

SEAVEY LOOP LAND GRAB

On Dec. 31 the city of Springfield suddenly announced a "visioning workshop" to determine the future of Lane County lands and citizens, to be held from 4 to 7 pm Jan. 14 at the Springfield Library. I have grave reservations about this process.

- The subject area is all outside the city of Springfield. It includes LCC and Lane County's largest park. These are all rural, unincorporated county lands. Springfield is an external power with no authority to direct visioning for this county territory and its residents. That is a violation of local governance and autonomy, which are the first principles of due process.

- The "invitation" was distributed on extremely short notice only via email and only to parties who have submitted comments regarding UGB expansion. A proper visioning process demands timely notification of stakeholders, which in this case means all county residents. There are well-established practices for stakeholder notification and for scheduling to accommodate stakeholders, starting with publication in newspapers of record. These practices were intentionally ignored, preventing stakeholder participation.

- Given the vast number of concerned stakeholders, the huge public investments to date and the importance of this area for the socioeconomic development of the Eugene-Springfield metro area, the proposed timeline of four sessions over

four weeks is insufficient to even begin any meaningful visioning or consensus building.

- The area of wide-ranging public concern is the east-west axis from Buford Park to LCC, that is, the park and green zone, the agricultural and residential Seavey Loop neighborhood and the section of 30th Avenue extending to LCC. The vision does not involve College View Road, which is a commercial street running north-south along I-5, or Goshen, located miles away.

- This meeting is not the start of a meaningful or democratic visioning process for the best future of Buford Park and the greater Seavey Loop area. It is an obvious ruse — a crude attempt by the city of Springfield to confuse the public, define the framework, dictate the agenda, whitewash citizen opposition and completely dominate the outcome. Springfield is acting on the false pretense it has some authority outside its jurisdiction over lands that will never become part of Springfield.

The faulty Springfield process should be abandoned immediately. In its place, a new process may be launched by the primary stakeholders and concerned civic groups in collaboration with Lane County. This restructured visioning process will benefit from the knowledge and experience of wide-ranging participants to build consensus and reach the best possible outcome.

You can also submit your comments to mayor@springfield-or.gov.

*Charles Stewart
Seavey Loop*

FAITHLESS SHELTERS?

Robert Simms' letter makes a strong case for faithless care for the homeless. It would be wonderful if the atheist clubs and groups in Lane County got together and came up with a system for emergency housing.

"Religious faith is a lazy person's excuse for not having to think" seems a bit subjective, but then so is the thinking of believers who do the volunteer work.

Having been homeless 40 years ago, I know that I'd have endured a sermon for a meal or roof. I'd have stood on my head, chanted almost anything anybody demanded! But that was then.

Where did the "15 percent" data of the homeless use of faith-connected resources come from? And what would happen if all the church-affiliated doors closed tonight? (It was 27 degrees Thursday night.)

Those who can't do, teach (or write letters?).

I say bravo, Robert, bring on the universal love, the agnostic, the atheist, etc. shelters!

*Magi Hart
Eugene*

WAR GOES ON AND ON

How can I describe the sadness that I felt during the holiday season, one that is

meant to be a season of hope? I joined the community where I live, led by a children's chorus, in singing with deep spirit, "Joy to the World," "Silent Night" and other carols. I almost felt the hope that memories of the birth and life of Jesus brought to the world.

Jesus brought a message of love, healing and courage to his community and to the world. He lived in simplicity, mostly out of doors, serving those in need, those who were rejected in his world, as best he could. The brutal Roman Empire dominated the region, and many wanted to rise up and forcibly overthrow it. But his was a message of courageous love, and he was willing to give up his life for it.

What a contrast memories of his life bring to the violence, the greed and, yes, the futility of our foreign and economic policies. President Obama has sent thousands of troops to "give instruction" to the armed forces in Iraq. Bombings and drone strikes ravage the countryside, creating suffering and hate. A willing and distracted U.S. public seems to be in complete support of sending trillions of dollars for this widening conflict and quite possibly many more years of war.

I long for a rising up of active compassion, of intelligent, imaginative, courageous devotion to nonviolent and planet-healing alternatives. I do see glimmers of that. I do.

*Peg Morton
Eugene*

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