

## VAMPIRE PLANNING

Regarding the proposed Seavey Loop industrial zone land grab: I can't believe the four Tea Party commissioners and the Springfield City Council are trying to ram this atrocious proposal past the citizens of Lane County, but I guess the success of the Parvin Butte murder has convinced them that they can do anything they want, including destroying our most popular county park, a community of several thousand people and hundreds of acres of farmland.

My friend's backyard adjoins Oxley Slough. The industrial zone would cover Oxley Slough (divert it? put it in a pipe?) and threaten the homes that border the slough, which serves as flood control in the event of Willamette River flooding. The homes are probably safe with the slough undisturbed, although part of my friend's yard is always underwater in February, but when they take that floodwater sponge away, who knows what will happen.

Does allowing this scam to go forward constitute illegal takings of private land for no public benefit, or will they get away with it as they did with destroying Parvin Butte and the city of Lowell, or the Ninth Ward in New Orleans, or any of hundreds of thousands of other robberies conducted by the 1 percent of the 1 percent?

Can we stop Aaron Jones and his

relatives and friends from destroying Lane County, or are we doomed to watch helplessly as our lives are sucked away by the vampire class?

Ann Tattersall  
Eugene

## OCF-GMO BLUES

An open letter to the Oregon Country Fair: I have attended the Fair since 1974, including participating in food booths and entertainment. I still believe it is truly one of the most magical events of its kind. The Fair has always represented a visionary dream of peaceful coexistence, green sustainability and creative expression through art and a wide variety of entertainment. I have watched the Fair grow and overcome seemingly impossible odds to continue its improbable run.

One area the Fair vision doesn't square with is the dream of sustainability and its blind eye to its lax food booth standards. This is a glaring weakness that the Fair needs to address over the next few years. The preponderance of genetically modified food ingredients in the majority of food booths runs contrary to the vision of true sustainability. Does green sustainability at the Fair end outside of the Community Village and Energy Park? In the case of most Fair food booths, it unfortunately does.

Why would the Fair support the use of these GMO ingredients? By allowing this practice, the Fair is, in effect, supporting chemical poison companies like Monsanto? The excuses for change are as weak as its food policy. I hear that "food costs will soar. How would it be policed? How do vendors know how to weed out GMO ingredients?" These problems can be overcome. The Fair needs to step up to the plate (literally) and make sustainable changes.

Andrew Harrison  
Gold Hill

## COHOUSING NOT HARMONIOUS

Oakleigh Meadow Cohousing (OMC) has half the members that it needs, partnered with Paradigm Construction, Essex as general contractor and Will Dixon as the project manager. The city of Eugene's permit department has listed the permits as apartments, townhouses and commercial building, not condominiums. The planned unit development (PUD) application is for condos, which must be owner occupancy. Is the permit department allowing the permit to say apartments or townhouse because Paradigm is supporting OMC financially? The city has said the scope of work will change to condos after the application has been approved. OMC's application is

in appeal to Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA), which set a hearing for July 24. This is all happening just down the road from the major development on River Road behind the old Goodwill in the Greenway.

Check out the meadow before it gets developed. Everyone has the right to hire a company to check for a water line. EWEB has proceeded to do more work than just locate a water line for OMC project without approved permits. This all seems to be more about money than land use change and being harmonious to the community.

Please visit [saveoakleighlane.blogspot.com](http://saveoakleighlane.blogspot.com).

Anne Love  
Eugene

## A CARING COMMUNITY

Oakleigh Meadow Cohousing (OMC) has just about 75 percent of the homes spoken for and building plans have been submitted to the city as of June 30. The project was incorrectly titled "apartments" at that time, but it has since been taken care of and the records updated.

The LUBA decision should be rendered by mid-August. OMC is aiming to break ground and start construction this fall. Essex is our general contractor and Paradigm Properties is our partner. EWEB is helping us design the water and electrical facilities for our project.

## VIEWPOINT BY COUNCILOR BETTY TAYLOR

# An Overdue Step

THE REAL FACTS ABOUT THE CITY'S PAID SICK TIME PROPOSAL

While much ink has already been spilled over the City Council's proposed paid sick time policy, it's important that our community is debating actual facts and applying appropriate context to the matter. I would like to clarify some key points.

As the Eugene City Council, we serve everyone who lives and works in our town, which is why the proposed ordinance applies to everyone who works more than the occasional flyover in Eugene, regardless of their employer's base location. As a public health measure, it wouldn't work so well if some people have to continue to work sick, spreading contagion to colleagues and clients. We want *everyone* working in Eugene to be able to recover at home and reduce the impact of their illness on everyone else.

This is not a complicated policy. Are there details to understand? Of course, but not that many.

There's been a lot of discussion of onerous tracking and reporting, but there will be no sick days police. Employers will not be required to report any sick days data to the city. Like most employment laws, enforcement will happen on a complaint basis, meaning employees who experience a violation can complain to the state's Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), whose staff will then investigate.

The tracking is pretty similar to what's already done for payroll. And, further, avoiding fair labor laws because they require some human resource time isn't

right. One simple option available to all employers to reduce paperwork and accrual tracking is to front-load their staff with the total hours they would accrue in a year, then all that is required is to track actual hours used. Experience shows that people are quite protective of their sick time and only use it when it is really needed. In fact, many don't use their sick time at all, costing their employer nothing.

Council has devoted a great deal of time to this issue because it's important to us and to the community. And the process isn't over. A thorough rule-making process is yet to come, during which many details will be ironed out. This will be done by soliciting input from a range of perspectives, and by applying data, with lots of opportunity for robust dialog. Once the rules are established there will be several months for employer trainings and education as well as outreach to workers to ensure the smoothest possible implementation.

Our proposal will not cost the city millions of dollars as some are claiming. Nor will it cost employers millions. Quite the contrary: Paid sick time leads to healthier employees, less costly turnover and a more committed and productive workforce with less presenteeism (when

people are physically at work but not able to do much due to illness). Experience from other cities tells us that paid sick days policies do not impede business growth. And let's not forget that there is a *current* cost to *not* having paid sick time, one that is borne mostly by working people whose health and financial security suffer when they're forced to either work sick or lose needed pay (or their job) when they get ill.

What we're proposing is a straightforward, minimum labor standard of five earned sick days per year (40 hours). This will be a welcome improvement and provide a much needed sense of security for those who currently don't have a single paid day off work — not one.

Oregon and Eugene are known for innovation, excellence and leadership in many arenas, but when

it comes to setting basic workplace protections and family supportive policies for everyone, we are behind the rest of the world. Ensuring a few paid sick days for everyone is a small but significant opportunity to do better.

I have supported this idea from the very beginning for the simple reason that it is a long overdue step in the right direction for our community's public health, our local economy and, importantly, for all the hard-working folks who struggle to maintain their own and their family's health while holding down a job.

Betty Taylor is a Eugene city councilor representing Ward 2.

