

COUNTY TO TAKE CONTROL?

Everyone has boundaries, and some of us get a little hot under the collar when those boundaries are pushed. Lane County doesn't want so much to push Eugene and Springfield's boundaries, as it wants to control all the lands around the cities. One of the things that could be affected is water quality.

At 7 pm Tuesday, March 13, at Harris Hall, Lane County will hold a public meeting on ordinance PA1281, which is an amendment allowing the county to take jurisdictional control of the lands that lie in between the UGB (urban growth boundary) and the metro boundary, says Planning Commissioner Lisa Arkin.

The Board of Lane County Commissioners is planning a vote on the amendment despite the Lane County Planning Commission's vote against changing the way the lands are controlled.

County Planning Commissioner Dennis Sandow says, "The first thing the public should know is that this will shift decision-making authority from a collaboration between Eugene, Springfield and the county to solely Lane County."

If this ordinance passes, 81 percent of Springfield's drinking water would be under the county commissioners' decision-making authority, Sandow says. The Springfield Utility Board (SUB) gets much of the water it supplies from wells located in these lands. Springfield has a drinking water protection plan; Lane County does not.

"Lane County has no history or capability or knowledge of how to protect drinking water," Sandow says.

An attempt by the county in 2010 to protect Eugene's drinking water failed, and despite a recommendation by the Planning Commission to bring the water protection issue up again, the conservative board majority has failed to do so.

Arkin adds that residents should consider that often these lands get zoned for industrial, commercial or transportation uses, and the wells and the quality of water could be affected by changes in land use.

The changes in land use would be determined by the county commissioners. This could weaken Springfield citizens' control over their drinking water, Sandow says. He says the county claims it will create an intergovernmental agreement with SUB to protect the water, but as of yet, no such agreement appears to exist.

These boundary changes are all part of changes to the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan. Later on, handing over control of the lands outside Eugene's city limits to Lane County will also be voted on, as the Envision Eugene process wraps up.

Citizens can come give public comment to the commissioners before their vote on PA1281 at the March 13 Harris Hall meeting. For more information go to wkly.ws/13n

— Camilla Mortensen

BIG SALARIES OR SMALL ANIMALS?

Animal advocates want to know why Lane County isn't considering trimming salaries over \$90,000 instead of cutting much-needed services. Budget cuts at the city of Eugene and at Lane County have led to a proposal that Lane County Animal Services be ended and a new plan put in its place. But no new plan has been drafted, and who and what would take over dealing with the area's homeless pets from LCAS is unclear.

Lane County Commissioner Rob Handy proposed on February 8 that Lane County cut 15 percent off the salary of those making more than \$90,000 a year. He says this would save Lane County more than one million dollars. Commissioners Jay Bozievich, Sid Leiken and Faye Stewart voted against discussing the proposal.

"They don't even want to entertain the notion," says Lisa Warnes of Save the Pets. She says the proposal to cut LCAS is a way to get around paying union wages, and she says that it's "morally wrong to go after union wages and cut much needed services," when there are "fat cats" making six-figure salaries.

Warnes says the city ought to take up Handy's salary-trimming proposal as well.

Lane County Administrator Liane Richardson makes almost \$150,000. Eugene City Manager Jon Ruiz and Eugene Police Chief Pete Kerns each make over \$100,000.

LCAS, which has greatly reduced Eugene and Lane

County's euthanasia rates "is the best thing right now," she says. Warnes says she fears without LCAS there will be not only be more feral cats but also feral dogs, "more dog bites and more cops shooting dogs."

Cuts at LCAS are already a problem, she says. The animal behaviorist was recently fired. If it hadn't been for the willingness of LCAS to give a young behaviorally challenged dog named "Axel" a chance, and the work of the behaviorist, Warnes would not have adopted "the best dog I have ever had," she says.

While the city and county as of yet have no plan, they have discussed using a nonprofit group to take over the animal shelter, and moving enforcement to the police department.

Cary Lieberman of Greenhill Humane Society says that until the cities and county issue a request for proposals, it's too early to know how Greenhill may be involved. Lieberman says, "Our interest is to ensure that homeless, sheltered pets get the best care possible, and all pets are safe from abuse and neglect. We would want to know that those goals are in line with what the cities and county want before we consider any agreements."

— Camilla Mortensen

SPROUT! IT OUT

Two farmers and a priest walk into a bar and ... oh wait, is that how the joke goes? Springfield's Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO) is hatching Sprout!, which is no joke — it's a food hub that will be housed in the former First Christian Church on 4th and A streets.

NEDCO Assistant Director Sarai Johnson says the hub will have three main components: a year-round farmers market, a central kitchen that can accommodate up to five businesses at once, and an expansion of NEDCO's Hatch business incubator program.

"All of those things intertwine amazingly well," Johnson says, because small businesses can access technical and business assistance in their own marketplace.

Right now, the project is in its design and development phase, but NEDCO plans to open the farmers market in October.

Sprout!'s first-ever "Stalk-holder Celebration" will be from 1 to 4 pm Saturday, March 10, at 418 A St., Springfield; \$5 suggested donation.

— Shannon Finnell

SLANT

- Big question marks and plenty of politics are ahead for the judiciary in Eugene. **Presiding Judge Mary Ann Bearden** announced March 6 that she's resigning effective April 1 after 14 years in the Lane County Circuit Court. That means Gov. Kitzhaber will pick a new circuit judge right away and the powerful presiding position will change this spring. Over at the U.S. Courthouse, U.S. District Judge Michael Hogan is going on senior status, to be succeeded by one of five nominees from Sens. Wyden and Merkley. President Obama gets to choose the final nominee to throw to the surly senators for approval on their political clock. The two nominees from Eugene are Suzanne Chanti, a Lane County Circuit Court judge, and Bryan Lessley, assistant federal public defender. Either Chanti or Lessley should be named for this judgeship in Eugene.

- The city of Eugene is appealing the **use of excessive force** verdict against the EPD's Sgt. Bill Solesbee based on a technicality in the jury instructions. With the city's budget in dire straits, is it really time to double-down on an appeal when none of the evidence has changed? Now we're looking at direct and indirect expenses that could potentially cost the city nearly half a million dollars when this could have been settled years ago for less than \$10,000 in medical bills and an apology. We doubt this appeal will go anywhere; it's the same arguments EPD lost on before.

- **Three impressive women** urged an audience of women and a couple of men at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference to encourage more Oregon women to run for public office in 2012. Mayor Kitty Piercy and Cynthia Wooten, both with long histories of elective office in Eugene and beyond, told their stories. Mary Hughes, co-founder of The

2012 Project out of Rutgers University, laid out this country's miserable record in electing women and why 2012, a presidential year following a census, is key to boosting women in public office. We cheer the effort, of course, but raise that niggling question: Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, Gov. Jan Brewer of Arizona? What if the woman is a lousy candidate? The 2012 Project doesn't endorse, Hughes said, adding "it does women a disservice if you don't endorse the best candidate."

- **Not a lot of competition** for elected office at the Eugene City Council and EWEB levels this time around. The deadline for filing was March 1 and Mayor Kitty Piercy has just two challengers, Councilor Betty Taylor has two opponents, and only EWEB Wards 1 & 8 has a contested race. What keeps more good people from running? Elected office is a big commitment of time and labor, the pay is either minimal or not at all, and local politics brings out the best and worst in the local citizenry. But the rewards can be great. Why does Piercy go to all those meetings and events? She loves learning and being connected.

There is a way to plug into local government in significant ways without the pressures of elected office. The city of Eugene is now recruiting for various boards, commissions and committees until March 30. The vacancies are many: Budget Committee, Civilian Review Board, Planning Commission, Toxics Board, LRAPA Board, Police Commission, Sustainability Commission, etc. The City Council makes the appointments June 11. Apply on the city website, stop by the city manager's office or call 682-5010.

- **The economic models** we live with today have created massive wealth and development worldwide, along with gross

inequities, but they have only been with us for a tiny fraction of our species' time on the planet. Is there anything we can learn from how homo sapiens lived for most of the last 200,000 years? A lot of folks are excited about Charles Eisenstein's Oregon tour and his upcoming talks in Corvallis and Eugene (see Activist Alert). He's the author of *Sacred Economics* with its focus on sustainable, community-based exchanges of goods and services. Giving and receiving is how humanity survived and that might be how we get through tough times ahead, or at least build resilience into our economy. An interesting twist on this is a new Eugene-based smart phone app called Kindista, designed to create a "mass participatory gifting network." Find out about Kindista at unifyingcascadia.net or at Eisenstein's talks and workshops.

- Rock guitarist **Ronnie Montrose**, who played with Van Morrison, Sammy Hagar, Herbie Hancock and many others, showed us his mad guitar skills at WOW Hall back in September and he donated one of the guitars he played that memorable night to be raffled as a fundraiser for the local Musicians Emergency Medical Association. Sadly, Montrose died March 3 at the age of 64 following a battle with prostate cancer. He was probably quite ill when he came through town. We appreciate the rocker's generosity and courage. The raffle raised \$900 for MEMA, and longtime MEMA supporter Mathew Beveridge ended up taking home the signed guitar. Once again we are reminded that many of the most creative artists among us are self-employed and without health insurance.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com