

# Three contested seats in Hermiston council race

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Three of Hermiston's four city council races are contested this year.

Only Shean Fitzgerald, husband of current councilor Clara Beas Fitzgerald, is running unopposed after the deadline for filing passed Tuesday. He is looking to take over his wife's seat in Ward II after Clara decided to retire from the council to focus on other things, including her position on the Oregon Commission for Women. Fitzgerald is a "semi-retired" operating engineer who still takes jobs in the construction industry from time to time.

In Ward 1, a three-way race between incumbent Lori Davis, school board member Mark Gomolski and resident Jackie Linton is underway. Davis has served on the council for eight years after first being appointed to the seat and then being elected a few months later in 2010.

Gomolski previously ran for an at-large seat on the city council in 2016 but was edged out of the five-way race by the four incumbents. If Gomolski, elected to the Hermiston School District board by write-in last year, wins he is hoping either the city or school district is willing to change their meeting dates, as they both

meet on the second and fourth Monday of the month. He said he believes the change would be beneficial to members of the community who wish to attend both meetings.

Linton, who did not immediately return a call for comment, has been a frequent attendee at Hermiston council meetings in the past two years after first becoming involved in a city project to renovate a park on Beech Avenue. That park in 2016 was re-named Greenwood Park after her grandfather Greenwood Woodrow Luster, who first established it.

In Ward 3, Kyran Miller

is challenging incumbent Jackie Myers. Myers, a licensed tax preparer, was first elected to the council in 1994 and has served on a variety of city committees including a current assignment on the Parks and Recreation committee.

Miller said he decided to run because he thought his years as a small business owner would help him find ways that the city could save taxpayer money on operational costs, and find ways to attract more businesses and promote growth in Hermiston.

"I have no problem with any of the city councilors, they're all doing a wonderful

job, but I wanted to throw my hat into the ring to provide a different perspective as a business owner," he said.

Miller spent his career as a funeral home director in Michigan before retiring to Hermiston in August 2016. He said he had visited for "business and friends" for about 10 years before that and liked the community.

In Ward 4, incumbent Doug Smith is running against Michael Engelbrecht. Smith is in his first term as city councilor after being elected in 2015. He started working as an officer with the Hermiston Police Department in 1988 and after retiring began to work as a

general contractor. Engelbrecht did not return a call for comment Tuesday afternoon.

Hermiston residents will get a chance to cast their vote for the councilor representing their ward in the May 15 election. For Wards 2, 3 and 4 the May election will be considered the general election and the winner will take their seat in January. Because Ward I has more than two candidates, the May election will be a primary and the top two vote-getters will have a runoff in November.

To find what ward you live in, visit [www.hermiston.or.us/government/city-council](http://www.hermiston.or.us/government/city-council).

## UMATILLA

# Downtown framework plan captures national award

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Umatilla's downtown framework plan is now a national award-winner.

The plan, titled Umatilla Together and available on the city's website in both English and Spanish, was put together by Portland State University students in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program. It won the 2018 American Institute of Certified Planners Student Project Award.

"It's just really exciting to have that group recognized," said Tamra Mabbott, community development director for Umatilla.

She said the other award-winners for the year were from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She plans to go down to the National Planning Conference in New Orleans on April 24 when the students officially receive their award.

The Umatilla Together framework was put together in 2017 by students Amber Ayers, Laura Voss, Nate Miller, Samuel Roberts, Carlose Callava and Belen Herrera. They made multiple trips from Portland to Umatilla to engage with citizens, business leaders, city staff and elected officials during meetings, focus groups, mixers and a community open house.

The resulting document outlined suggestions for



Contributed photo

Clockwise from top left: Nate Miller, Laura Voss, Amber Ayers, Sam Roberts, Belen Herrera, and Carlos Callava.

the revitalizing Umatilla's downtown core and increasing the community's livability. Since being hired in the city's brand-new community development director position, Mabbott said much of her work has revolved around working to implement those suggestions, such as identifying gaps in the community's network of trails and searching for funding to connect those trails. Councilors and other city staff are also using the plan as a framework.

"The credit goes to the students, who engaged people over and over again," she said.

When Sen. Bill Hansell of Athena visited Umatilla on Feb. 1 to meet with city councilors and tour city projects, Mabbott said the Umatilla Together plan was shared with him too, and he

told them he was impressed with where the city was headed.

In a news release from PSU, planning student Amber Ayers said it feels "impossible to capture the depth of our appreciation" for the city of Umatilla and others who made the project and the resulting award possible.

"This is not an award just for us, but for the entire city of Umatilla," Ayers said. "The community members of Umatilla provided guidance, enthusiasm and devotion. We sincerely feel we lucked out having the opportunity of work with a city and a community as rich as Umatilla."

The students also won a statewide award for the project in the fall from the Oregon chapter of the American Planning Association.

## PENDLETON

# Late filings create competitive races

## Council appoints LeValle to seat

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Thanks to a flurry of filings in the waning days of the filing period, three of four Pendleton City Council races will be contested in the May 15 municipal elections.

In Ward 1, three people filed to replace longtime Councilor John Brenne, who died in January.

In the meantime, on a 6-1 vote the council selected Chuck LeValle, a hospital lab technician, to fill the seat until the election.

Carole Innes, a retired operations auditor for Northwest Farm Credit Services, and David Chozazy, a local musician, will join LeValle on the

ballot for Ward 1, which covers the downtown area, South Hill and Riverside.

Retired firefighter John Cook entered the race in January but dropped out Feb. 28.

If no one takes more than 50 percent of the vote in the May election, there will be a runoff between the top two candidates during the Nov. 6 election.

Ward 2 Councilor McKennon McDonald drew no opposition by the filing deadline and will likely breeze toward re-election for her seat that encompasses North Hill, Westgate and the airport.

A teacher at Helix School, McDonald won office in 2014 by beating former Pendleton City Councilor Bryan Branstetter.

Following Councilor Neil Brown's retirement, two new names filed for Ward 3, which spans South-

gate, McKay Creek and Tutuilla Road.

Bill Aney, a retired regional forest restoration coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service, and retired educator Linda Neuman are vying for the seat.

Rex Morehouse filed late Tuesday afternoon to challenge incumbent Jake Cambier for the at-large seat.

A former mayor of Spirit Lake, Idaho, and a frequent presence at city council meetings, Morehouse lost to Councilor Scott Fairley in the 2016 race for Ward 2.

A retired doctor, Cambier was appointed in 2016 to fill the rest of former Councilor Al Plute's term and is seeking his first full term.

Although no more candidates can add their names to the ballot, the field can still change. The dropout deadline is on Friday.

## Local coalition seeks input on homelessness

PENDLETON — The local coalition Home 4 Hope invites the public to a forum on homelessness.

The event is Thursday, 2-4 p.m. in the Rogers Room at the First Presbyterian Church, 201 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Home 4 Hope reported a survey in 2017

found 63 homeless in Umatilla County.

Home 4 Hope member Janet McFarlane said the forum provides a format to discuss what the community feels are the most important issues surrounding the homeless population as well as suggestions and possible solutions.

# 'Searching For Meaning' to raise money for 'Anson Strong'

East Oregonian

Father Gerry Condon has continued his annual tradition of writing and directing a play leading up to Heppner's Wee Bit O' Ireland celebration.

The retired priest gained inspiration for this year's drama, "Searching For Meaning," from Philippians 3:7-8.

"But those things I used to consider gain I have now reappraised as loss in the light of the surpassing knowledge of my Lord Jesus Christ."

St Paul, Condon said, had a unique transformation from sinner to saint. In addition, he said throughout history there have been many similar transformations. However, in the life of many ordinary people, Condon said there are transformations of a less significant kind.

"These often happen with only a minimal outward or external evidence," he said. "Yet such transformations bring about a radical change in the lives of those people."

Such people, Condon further explained, have found a new meaning for their lives. They are moved by a new passion. There is a new satisfaction in their lives. There is an inner joy and peace in their hearts.

"Searching For Meaning" is a story of some people finding that new light in their lives," Condon said.

The play will open Sunday, March 11 at 3 p.m. at Ione Community School, 445 Spring St. And a final performance will be held Thursday, March 15 at 7



Photo contributed by Ashley Lindsay

Father Gerry Condon, bottom left, watches as participants rehearse "Searching For Meaning," a play he wrote to coincide with the St. Patrick's Day holiday. Performances are March 11 in Ione and March 15 in Heppner.

p.m. in the parish hall at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 525 Gale St., Heppner. Desserts will be served.

There is no admission charge for either performance. However, donations will be accepted for "Anson Strong."

Money received will be donated on behalf of Anson Fairbank, the 2-year-old son of Matthew and Adrienne Fairbank of Pendleton. The youngster is fighting leukemia. Anson's grandparents are Jim and Monica Swanson of Ione, Brad Fairbank of Pendleton and Missy Fairbank of Adams.

Performers in the production are Barney Lindsay, Josh Coiner, Dan VanSchoiack, Ann Morter, Brian Kollman, Beth Dickenson, Larry Lutcher, Janet Greenup, Bill Monagle, Rita VanSchoiack, Bill Kuhn and Nikki Coe. In addition, the Willow Entertainers are featured, including Joe Lindsay and

his children, Andrew, Ryan and Cori Jo.

For more about the performances, contact Ashley Lindsay at [farmwife02@icloud.com](mailto:farmwife02@icloud.com), 541-376-8285 or 541-379-4079. Search Facebook for more about "Anson Strong."

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