

Poor substitute

In completing the survey for which the City of Cannon Beach is spending \$30,000, we found that its questions were designed to apply broadly to any city in the country. If the present city management lived in this small community, got acquainted with the citizens, took part in community activities, and walked around the neighborhoods, they would know the answers to all these questions. This expensive exercise is a poor substitute for good governing.

REX and DIANE AMOS
Cannon Beach

Grandfather rentals

We vacationed in Gearhart several years ago as a family, and fell in love with the quaint little town. One of the reasons we could purchase the home in Gearhart was because we could operate it as a short term rental to help with the expenses, but our long term plan is to spend much more time there once we are retired. The recent developments by the Planning Commission and the City Council have us very concerned.

First of all, we acknowledge that change is unsettling for everyone. We also believe that the efforts to reduce or eliminate short term rentals are not personal attacks, and as we express our views we hope that folks will understand that this is not personally targeted at anyone.

We understand there are currently 85 short term rentals in the Gearhart area. It is proposed to reduce those to 35. That seems drastic, in our opinion. Our proposal is that the existing operators be grandfathered in, since this was a valid use of the properties at the time of purchase. Reductions would happen organically over time.

Since short term rentals are a historic use in Gearhart, they should be allowed to operate as viable businesses without arbitrary or punitive restrictions. By arbitrary and punitive, we mean that if a home moved from short term rental to another use, would the outcome be better, or worse, or no change?

For example: If there were extra landscape maintenance required for short term rental, would the non-short term rental use (the desired outcome) be better, or worse, or no change? In the case of landscape maintenance the outcome would be no change, at best, and likely worse.

So a landscape requirement would be judged arbitrary and punitive by this criteria. Many of the proposed ordinance items are of this nature. It would seem that it would be better, for the neighborhood, to have a house occupied by approved renters than to have the house sit vacant.

We are appealing to a voice of reason and fairness to all involved. We are a part of the community by being a property owner and part-time resident. We want to operate harmoniously, making it a win/win for everyone.

MIKE and JANET
CRANSTON
Beaverton

Reinstate sanity

Gearhart residents: There is a public hearing regarding short-term rentals (aka transient lodging) at 6 p.m. Thursday at the Gearhart Fire Station, 670 Pacific Way. Your property values will be affected, as well as the quality of life we have come to know and enjoy in Gearhart.

There are 87 known short-term rentals, 77 are in Residential 1 (R1) zones. These rentals are changing the residential character of this little city. With the easy access to internet advertising and vacation rental companies like Vacasa, Airbnb and VRBO, rental properties are packed with height to 16-plus vacationers.

The parking, noise, traffic is intense in summer months and holidays. Septic systems are definitely challenged. Non-resident property owners have bought multiple properties, turning these homes into hotel-like businesses. If short-term rental businesses take over, the Gearhart Comprehensive Plan will be violated in R1 and R2 zones. What's to stop other commercial ventures from being inserted as your next door neighbor?

Building a sense of community

Every town needs businesses that help build a sense of community. You may not like brew pubs, but they fall into that category. Places where locals can get out of the house, not have to cook, watch Oregon sports teams on TV, have a couple of beers, get some food, and be around a lot of fun people. This is what Molly Lowenberg, the

owner of the Gearhart Grocery store, is proposing. What is the problem?

Those who would rather have Molly's business fail than add a little life to the town's core are shortsighted, and completely off base. I'm guessing these people have a net worth in the millions, have bypassed their local grocery store for years to save a few bucks, and now

scream when a business plan has to change.

The proposal for the Gearhart Grocery is perfectly reasonable, and will add to the community. Those opposing it, I guess, can build a wall and have Seaside pay for it.

JIM SPURR
Cannon Beach

At the Thursday meeting of the Gearhart Planning Commission, policies will be presented that will put short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have always been, and are still strictly residential. Do you want these residential zones to now include hotel-like commercial activity?

Excerpted from the Gearhart Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies, Ordinance No. 677:

"Residential development policies: The City will preserve and maintain the predominantly residential character of Gearhart through appropriate zoning and land use development regulations. The City will recognize the importance of the City's residential neighborhoods and the need to protect them from the negative impacts of the transient rental of property, and to discourage increased levels of traffic and similar disruptions.

"Commercial Development policies: The City will limit commercial activity in the City, in terms of both land devoted to commercial uses and the types of uses permitted in commercial zones, to a level that is compatible with Gearhart's residential character.

"The City will prevent the City from becoming a tourist destination. To achieve this policy the City, through its land use designations shall seek to accommodate only a limited level of tourist development."

We must come forward to uphold and preserve the Gearhart Comprehensive Plan.

VICTORIA

ABRAHAMSON and

JEANNE and WILSON

MARK

Gearhart

Gearhart Grocery

An open letter to the community of Gearhart: As a Gearhart resident and 5-year Gearhart Grocery employee, I am disheartened by the community's response to the idea of a new business taking Gearhart Grocery's place.

While I understand that the grocery store has been a staple in the community for over 50 years, a business can not run on sentimental value alone. I have always been proud of how tight-knit the community of Gearhart is, and can say with confidence that my coworkers and I know most customers by name and recognize almost all.

However, over these past few weeks we have been bombarded with an obscene amount of rude demands, statements and questions — most of which are coming from people that I do not recognize, or cannot recall being a frequent shopper.

We have read and heard inaccurate rumors pertaining to what is going to happen with the store. We have been accused of sneakiness in the days leading up to the zoning meeting, as well as having a lack of care for our community. The city of Gearhart did everything required of them when a matter like this is voted on — the information regarding the zoning meeting, where our proposal was approved, was made public in a February issue of *The Daily Astorian*.

We love our community members, whether they frequent our store or not. The fact of the matter is that although people love us, they do not shop here nearly enough for us to be a successful, profitable business. This is what community members need to keep in mind when weighing the idea of a new business.

The argument that replacing the store with this new business will "increase the amount of drinking" is inaccurate as well as invalid. This new business will promote no more alcohol consumption than there already is.

Many have complained that this transition will ruin the

tight-knit community that we have built, and I strongly disagree. This potential new business would not necessarily generate any more activity than other local restaurants do.

Every complaint we have heard, whether it be negative or positive, has been emotionally charged and inconsiderate of the business owners and buyers. By appealing, or being unsupportive of this transition, you are also being unsupportive of your fellow community members.

While we appreciate the community's concern, we hope that this open letter will give community members a fresh perspective and enough additional information to allow supportive attitudes and decrease the negativity while we move forward.

ALYSSA LOGAN and
GEARHART GROCERY
Gearhart

Christian values?

This letter is in response to Gary Mauro's Open Forum letter, "On Chicago" (*The Daily Astorian*, March 25).

He states that this country was founded on Judeo-Christian values. (By the way, how did that work out for the Native Americans?). Is he talking about those same Christian values that wiped out millions of indigenous people throughout the world? Or, maybe Mr. Mauro is talking about the Christian values that inspired the burning of innocent women during the Salem witch hunt.

Could he be talking about those good Christian values

that come straight out of the New Testament, which teaches, "A woman should learn in silence with submission. And do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but in silence." (First Timothy 2:11, 12)

I believe this country is great, but not because of Christian values. This country is great because of diversity and the freedom of choice. The choice to be who we are, not who Christians — or any other religious group — think we should be. This country is also great because the founding fathers were smart enough to keep religion and state separate.

Just one more thing. That loving god Mr. Mauro talks about — the god of Abraham — is also worshiped by Muslims world-wide.

CARLA A. JOHNSON
Herlong, California

Keep the sea lions

My partner and I are planning on making Astoria our new home this coming summer. We read the article about trying to deter the sea lions. Boo! We love the sea lions, and enjoyed them on our last visit. I understand that while we aren't residents, and don't understand the fuss, the sea lions are a charming addition to us.

We also don't understand the Goonies fascination. That seems to be more of a problem than nature's creatures looking for food.

Seriously.
ROBIN RODGERS
Paradise, California

Help needed

I applaud the employees at Clatsop Behavioral Health (CBH) for making an attempt to bring issues into the light. ("Union takes 'no confidence' vote against clinical director," *The Daily Astorian*, April 1).

I do not know the clinical director or executive director, but I do know that the people in our community are faced with a daunting, and sometimes unusable, health care system. Many of us in the community have read a bit from news articles, but in my case have also heard frustrated comments from local professionals in both the medical and educational fields who have received either faulty — or no — help at all when it was needed most from CBH.

I have also had a string of neighbors who were CBH employees living next door, and have seen not only an alarming turnover, but a frustration that has been more than a few disgruntled employees. I believe I join others in the county in asking the CBH Board to facilitate bringing in an impartial third party who is qualified in both clinical and medical-related administrative systems. I'm sure the present administration would appreciate the assistance, as well as the employees.

It's too easy to miss the forest for the trees in frustrating situations like this, and only doing an internal review might miss any other issues that might be standing in the path of a functioning mental health system.

KITTY PAINO
Astoria

Community needs

When I learned that the Gearhart grocery store, from which I live around the corner, was to become a brew pub, I was delighted. I immediately relived, in memory, the afternoons and evenings my wife, our three grandchildren and their parents enjoyed in the brewpubs of Portland — the world's best beers, the inexpensive, tasty fare, and, best of all, the kid-friendly atmosphere and menus. The high-spirited conviviality, for all ages, is not often matched in commercial enterprises of any kind.

Then I thought of the summers-to-come: outdoor tables under a blue sky, following or preceding a day on the beach, many people with families and others without enjoying the center of our beautiful town, with the prospect of the vast majesty of the Pacific Ocean but a block or two away. Who could not be cheered by such a tableau of multi-generational human gaiety?

"A handful of residents," that's who, I learned from R.J. Marx in *The Daily Astorian* ("Residents fight Gearhart brew pub plans," March 30). And they attire what is nothing more than their personal disfavor in the garb of concern for the "needs" of the community, as if any person, or "handful" of persons are qualified to decide what are my needs, or my neighbor's or my neighbor's neighbor's.

And, if it is really "needs" we are talking about, what community "needs" more than a fire department, a police station and a post office? And what individual "needs" more than a glass of water, a bowl of soybeans and a waterproof jacket in winter? Who needs a dog, or a car, or a church? I don't.

Shall I go then, through legal channels and attempt to have them banned from the city of Gearhart? And if each of us persuaded the authorities to ban everything we either disliked or had no use for, what would remain? A pretty picture Gearhart would be then, wouldn't it?

LOUIS SARGENT
Gearhart

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