

Passions run high at Nestlé town hall



Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

NESTLÉ TOWN HALL brings in more than 120 people at the Cascade Locks City Hall last Thursday night. Audience members raise their hands for a chance to speak. Gordon Zimmerman, Cascade Locks City Administrator, points to the next speaker.

By PATRICK MULVIHILL

News staff writer

More than 120 people filled the Cascade Locks City hall gym Thursday to discuss Nestlé's proposed bottling plant. Tension mounted as those in favor and opposed raised their voices with comments and questions.

Nestlé's proposed plant would set up shop at the Industrial Park in Cascade Locks, and bottle 100 million gallons of spring water annually from Oxbow Springs in order to sell it around the Northwest.

The town hall was coordinated by Cascade Locks Administrator Gordon Zimmerman and a facilitator, Barbara Briggs of Hood River.

A handful of Port and city leaders were present, including Cascade Locks Mayor Tom Cramblett, outgoing Port Commissioner Brenda Cramblett, Port Commission President Jess Groves and Port Interim General Manager Paul Koch, but those representatives were not involved in facilitating the

forum.

Zimmerman gave an update on the status of the Nestlé deal. So far, the cross water rights transfer hasn't yet been approved by the Oregon Water Resources Department.

If the state agency issues the city a permit by the end of the year, Cascade Locks would transfer 0.5 cubic feet per second (cfs) — 225 gallons per minute — of its municipal ground water right in exchange for 0.5 cfs of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's water right to Oxbow Spring, just east of town.

The city would pipe those gallons from Oxbow Springs into the park's industrial park, and sell it to Nestlé for bottling.

Zimmerman compared the water bottling plant to the software company Intel's water requirement, which uses 1 billion gallons annually, 8.6 times as much Nestlé's proposed plant.

Zimmerman explained that sale of the land will be

managed by the Port Commission, and development of the land will be approved by the City.

Members of local and Portland environmental groups, including the "No Nestlé in Cascades Locks" coalition and the Local Water Alliance, spoke out in large numbers against the plant.

In fact, they interjected several times during Zimmerman's update speech, prompting him to say, "It'll take a lot longer if you keep interrupting me."

When Briggs opened the floor for public comment and passed the microphone around, Nestlé opponents were most numerous in the audience.

"I'm deeply disappointed with the Port Commission, the City of Cascade Locks, the ODFW, and our previous two governors," said Kathleen Fitzgerald of the Local Water Alliance. Fitzgerald applauded Cascade Locks City Councilor Deanna Busdieker, the sole councilor op-

posed to the Nestlé deal.

"She has been courageous to stand up against the odds, against the hard-nosed bureaucrats that have been given a small amount of power over citizens and their right to their water source," said Fitzgerald.

Anti-Nestlé speakers cited concerns including increased truck traffic and plastic bottle pollution, an impact on local Warm Springs tribes' water rights, and a pressing need for public ownership of water in a time of countywide drought.

"We are not in a drought in Cascade Locks," said Zimmerman, responding to the latter comment.

Hood River County declared a drought emergency last week, and included Cascade Locks in the resolution. County Administrator Dave Meriwether said there was an option to exclude Cascade Locks from the declaration due to its high annual rainfall — an idea suggested by several citizens of the city — but the Board of Commis-

sioners opted to include Cascade Locks in order to have the entire county considered on the state's list.

James Dean of Cascade Locks argued that Oxbow Springs is unrelated to the water supply of Hood River and Portland, where some audience members hailed from.

"It seems that we have a lot of people here that this doesn't affect," said Dean.

Dean named unemployment as a central issue in Cascade Locks. "You probably all have jobs, you have the opportunity for jobs. This little community relies on whatever ... they can get."

Audience members asked Zimmerman how Cascade Locks would be able to hold Nestlé accountable if they "did something wrong" in its treatment of the small town.

"Shut off their water," joked Zimmerman. He then suggested a "termination clause" be put in place in the contract with Nestlé, which could allow the city to withdraw.



Barbara Briggs

City Councilor Busdieker argued that the city wouldn't be able to afford a legal tussle. She cited a similar situation in Fryburg, Maine, in which the town tried unsuccessfully to sue Nestlé.

"We don't have the resources to fight their lawyers. This is too risky," said Busdieker.

ON THE AGENDA

These are the regular meeting times of governing bodies for these agencies:

Cascade Locks

Cascade Locks City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 140 W. WaNaPa St., second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Cascade Locks Planning Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 140 W. WaNaPa St., second Thursday of the month.

Cascade Locks Port Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall

Council Chambers, 140 W. WaNaPa St., first and third Thursdays of the month.

Hood River

City of Hood River Planning Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., Hood River City Hall Council Chambers, 211 Second St., generally the first and third Mondays of the month. Place and dates subject to change.

Hood River Port Commission, 5 p.m., 100 E. Port Marina Drive, board room, first and third Tuesdays of

the month.

Hood River City Council, 6 p.m., Hood River City Hall Council Chambers, 211 Second St., second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District, 6 p.m., Aquatic Center, 1601 May St., third Wednesday of the month. Place subject to change.

Hood River County

Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors

meeting, 4 p.m., OSU Extension Service Building, 2990 Experiment Station Road, first Thursday of the month.

Hood River County Board of Commissioners regular session, 6 p.m., 601 State St., first floor conference room, third Monday of the month. Time subject to change.

Library District Board meeting, 7 p.m., 502 State St., conference room, third Tuesday of the month.

Hood River County Planning Commission meeting,

7 p.m., 601 State St., first floor, generally second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Hood River County Water Planning Group, 2 p.m., 601 State St., first floor conference room, generally first Wednesday of the month.

Hood River County Commission on Children and Families Board meeting, 5:15 p.m., Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital boardroom, generally first Tuesday of the month.

Hood River County

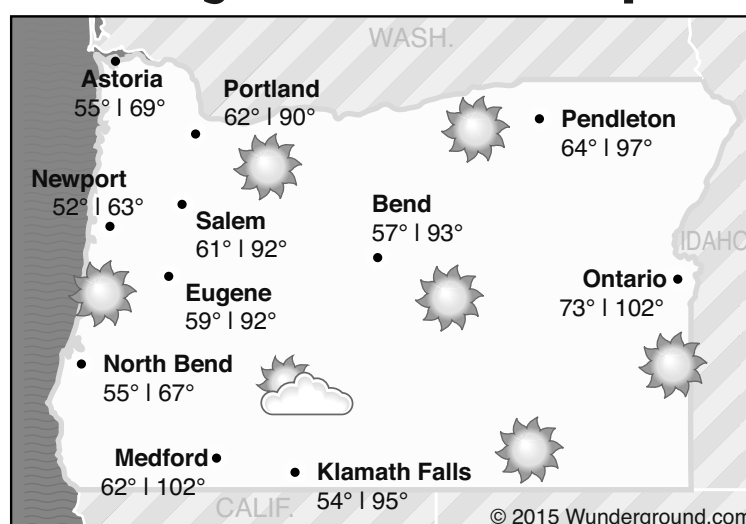
School Board, 6:30 p.m., meets at schools and district facilities on a rotating schedule (visit hoodriver.k12.or.us for location), second and fourth Wednesdays of the month unless school vacations or other holidays interrupt the schedule.

Hood River County Transportation District, 9 a.m., Hood River County Transportation District Board Room, 224 Wasco Loop, second Wednesday of the month.

Hood River Weather Forecast

Date	Forecast	Daytime / Overnight High / Low (°F)
Today July 1	Sunny	99° / 68°
Thurs. July 2	Sunny	104° / 70°
Fri. July 3	Sunny	98° / 68°
Sat. July 4	Mostly Sunny	98° / 68°
Sun. July 5	Sunny	99° / 69°
Mon. July 6	Sunny	98° / 68°
Tues. July 7	Sunny	98° / 67°

Oregon Weather Map



This week's Forecast

Sunny and hot, with a high near 96. West wind around 5 mph becoming light and variable in the morning.

Humidity 78%
Wind Speed WNW 3 G 13 MPH
Barometer NA
Dewpoint 64°F (18°C)
Visibility NA
Last update 29 Jun 7:00 am PDT

Actual High / Low

AGRIMET HOOD RIVER OR
Lat: 45.6842 Long: -121.5181 Elev: 510
<http://uspest.org>

June 22 - 79/56
June 23 - 83/54
June 24 - 86/62
June 25 - 95/58
June 26 - 105/60
June 27 - 99/68
June 28 - 91/69

Updated Monday, June 29
at 9:00 a.m. PST
Data from www.weather.com



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