



- A second, smaller **cohousing project** is forming downtown while the more ambitious Oakleigh Meadow project off River Road continues, despite legal delays. Eugene Cohousing Downtown will have 15 to 20 adult housing condos, plus ground-floor parking and commercial spaces, and will not be seeking planning variances or applying for city tax breaks. The site is a mostly vacant lot on the west side of Lincoln Street between Broadway and 10th Avenue, next to Lincoln Terrace. Unlike Oakleigh Meadow, the downtown units will be designed for adults 55 and older and cater to an urban lifestyle with easy walking access to downtown amenities and public transportation. Cohousing is a way for collaborative-minded people to join together to create private living units with common areas and facilities for group meals and other social interaction. The Oakleigh Meadow project along the Willamette River has been delayed, but is still viable and looking for new members, including families with children. “We’re aiming to break ground in spring of 2018,” says Will Dixon of Oakleigh. National Cohousing Open House Day is Saturday, April 29, and local events are planned. Contact Oakleigh Meadow at 541-514-1176 or wcd@willardcdixon.com. Eugene Cohousing Downtown will have a meeting 3 pm, Saturday. Call 541-344-5751 or email ljseymour@gmail.com for location.

- A **town hall for landlords**, property managers and tenants will be from 1 to 2:30 pm Sunday, April 30, at Willamette High School, 1801 Echo Hollow Road. Topic is HB 2004, which deals with eviction rules and rent stabilization. State Sen. James Manning will lead the discussion. Call 330-933-1968 for more information.

- **The city of Eugene has contracted with Social Bicycles** to provide bike share equipment, operate the program for the first five years (at its own expense) and be responsible for lining up business underwriting to support the program. SoBi provides Portland’s bike share, with Nike as lead sponsor. As the very first event of “May Is Bike Month,” the Eugene Bike Share program will have an open house 4 to 6 pm, Monday, May 1, in the Broadway Commerce Center lobby, 44 West Broadway. The program is slated to launch in time for the start of UO classes in the fall. For more info go to socialbicycles.com.

- Two local **nonprofit homegrown internet service providers, efn.org and epud.org, have been sold** to PEAK Internet of Corvallis. Starting in May, the affected customers will keep their email addresses but will start getting bills from PEAK. Autopay arrangements will need to be changed. Cost of services will not go up, according to Emerald People’s Utility District. EPUD bought EFN internet services from Oregon Public Networking in 2004 and over the years the utility has had a partnership with PEAK to provide full web services. OPN and EFN started in 1993 as “the first community internet network in the world,” but the nonprofit’s website is inactive and its phone number is disconnected.

- What’s happening with **Ocean Sky** restaurant at 1601 Chambers? Sources tell us the family style Chinese eatery, which has been in business for 25 years, is for sale and may or may not be closing soon. The owners cannot be reached and the commercial real estate broker who has had the business and land listed for \$1.1 million has not responded to a request for information. Restaurant staff can only tell us some changes are in the works. Meanwhile, we recommend the Honey Walnut Chicken. Delish.

- A **virtual reality arcade** and gaming center called multiVRse opened recently at 1374 Willamette Street and is Eugene’s first VR arcade “where you can experience the newest frontier in entertainment,” according to the owners. Customers can play VR by the hour as individuals or groups. Hours are 3 to 11:30 pm.

Send suggestions to bizbeat@eugeneweekly.com.

NEWS

BY KENNY JACOBY

DATA ON HATE

Numbers show that local bias crimes and incidents are on the rise

A South Eugene high school student found homosexual slurs graffitied on one of the school’s gender-inclusive restrooms. An African-American man, whose car had symbols indicating his race and military rank, found his driver’s side mirror broken and a crack in his windshield. A local nonprofit found a swastika painted on its glass window, accompanied by swear words disparaging the victim of the hate crime.

The uptick of hate and bias crimes in Eugene since the election of Donald Trump has been well documented in the media, but the reporting of individual incidents has driven the coverage more than big-picture data.

New statistics reported by the Eugene Human Rights Commission of Eugene and obtained by *Eugene Weekly* reveal a massive spike in the number of hate and bias crimes targeting a wide range of communities since the beginning of the year. The numbers show the reports of individual incidents are not exaggerating the situation.

During the first three months of 2017, the Eugene Police Department reported 25 hate or bias crimes to the Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement Office (HRNI), up from three over the same period in 2016. Twelve of the crimes were swastika-related.

The city is on track to double the number of hate crimes, 49, it saw in 2015, according to the most recent annual report the Human Rights Commission has released. It plans to release the 2016 report in the coming months.

HRNI classifies crimes based on the particular community they target. In the first quarter of 2016, the organization logged two crimes targeting race and one aimed at religion. In 2017, it has logged 12 cases related to race and ethnicity, five to religion, three to sexual orientation, three to political affiliation and one targeting a transgender individual.

In addition to crimes, the Human Rights Commission tracks hate and bias incidents, which lack a criminal element and are protected as free speech. In 2015, it recorded 10 hate and bias incidents. The number of incidents reported is usually less than the number of crimes, though the two are mutually exclusive.

EPD Chief Pete Kerns says that although the trend is not unique to Eugene — the number of hate and bias crimes reported has seen a nationwide increase since the election — he is concerned about the sharpness of the spike.

“Hate and bias offenses are particularly hard on a community because the class of people or category of people, because of who they are or how they were born, are in this unchangeable condition and they are affected by it,” he says. “So that’s a pretty intimidating situation to be in.”

Kerns says the nature of the crimes makes them inherently difficult to solve. Many are graffiti or vandalism cases that happen late at night, so by the time they’re noticed it is often too late to find the suspect. Seventeen of the 25 cases are currently considered suspended with no leads; four were cleared by arrest; three are open and active; and one was determined to be unfounded.

Ken Neubeck, chair of the Human Rights Commission, says the 700-percent increase could in part be due to the city’s increased efforts to raise awareness about reporting hate and bias incidents, but that Trump and his supporters’ labeling and singling out of the Muslim and LGBTQ communities and people of color has encouraged hateful behavior.

“There’s some feeling that license has been given to people on the ground to take out some of their feelings against these groups,” Neubeck said.

Andy Gitelson, executive director of Oregon Hillel, a Jewish “home away from home” on the University of Oregon campus, says that as concerning as the increase in hate crimes is, he is somewhat “relieved” that more people now are reporting them. Hate crimes, he says, were happening long before the election of Trump.

“This is an ongoing thing that people in our minority communities have continued to face over the years,” Gitelson said. “The appalling thing to me is when people act like this is brand-new or out of the blue.”

Gitelson encourages everyone who witnesses hate crimes to continue to report them to both the Human Rights Commission and to the police.

“One of the biggest challenges with hate crimes in general is getting victims to report them,” Gitelson says. “The more we track how these things happen, the more we get a realistic picture of the world we live in.” ■

NEWS

BY LUCY OHLSEN

COUNTY INITIATIVE POWER UNDER ATTACK?

Proposed community rights initiatives get OK to move forward, for now

The fight over the initiative process in Lane County took a new turn last month.

Judge Karsten Rasmussen, presiding judge of the Lane County Circuit Court, offered wins to both the progressive organization Community Rights Lane County and to retired Eugene attorney Stan Long in the battle over how — or whether — the county places initiatives on the ballot for voters to decide on future county ordinances.

Rasmussen ruled on Feb. 9 that Community Rights can keep collecting signatures on several initiatives, but the or-

ganization was told the initiatives face additional hurdles in the near future. The fight ultimately boils down to how much procedure and control county officials can exert over citizens’ rights to propose initiatives and amendments to their own county’s charter.

In February, Long filed the lawsuit as his most recent attempt to get government officials to exert more control over the initiative process. Long’s suit alleges that the Lane County clerk and county counsel failed to conduct the review he argues is “required” for certain initiative-proposed amendments to the Lane County Charter.

The proposed amendments at issue included a ban on aerial spraying of herbicides and a formal recognition of a right to community self-government.

The review that Long said the county officials failed to do is checking compliance with a part of the Oregon Constitution and state law commonly referred to as the “separate vote” rule. The rule ensures that voters aren’t forced to vote just once on a proposal that would make more than one change to a county charter. A similar rule must be followed for initiative-proposed amendments to the state Constitution.

Rasmussen ultimately denied Long’s claim that the coun-

CONTINUED ON P. 9 >>>