeneweekly.com with “Biz Beat” in the subject line.