

NEWS

BY CARL SEGERSTROM

MANUEL MEJIA GONZALEZ ADDRESSES
THE LANE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



PHOTO BY PHIL CARRASCO

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO DECIDE ON SANCTUARY

After lengthy process, sanctuary rules go to a vote

“This shouldn’t have taken so long because this is a pressing issue,” Phil Carrasco says. “People are feeling the fear and pressure right now, they’re missing appointments at Health and Human Services.”

For immigrant rights advocates like Carrasco, who has been one of the leaders in the campaign for sanctuary in Lane County, the expected July 11 vote by the Board of Commissioners on sanctuary measures has been a long time coming.

After President Trump’s election at a time rife with anti-immigrant rhetoric, supporters of immigrant communities began the ongoing effort to create laws and policies to protect undocumented immigrants.

These efforts spanned from a city of Eugene ordinance to the 4J and Lane Community College school districts affirming their policies of not collecting or sharing the documentation status of the community members they serve.

Nearly four months after the city passed its ordinance, immigrant rights advocates are hoping the Lane County Commission will move forward with a resolution and board order to protect undocumented immigrants.

The resolution and order would prohibit county employees from using county resources to participate in im-

migration enforcement, except in the case of criminal arrests, warrants and when required by federal law.

According to Carrasco, who served on the task force charged with developing the resolution, it will be effective because it will compel all county departments to develop procedures that ensure they are not aiding in immigration enforcement.

Carrasco says, “We need to establish policies that the county can uphold to protect undocumented immigrants.”

In the past the county has downplayed the value of local inclusivity measures because of an Oregon law prohibiting state law enforcement from participating in federal immigration enforcement. But with IP 22, a proposed 2018 ballot initiative that would overturn the state law, there is an urgency to take action at a local level.

On June 13, Rabbi Ruhi Rubenstein of Temple Beth Israel spoke in front of the Board of Commissioners in favor of the resolution and order.

“The county has the authority to create its own policy reinforcing and independent of state statutes,” Rubenstein said. “In a time when federal policy is being designed to encroach on the safety and well-being of local communities the county has a responsibility, in our opinion, to use this authority.”

The process has been plodding forward since early January, when Commissioner Pat Farr delegated the issue to the Equity and Access Advisory Committee. That committee formed a special task force to draft sanctuary measures, which didn’t meet until March.

The slow pace frustrated some advocates who see the immigrant community as harmed by the inaction. After the outpouring of public comment in support of inclusivity measures on June 13, commissioners Farr and Pete Sorenson expressed their frustration with the time it has taken for the commission to arrive at a vote.

Sorenson praised community members for keeping pressure on the board and says it was time for the county commissioners to vote. He asked the board how many more times they needed to hear about fear in the community before they act.

Sorenson said putting the inclusivity measure to a vote will “put some people on notice as to who’s willing to move ahead with an inclusivity ordinance, or not.”

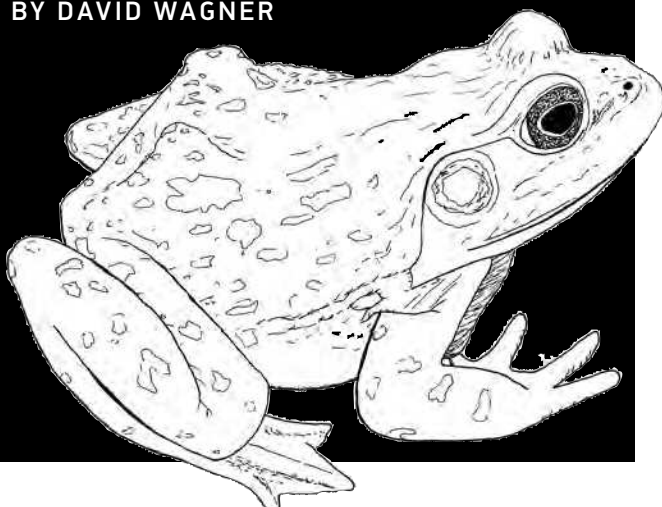
“To me, that’s where the rubber is going to hit the road,” Sorenson said at the meeting. “When are we going to do something about this?”

The coalition of religious leaders, organized labor, Latino community organizations and allies of the sanctuary movement that has been pressing the county to act will rally ahead of the July 11 meeting.

Carrasco says he is hopeful the board will heed the call of the people who have been showing up at County Commission meetings. If the county approves the resolution and board order, it will be “proof that this united community can come out and protect everyone in this county,” Carrasco says. ■

IT’S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



AMERICAN BULLFROG, *LITHOBATES CATESBEIANUS*

For the first time in several years our reservoirs are full. This is good news all around because it means that there has been a good rain year with higher than average snowpack in the mountains. Euphemistically called “lakes” by the Army Corps of Engineers, I always add “reservoir” to the names, as in “Dexter Lake Reservoir.” Reservoirs are not the same water bodies as natural lakes and have distinctive ecological relationships worth remembering. Reservoirs built for flood control in the Willamette River watershed are subject to dramatic changes in water level every year. They are always drained low in the winter. Summer high water is unpredictable because of natural variation in winter precipitation.

Reports from botanists around the state emphasize that this is a banner year for flower watchers.

Recovering from a long, cold, wet spell after a drought year seems to have brought on a frenzy of reproductive effort. The subalpine meadows are full of an incredible array of flowers blooming at the same time, as glorious as anyone can recall.

The long days of July give our gardens the boost needed after a slow start due to the cool spring. With proper attention to watering and feeding, vegetables will take off in a most satisfying fashion. The pole beans can be seen growing several inches every day. I am devoting a large bed to zinnias thanks to all the seeds germinating successfully. They were planted just as the soil warmed up, and always do better when started outside.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes nature calendars. He can be contacted through his web site: fernzenmosses.com.