

Commissioners: Noxious weeds list accepted

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help these four entities.”

Commissioner John Hillock agreed these four suffered from the pandemic.

“All these groups were adversely affected by the pandemic,” he said. “Some of the other groups had the right type of organization.”

In a rare case, the commissioners split their vote on another matter. They were considering whether to hear on the record a land-use appeal by Charles Woods, who was seeking a variance from the county Planning Commission.

County Counsel Paige Sully told the commissioners that, if they choose, they can open a hearing for new evidence.

“To my knowledge, the board has not received a request from Mr. Woods to have a new hearing,” Roberts said. “I do believe he’s sent a request through other channels and we can accept that if we want, is that correct?”

“That is correct, you can,” Sully said. “There has been an issue with the plaintiff continuing to file with the Planning Commission, even though he’s been told the correct venue and jurisdiction is the board of commissioners.”

But Sully did not believe anything new was being put forward.

“I, however, have not seen



Hillock



Nash



Roberts

anything that the appellant has provided with any persuasive authority ... to go on the record,” she said.

Sully said the law sets no criteria as to whether Woods’ appeal should be heard on the record.

“It’s completely up to your discretion,” she told the commissioners.

“Having read the full record as supplied by the planning board, I can sympathize with the applicant, but the applicant actually had ample opportunity to remedy his application and he failed to do so or chose not to do so, I don’t know which,” Roberts said.

She said she believes it’s time to take the matter on the record.

“At this point, I feel that hearing it on the record is the way to proceed at this time,” she said. “That’s just my opinion.”

Hillock initially was sympathetic to Roberts’ position.

“I also reviewed all the documents, and it’s very confusing because there are several different timelines and things that are not very clear

as to applicability and those type of things,” he said. “The applicant did not hire a professional to do some work that he could have done, so I have to agree with the decision.”

But Nash was opposed to the idea of denying an on-the-record hearing.

“I’m going to be in favor of a ‘no’ vote when it comes time to try to dispel any heartache that occurred here,” he said.

At that, Hillock sided with Nash.

“I could flip on this because obviously, he did not get all the info out that he could have so I could go with a ‘no’ vote, as well,” he said.

When it came time to vote, it was whether the on-the-record hearing should be held. Nash and Hillock voted “aye,” while Roberts voted opposed.

“I understand your feelings, Commissioner Nash, following the guidelines laid out in our land-use policy,” Roberts said. “Even though we don’t agree, I think we’d be opening the door to all others who think that you

don’t need to do what you’re requested to do in order to get a full hearing before the Planning Commission, but the commissioners might feel sorry for you and let you do it anyway. I don’t think that’s a proper thing, but I understand your feelings and Commissioner Hillock’s on the issue.”

In other matters, the board:

- Accepted the resignation of Trina Rice as a 911 dispatcher and acknowledged the death of dispatcher and Reserve Deputy Bret Bridges.
- Approved the appointment to Northeast Oregon Economic Development District Board of Jennifer Piper, Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce executive director; Enterprise Mayor Ashley Sullivan; and Joseph Mayor Belinda Buswell.
- Adopted a list of noxious weeds as proposed by the Wallowa County Weed Board.
- Approved bylaws proposed by the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Advisory Committee.
- Approved the county’s Smoke Management Community Response Plan as presented and reviewed March 3 by Lisa Mahon. Mahon attended the March 17 meeting by Zoom and informed the commissioners the Enterprise City Council had approved the plan, as well.

IN BRIEF

Atlanta shootings spark local ‘peace vigil’

ENTERPRISE — A group of 35 people and one dog, diverse in age and gender, and colorfully masked, gathered at the Wallowa County Courthouse to express their concern Sunday, March 21, over recent acts of violence in Atlanta, according to Randi Jandt, a spokeswoman for the group.

A series of mass shootings in the Atlanta metro area on Tuesday, March 16, at three spas or massage parlors left eight people dead — six of whom were Asian women — and one other person wounded, according to online sources. Robert Aaron Long, 21, was arrested later in the day.

The “peace vigil,” as Jandt called it, wasn’t widely advertised beforehand, she said, primar-

ily relying on emails and Facebook. She said it was organized by Sarah Lynch and Quinn Osgood Dawson of Wallowa.

Jandt said the focus of the shootings on Asians and Pacific Islanders was of particular concern.

“There’s a push to prosecute as hate crime because targeted people of certain race,” she said. “But all these details are not really the point but that everybody belongs here.”

Osgood Dawson spoke during the vigil, recounting the contributions of Asians who have immigrated to the U.S. to the culture here.

While Wallowa County is an overwhelmingly white community, the estimated seven or eight generations represented at the vigil are intended to make minorities feel supported.

“I think it should make our friends in the community who are Asians and Pacific Islanders know somebody cares and they have support here,” she said.

— Chieftain staff

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ing would cover these, some needed renovations in locker rooms in the gym, security renovations, including a more secure fence around the school and a more secure entry so that unknown visitors can’t just stroll into the school, and updates and remodels to some restrooms and other areas to ensure compliance with handicapped accessibility and code requirements.

“Things work now, but the boiler could go at any time. If these systems fail, then we don’t have a functional school, and it would be exorbitantly expensive to replace or repair. It wasn’t an exorbitant wish list. It was, ‘What do we have to do?’” Wolfe said.

Jones noted that, “We haven’t done a whole lot of improvements over time. The last bond was in 1993. We are sitting on a 40-year-old boiler, and some of the piping is original.

“We’ve been going to school when there’s no heat in the building. We didn’t take days off. But there was

WALLOWA SCHOOL BOND ON MAY 18 BALLOT

TITLE: Bonds for Improvements and Renovations to Facilities.

AMOUNT: \$7 million in bonds and a \$4 million state matching grant. If the bonds are approved they will be payable from taxes on property or property ownership that are not subject to the limits of sections 11 and 11b, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

SUMMARY:

- Heating and electrical system replacement and improvements including for efficiency and cost savings.
- Safety and security improvements including secure and accessible building entries, install and update emergency communication and security systems, and install perimeter fencing.
- Gym renovations and additions expected to include improvements to meet codes for accessibility and other requirements, providing new or renovated locker rooms, restrooms,

lobby, gym entrance, a wellness/weight room and student educational and meeting space.

- Site improvements, furnishings, equipment, and bond issuance costs.

UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS:

March 29, 6 p.m., BJR Learn more about school needs and the bond, and join the Citizens for Wallowa Schools committee.

April 1 and 8, 6 p.m., WHS gym: Community tour and information meeting.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Tammy Jones, Superintendent: 541-886-20561 or tsjones@wallowa.k12.or.us

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wallowa-School-District-1990252624535155/>

Website: <https://www.apps.wallowa.k12.or.us/>

Tours and community coffees: Join a community tour. See website, Facebook, or call Jones for more information.

no heat. The sixth grade classroom has no heat at all, and leaky pipes were flooding it. We tried heating it with (space) heaters, but that blew out the electrical in the school. We need new electrical coming into the school.

“The \$7 million bond plus \$4 million matching are not going to get us anything fancy or special,” Jones continued. “But this bond is important to

the safe, continued operation of our school.”

The exact scope of work will be finalized once the bond is passed. Work is expected to begin in 2022.

“The bond will go to the

nuts and bolts of the school,” education board member Mike Lowesaid. “There’s no fluff. It’s just what we need to do to ensure that we have a school in this community in the future.”

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WALLOWA COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

Pet of the Week

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