

Council approves medical marijuana zoning, business license

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Florence City Council met Tuesday, Feb. 17, to approve the first and second ordinances of 2015, both of which concerned medical marijuana dispensaries. They approved expanded zoning, opened up more commercial areas along Highway 101 and increased leniency on building requirements for the dispensaries.

After little discussion, both ordinances passed unanimously.

The decision on both ordinances is considered an emergency because of the nearing conclusion to the moratorium of

medical marijuana dispensaries on March 17. After that date, state law will allow medical marijuana facilities in the city.

At the board meeting, Planning Director Wendy FarleyCampbell said, "You decided that it would be best, since you were not the initiating council on these amendments, that you hold a work session. At your Feb. 9 work session, you reviewed code proposal, all the various proposals that had been originally considered and were recommended and identified areas that you would like to see amended."

Members of the council and their staff also spoke with the

Florence Area Chamber of Commerce and with concerned citizens.

FarleyCampbell summarized the council's decisions on zoning: "In addition to the planning commission's North Commercial District, you added back in the Highway District, the Commercial District, the Main Street District and the Professional Office District."

The ordinance also changes the residential buffer from the previously-discussed 300 feet to 75 feet. Park buffers were reduced from 400 feet to 200 feet, except Miller Park, which will retain the 400 feet buffer because of its proximity to a

day-care center, which has a higher buffer.

The Planning Commission proposal considered by the council on Feb. 2 required medical marijuana dispensaries be in a stand-alone structure. Now, however, dispensaries in Florence could be co-located with other uses, but they would need to have separate air filtration.

One public speaker stepped forward at this point. He was concerned with the cost of a separate HVAC unit, especially as, according to Oregon law, it is illegal to smoke inside a public building.

"It was basically to address

two potential situations," said FarleyCampbell. "One would be the smell of the product getting into the circulation system, as brought up under concern from the previous council. The main reason was concern for mold from the product."

The man replied, "Everything that's in there has to be tested for mold dust and residue, so it should be pretty mold free if you're worried about mold getting into your HVAC. That's going to restrict a lot of people. It costs a lot of money."

Besides ruling about medical marijuana zones, the council also established business license fees and other guidelines to run

a dispensary in Florence. A business license will be \$150 per year. Medical marijuana dispensaries will also require a criminal history check of \$50 per year per person handling useable marijuana within the facility.

Mayor Joe Henry concluded the vote, saying, "Very good job. I want to thank you, Wendy, and Mike (Miller) and everyone who put in quite a few hours on this subject."

He also congratulated the rest of the council for passing the ordinances.

"That's carried unanimously. This definitely is the fun part," he said.

Bear from 1A

The film chronicles the adventures of Sellman and Grano and what they learned about human nature as they traveled around the United States visiting the five towns named Bear. According to O'Mara, the documentary shows the variety of cultures and diversity that makes up this country.

Mapleton High School's ninth- to 12th-grade students will partner with Siuslaw High School social studies teacher Erin Ellis' sophomore class to view a private screening of the film. In all, approximately 135 students are expected to attend.

"The cost is \$6 per student," O'Mara said. "We are asking each student to pay \$2. An anonymous donor paid for the travel speaking fees to get the filmmakers here."

City Lights Cinemas also will hold a public viewing of the documentary at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday. Regular adult ticket prices will apply. The filmmakers will introduce the film at both showings, offer discussion questions for the students and hold a question and answer session at the end of each showing.

O'Mara said, "We are going to ask our kids, 'How would you be perceived differently in different parts of the country?' This is a stretch for our kids because most have not been to different parts of this country."

Filmmaker Grano said, "We both tend to be pretty optimistic about people and that led us to create this film. A hopeful message on how people can interact with one another. We loved the opportunity to explore America and discover its stories face to face."

The original inspiration for the documentary came in the middle of the night.

"I was talking in my sleep one night. I woke Sarah up. I was saying, 'We need to go to Bear, Co.' We thought, my gosh, this is our destiny; we have to visit this place. I had a dream, she heard it, this is important."

"We were disappointed to learn there is no place called Bear, Co. Instead we discovered



Sarah Sellman and Greg Grano will present their documentary, "American Bear," at City Lights Cinemas on Feb. 24.



COURTESY PHOTOS

there were five places in the country called Bear, and it would make a perfect 'U' around the United States. They are in Washington, Idaho, Arizona, Arkansas and Delaware. We used them as a blueprint for the route that brought us around the country."

The couple spent 60 nights on the road, visiting mostly small towns. They passed through three large cities, Chicago, Atlanta and Las Vegas, the latter two of which they spoke with more than 100 people and no one invited them to spend the night, so they slept in the van.

"This only happened four times during the entire trip," he said. "One of the messages in the film is that people in big cities are a lot less friendly, and small towns are a lot friendlier. We have thought about this from a variety of different perspectives."

"We learned that much of our own identities influenced the experiences we had. The fact that Sarah and I are both white, we are in a heterosexual relationship and we are young had much to do with how people interacted with us. In small towns, particularly, we looked like we could fit in. While we had wonderful experiences in small towns and met people who were very friendly and generous to us, we think it is important to talk about the fact that this is probably not the case for everybody that might visit that town."

"There were a lot of complex themes that came to light while we were making the film. We like delving a little deeper into that when we have our audience

participation after the film." City Lights Cinemas co-owner Michael Falter said, "When Jodi sent me a note about this film to reach students, I jumped at the chance. I spoke

with the filmmaker and reviewed the film. It was Jodi's interest in the film that got things going."

Falter was working on ways to reach out to more local students. Offering a diversity of films,

such as "American Bear", was one way to achieve that goal.

According to Falter, this is the unofficial kickoff to a weekly documentary movie series. The focus of the series is to reach out

to various groups in Florence that would have an interest in a particular subject.

"I'm really excited to be able to launch the series with 'American Bear,' especially having the filmmakers here," he said.

O'Mara has applied for grant funding to cover the balance of the student ticket price.

A second film documentary field trip is planned for both Mapleton and Siuslaw sixth grade classes called "I am 11," an Australian film that interviews 11-year-olds from around the world.

"It's a film about life and love from the perspective of 11-year-olds," O'Mara said. "We hope to schedule it for some time in late May."

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Si usted desea escuchar esta información en español, por favor llame a la Agencia de Viviendas (Housing Agency) 541-682-2603.

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Housing And Community Services Agency of Lane County
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8:30-10:00 am HOT YOGA	10:00-11:00 am Belly Dance w/Eileen	8:30-10:00am HOT YOGA	10:00-11:00 am Belly Dance w/Eileen	8:30-10:00am HOT YOGA	10:00-Noon BEGINNERS HOT YOGA	Check out our Facebook page for Special Sunday Classes and Activities
4:30-5:30pm Bollywood Fusion w/Ellen	11:30am-12:30p PILATES w/Eileen		11:30-12:30pm PILATES w/Eileen			
6:00-7:00 pm ZUMBA w/Dori	3:00-4:30 HOT FLOW w/Bill	6:00-7:00pm ZUMBA w/Dori	3:00-4:30 pm HOT FLOW W/Bill	4:00-5:30 pm BOLLYWOOD FUSION w/Eileen		
7:30-9:00 pm HOT YOGA	5:30-7:00pm ADULT BALLET w/Angela	7:30-9:00 pm HOT YOGA	6:00-7:00 pm ZUMBA w/Dori	6:30-8:00pm HOT YOGA		

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