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LETTERS

BENCHES FOR PEG

As a relative newcomer to Eugene, I don't remember when Kesey Square had benches, but it certainly needs them. Among other amenities, I recommend a few sectional benches for community convenience, dedicated to Peg Morton, whose letter Dec. 17 was a comment on this very need.

*Patricia Spicer
Eugene*

VOICES NOT HEARD

I know that the voices of the unheard are the voices of those who need help. They are the ones who need to move away but they can't. These voices come from low-income families, big families and young families. They are from people who can't speak the native tongue, the voices are from people who are disabled. These voices are from west Eugene.

These people can't move away from chemical-spilling factories. These chemicals can cause miscarriages, cancer and asthma. Some people can't even go outside their houses without feeling sick. Some kids aren't able to go outside for recess because they say they can't breathe properly.

This is in west Eugene. This isn't a faraway land. This is only a few blocks or miles away, or it's right underneath your feet and around you. Why can't we fix our problems without causing more of them? Can we help our neighbors before we help our wallets?

*Zoe Beauchamp
Eugene*

KESEY SQUARE MOMENTUM

I would like to contribute some positive ideas to what has been referred to as a poorly designed space. Kesey Square could easily become a success story of public activity. Bicycles, downtown residents, bus riders and students all have direct access to the plaza area. It would take some funding, but I can envision the plaza offering a real sense of purpose. Saturday Market could expand to weekdays and offer local foods, music and crafts. Along one wall you might see built-in vending stands for produce, even ones that collapse to open up the plaza, or a decent stage for performers and yet still lots of plaza space for weekend events. Wellness fairs, public speeches, the list is endless and each contributing to the livelihood of our downtown economy.

*Robert Howarth
Eugene*

HISTORIC RESOURCES

I'm writing to appeal to EW readers because I believe you are an interested, intelligent, open-minded and sometimes activist group of local folk. The Springfield Historic Commission (SHC) is looking for candidates to fill four open positions, as previous commissioners' terms have ended or they have decided to focus on other endeavors. We've been an energetic group in the past and need to maintain that momentum as we move on with plans to complete our Lumber Heritage Historic Context Statement — and follow through on actions that result from it. We also must serve our existing mandate of stewardship

for the Washburne Historic District and other identified historic resources in the city. The directive for the SHC is monitored and directed by the City Council and staff.

There are a few qualifications: Candidates must live within the metropolitan boundary, or vote or own property in the city of Springfield. You can be an appointee of Willamalane Park and Recreation District or Springfield School District #19, as those bodies already manage significant historic resources. And, finally, we ask that you are in a field related to archaeology, history, architectural history or architecture. We have public meetings every other month on the fourth Tuesday at 5:30 pm in Springfield City Hall. At that time we may have public feedback, or be asked to review development and restoration requests from owners of historic resources.

The deadline to apply is 5 pm on Jan. 22. Interviews will be conducted by the Springfield City Council at the Feb. 22 work session. Confirmation of the chosen candidates will be at the City Council at the March 7 regular session.

Copies of the application packet are available at the City Manager's Office in City Hall, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, 726-3700.

*Tim Hilton, Chair
Springfield Historic Commission*

CAMPING FIRST

I was encouraged by Mayor Kitty Piercy's State of the City address mention of the "housing first" model for dealing with the homeless crisis because, although city and charity officials have been talking about housing first for years, this might mean that they are ready to implement that model in Eugene.

That would be a positive step because, unlike current projects, the housing first model would make housing available to people who are not sober and mentally healthy.

Judging by previous city-sanctioned charity efforts, we might expect to see a pilot project that would house 20 to 30 people within a year or so, but little else.

My fear is that while this is being implemented, city officials will still allow, or even encourage, police to break up homeless camps and cite those waiting to be sheltered in a sanctioned project for trespassing on public property.

A more compassionate path would be for them to implement a "camping first" policy, which would allow homeless people to set up and maintain camps on public property where they would be able to take care of themselves and one another while they are waiting for more permanent shelter.

This should be done as soon as possible, because the way we are going, it will be decades before all those who need shelter will have it.

*Steve Hiatte
Eugene*

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 200 words and include your address and phone number for our files. Email to letters@eugeneweekly.com, fax to 484-4044 or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.