

news



ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF DREW

Fyre 2.0 Coming to Eugene

CITY COUNCIL GRANTS ETERNAL TAX BREAK TO UNDERWRITE ROCK FESTIVAL

By Bob Keefer

In its latest attempt to bolster downtown business, the City Council voted unanimously last week to host the controversial Fyre Festival 2.0 this summer on the gravel pad that once held City Hall.

"We have put Eugene on the map!" said an exultant Eugene-Springfield Chamber of Commerce CEO Brittany Quick-Warner, who predicted the three-day luxury summer festival, to be held July 7-9, would pump \$20 million into the local economy.

Three-day passes will run \$1,200 to \$2,500, with the upper range including tent accommodations at the homeless camp nearby on Highway 99. Parking at the city's overcrowded parking garages will run another \$500.

Headlining the festival will be what's left of guitarist Jerry Garcia, front man of The Grateful Dead. Quick-Warner said Garcia's remains were turned over after his reported death in 1995 to a cryogenic laboratory now at the Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact, where University of Oregon scientists have

developed a revolutionary procedure for bringing dead artists back to life.

"This new technology will absolutely blow your mind," said Matt Sayre of Technology Association of Oregon, another backer of the festival plan.

Key to moving the project forward was a city-county deal in which the land under the gravel pad is to be sold to Fyre 2.0 LLC for \$50,000. The low price, explained City Manager Jon Ruiz, reflects the fact that it's apparently impossible to build anything on the lot.

The city then declared the site to be part of a newly established "infinity enterprise zone," exempting Fyre from property taxes forever in exchange for creating three minimum-wage jobs.

An advance crew of supermodels and social media influencers hired by Fyre founder and entrepreneur Billy McFarland has already been spotted hanging around downtown, pretending to be homeless and posting about Eugene as an undiscovered tropical paradise.

"Eugene is even better than the Bahamas," gushed McFarland on Twitter from his suite at the Federal Cor-

rectional Institution in Otisville, New York, where he said he has been enjoying a six-year artistic residency since the last Fyre fest wrapped up.

The 2017 Fyre Festival, which was to have been held on Great Exuma, a small private island in the Bahamas, descended into chaos and, finally, lawsuits and prosecutions when thousands of ticket holders arrived to find no accommodations and no music. Many were stuck on the island with no way home.

McFarland said he's had two years to work out the issues that plagued the original fest. "And if anyone gets stuck in Eugene, well, Mr. Ruiz tells me you do an absolutely excellent job of taking care of the homeless," he emailed.

Ruiz dismissed claims that Fyre 2.0 might never materialize.

"That festival is absolutely going to happen, and a new City Hall is going to be built," he predicted. "Don't believe everything you read about Billy McFarland. He has the kind of clear business vision we need here in Eugene." ■