

One objection to the deal emailed to the mayor and City Council compared the settlement to extortion, and another decried the power of neighborhood organizations. Conte says his actions weren't as a part of any neighborhood organization.

MUPTC could be changing in the near future. Conte says, "Looking forward, however, Councilor Brown has indicated an interest to other councilors in an ordinance that would suspend MUPTC entirely for new applications until council can really carefully examine what they can get out of these very large tax exemptions."

Conte cites Portland as a place that uses tax breaks to accomplish community benefits by capping the exemption and requiring benefits such as low-income housing to qualify for the exemption (see wkly.ws/19j for more). "If we can't do those, one alternative is to just get rid of it. I don't think we're getting the benefits out of the current program, especially not being used to produce more student housing when the market's already flooded," he says.

— Shannon Finnell

BOARD DISCUSSES DINGLE

The Lane Board of County Commissioners had scheduled a vote to appoint Senior Assistant County Counsel Stephen Dingle as the new county counsel at their Jan. 8 meeting, but postponed the issue of Dingle's contract, voting instead on another part of the agenda item — to re-create the Office of Lane County Legal Counsel as a separate county department.

Alex Gardner, the Lane County district attorney, has been simultaneously serving as the acting county counsel, and when the decision was made to appoint him in November 2011, the county counsel's office was added to the DA's office and called the Civil Division.

The County Commission voted to transfer control of the county counsel's office back to the board's control. "I'm glad the board transferred back the function," Sorenson said. He and former fellow progressive commissioner Rob Handy had previously voted against transferring the functions of the

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TOMO TSURUMI



PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

DRUNK BASHES SAX IN THE CITY

At bar close in the Barmuda Triangle on Tuesday, Dec. 4, Tomo Tsurumi — saxophonist for Volifonix and origami artist — was attacked by a twenty-something Caucasian male with fair, long curly hair. Tsurumi, who has been busking with his alto saxophone in downtown Eugene for the past seven years, says he had stepped into Jameson's for one beer before bar close. Upon exiting, Tsurumi was approached by a "drunk and happy" man.

"He tried to mosh pit me," Tsurumi says, whose saxophone case was strapped to his back. Tsurumi dodged the attack and says he then tried to explain to the man that he was carrying a valuable instrument. "Without saying anything, he lost his smile and pushed me against the Jameson's cement wall."

The attack broke the saxophone case and caused \$1,000 in damage to the saxophone. Tsurumi has raised \$100 and is hoping to raise more to fix the instrument at Pacific Winds. He is hosting fundraisers on Jan. 15 at Cozmic and Jan. 26 at The Granary. Tsurumi will be performing with his tenor sax and will be giving away origami art.

"Without my saxophone, I would have been hurt," he says. Tsurumi only remembers the offender hopping on a truck bed after the attack because he left immediately, not wanting to be attacked again. He reported the incident to the police but he says there's little they can do besides take down information. Tsurumi has returned to busking but says he's more suspicious of people now.

"People shouldn't use their power for harassment," he says. His message for Eugene? "Drink responsibly."

Tomo Tsurumi plays 5 pm Tuesday, Jan. 15, at Cozmic and 9 pm (opening for Garin Reese) Saturday, Jan. 26, at The Granary. — Alex Notman

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