

COUNCIL MISLED

Concerned citizens following recent Eugene City Council discussion around preservation of the Amazon Headwaters are wondering about the role of city management.

At the Feb. 19 work session, staff repeatedly stated that the Deerbrook PUD has been approved. This is false. The application received a tentative approval. The property owners have chosen to delay applying for other approvals needed before any development can begin. Why was council misled on this point?

Another issue neglected in the discussion is the extension of West Amazon Drive south to Fox Hollow. The extension is prerequisite for development of the residential lots due to the "19 Lot Rule," EC 9.8325.6(c), requiring that the PUD streets disperse traffic onto more than one public local street when the PUD exceeds 19 lots.

The unpaved right-of-way is within 30 feet of the protected stream corridor for some distance. Is it really feasible to complete the road without impacting the stream? The issue has not been addressed since the right-of-way is not considered part of the PUD.

This right-of-way is currently a signed trailhead and the tentative approval cedes this well-used park amenity to the developers at no cost.

Planning staff dismisses concerns about environmental protection by quoting the restrictions/conditions included in the tentative approval. Those familiar with the proceedings leading to the tentative approval will be skeptical of the effectiveness of those restrictions.

David Saul
Eugene

THE GREENEST BUILDING

The city of Eugene wants to demolish old City Hall and replace it with a "sustainable" building. That begs the question: Wouldn't the existing building be a lot more sustainable if they didn't tear it down?

Rick Wilmath
Veneta

SHORTSIGHTED IDEA

The "draft the homeless" idea [Letters, 2/20] is flawed in a few ways. First, forcing people to work without pay is indentured servitude, which is illegal in this country. Second, the military has a high standard of eligibility for enlistment. For the potential enlistee, these include trainability, physical and mental fitness, and patriot motivation. And finally, the "homeless" are in this situation for a wide variety of reasons. Establishing a single answer for "dealing"

with the situation is simplistic, shortsighted and uncompassionate.

Beverley A. Mowery
Eugene

EVERY THIRD BITE

More than half of North America's bumble bee species are declining. Although there are many factors contributing to this, pesticides are one of the main contributors that often gets overlooked. The class of pesticides called neonicotinoids has become increasingly linked to large-scale bee die-offs in Oregon, as well as across the country. They kill bees directly, as well as cause harm to bees in such a way that they are more vulnerable to diseases, parasites and predation.

You might be asking yourself why you should care. A quote, attributed to Albert Einstein, says that human civilization would only last four years if all the bees disappeared. Whether or not that is true, our ecosystem will be altered drastically if bees are suddenly not around to pollinate plants. Bees are responsible for every third bite of food we eat.

Many other countries have already taken action toward the investigation and restriction of these pesticides, and it seems to be our duty to follow in the footsteps of these countries. The federal bill, the Saving

America's Pollinators Act (HR 2692), would suspend use of these pesticides as well as call for deeper evaluation of their negative impacts on pollinators. I urge you to call your representative and ask them to hop on board!

The Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides is very deeply involved in this bill and would be happy to answer any other questions that you have regarding the subject. You can contact them through their website, pesticide.org.

Hannah Miller
Eugene

STILL WORK TO BE DONE

Thanks to *EW* for support of historic Civic Stadium. Over the past five years *EW* has publicized all of our events, clean-ups and meetings to the public. It has alerted the community of 4J and city meetings that were important to the process to save Civic Stadium. Their articles have been positive and engaging for the restoration of this historic structure. It has promoted its use as a venue for soccer and kids sports and a facility for use by the community at large. It helped explore the unlimited possibilities that await the future of this great asset for the citizens of Eugene.

With the vote by 4J to offer the Civic property to the city of Eugene, there is

VIEWPOINT BY BOB WARREN

We Can Do Both

LARGE COMPANIES ARE IMPORTANT PART OF THE MIX

Comments by *EW* in the Feb. 6 issue about the "new economy" criticize Lane County and local communities for spending time and money to lure large companies to create jobs and tax revenues. *EW* goes on to reinforce the commonly held myth that these companies are only here to get the cash and tax breaks and leave as soon as they are exhausted. Once again, Sony and Hynix are used as examples to perpetuate the myth. In neither case is it true.

One very good reason to recruit large employers is the Willie Sutton effect. 1930s bank robber Willie Sutton allegedly told a reporter he robbed banks because "that's where the money is." And that's why it makes sense for state and local governments to continue to recruit large employers. On a per project basis, these large employers like Sony, Hyundai, Symantec and Royal Caribbean, to name a few, provide a lot of bang for the buck in terms of jobs and tax revenues.

All of the services of local government, including schools and public safety, are paid for by property taxes. The state is dependent on the income taxes provided by jobs, some of which also goes to fund local services including schools. Big employers employ lots of people and make large investments in buildings and equipment. The jobs create income tax revenue and the investments create property tax revenues.

At its peak, Hyundai/Hynix employed more than 1,000 people at its west Eugene campus and was the largest property tax payer in Lane County by a very wide margin. Yes, it is regrettable that Hynix ceased

operations; however, it did not shut down because the tax breaks went away. It shut down due to rapid changes in the high-tech world in which they operated. The plant became economically obsolete. But even now, years after its closing, Hynix is still one of the largest property tax payers in Lane County.

And the infrastructure created for that recruitment remains in place for continued job growth for both large and small employers. Investments in transportation, water, wastewater and electricity continue to provide the basics for future development in the area. Other firms, like Life Technologies, continue to expand and grow and create high-wage jobs nearby.

The same could be said for Sony. Sony shut down its Springfield facility because people stopped buying compact discs, not because the tax breaks ended. And even though Sony is no longer operating, the property developed by Sony now employs far more people than Sony ever did.

Symantec was another large employer recruited by state and local governments. It originally located in downtown Eugene, giving that area a significant boost when it was badly needed. And when it outgrew the downtown location, it was able to relocate locally, thanks in large measure to the infrastructure investments made for the Sony recruitment. Without the Sony investments, Symantec may have left our area completely. The Sony investments were also instrumental in locating Royal Caribbean in our area.

And Symantec's former location in downtown Eugene? The infrastructure investments made to accommodate Symantec made the former department

store an attractive location for continued job creation, first Enterprise Car Rentals and now a Sykes call center.

It is true that many small businesses suffer when a large employer like Hynix or Sony goes out of business. They purchase materials and services that local businesses provide. When they leave, that business is missed. For that reason, the recruitment of large employers can be part of a strategy to support the small business community. But not the whole strategy.

Cumulatively, small businesses create thousands of jobs and pay millions of dollars of property taxes. They are important and vital to the health and well-being of our local economy. We absolutely need to support and nurture our small business community.

We need a wide range of policies and programs that nurture and support up-and-coming businesses like Urban Lumber. We need the programs that help our established small businesses to grow right here.

Companies like Urban Lumber are wonderful. They help define our community. They help make life interesting and enjoyable. They manufacture high-quality products that improve the livability of our communities. And they provide jobs, good jobs. These small businesses help define who we are.

Fortunately, we can do both. We can support local small business while also recruiting large employers. We can nurture our local startups and we can create and maintain policies that support the existing small business community. Recruiting large employers and supporting small businesses are not mutually exclusive endeavors. We don't have to do one or the other. They are both essential components of a comprehensive economic development strategy.

Robert Warren has been a Eugene resident since 1984. He retired in 2012 as regional business development officer for the Oregon Business Development Department for Lane, Benton and Linn Counties and had a long career in economic and community development, forest policy and natural resources consulting.