

Dunes City from 1A

In January 2017, during a discussion on the issue, Dunes City Administrator Jamie Mills pointed out that while the state is “very strict about the locations of recreational marijuana businesses and is very particular about recreational grow facilities,” Dunes City currently did not have code addressing any of its own restrictions.

Thus, the city had to abide by state regulations, which led to marijuana grow sites being allowed in the city.

Councilor Duke Wells, who made a protest vote against the amendment but voted for the resolution in full, spoke of the difficulties the council faced the prior year.

“In 2016, I was the only councilor who was here when that went on. When I made that vote on the three percent, I thought that was the end of the conversation. There were a lot sharper people on that council than me, and none of us caught it. I know the council in 2016 would have voted ‘no’ for commercial grows,” he said.

“Dunes City doesn’t need this,” he continued. “I don’t see an upside for this in Dunes City. I want it clear to residents where the buck stops, and on this the buck stops with me.”

The ordinance does not fully

protect the grow sites, which are still in the process of getting approval by OLCC.

If those applications are denied, they would have to reapply for approval from the city. In that case, they would be considered a “new application,” which would fall under the Ordinance 245 ban.

An overflow crowd attended the meeting, with public comments being made for and against the ordinance.

Land Use Attorney Ross Day, who represents the three grow operations, warned Dunes City Council not to pass the ordinance because his clients had a vested right in the property.

“I strongly suggest, before you move further with this, you sit down with legal counsel, follow proper procedures, go line by line and make sure you’re not exposing the city to substantial liability,” he said.

Resident Sherry Nelson made an impassioned plea for the grow, stating that medical marijuana had helped her family. She chastised city residents for getting their information from what she called “gossip”.

“I spent a full day gathering information the hard way. I went out to the grow site because we were welcomed there, as we all were, to visit the site. So, I toured it. And then I went to places that sell marijuana, which this place isn’t. How many of

you have gone and talked to them? Not from your gossip, but spoke to them directly?” she asked.

Arguments made against the grow site were many, including a newly dug well on the site.

The well, which had reached a depth in excess of 400 feet, was larger than the typical 100-foot wells found in the city. The well had originally been planned to be shallower, but there were issues during construction as the walls kept caving in.

A leaflet distributed by resident Catherine Caudle at the beginning of the meeting stated, “You may be at risk of losing your water supply if you are on a well.”

The fear was, water taken from the well would ultimately drain other wells in the area and have a negative impact on the lake.

Mills read a statement from Michael J. Thoma, PhD, a hydrogeologist for the Oregon Water Resource Department.

The technically laden document concluded, “It is unlikely that even heavy use of the well will significantly impact the lake. A 400-foot well will have the same impact as a 100-foot well.”

It was also pointed out in public comments, which was then confirmed by the Siuslaw News, that the commercial grow site will not be using the well water; all water for the operation will be

shipped in from Eugene. The well in question was for the private residence on the property site.

Dunes City resident Don Anderson, a retired fire captain, spoke of his experiences working in Humboldt County, Calif., before moving to Oregon.

“Humboldt County was known as the redwood capital of California,” he said. “Now it’s known as the pot growing capital of California. Anywhere we went to fight fires, we had to have an armed escort because people would shoot at firefighters in the event that we got too close to their marijuana. Everybody was worried that somebody was going to steal their crops.

“I don’t feel that Dunes City has the law enforcement capability to maintain,” Anderson continued. “What if next year, 40, 50 sites come in? Dunes City will be known as the pot capital of Lane County.”

Ultimately, the largest argument against the grow sites came down to residents simply not wanting marijuana in their city.

Dunes City resident Richard Booth said, “I don’t want our city sullied by a pot grow. If there are financial issues that are affecting the decisions of the council, please ignore them. I’d be happy to pay taxes in lieu of a three percent marijuana tax. Do whatever is necessary from legally preventing this from happening.”

Speaking after the meeting, Wells said that it was now the job of Dunes City residents to begin to campaign to make the ordinance permanent in 2018, which he hoped they would.

When asked how residents should deal with the grow facilities currently allowed, he said, “I don’t dictate what anybody does. If somebody feels like they want to go over and know those folks, and see their facilities, they should take a look at it.”

But Wells says he won’t be one of those people.

“No, I have my own personal history in my family with drugs, and I don’t like drugs. And I won’t associate with drugs,” he said.

He continued, “I will say, at the end of the day, marijuana growers, it’s all part of the drug culture, whether the state’s legalized it or not. I don’t think this is over yet. I think our attorney general, when he gets done with some other things, is going to move against this and the states that legalized it. The problem is, there’s a hell of a lot of money there. That’s going to be an issue to see.”

After the vote, Day, the attorney representing the three grow operations, said, “I’m very happy that they took the time to contact their own legal counsel and get sound advice on a solution that will be the best, not only for my clients, but for the entire community of Dunes City.”

Valerie Cain-Mathis, one of the growers represented by Day, said, “I really appreciate all the education that people received, and I welcome any questions that people have in the future. I’m sorry for anybody that felt offended by anything that happened here. There’s no animosity. We did come here to try and fight for what we knew was right for us, and other people who had medical issues.”

Dunes City Mayor Robert Forsythe said, “You can see the room was split. But I would encourage voters to get out, because it’s how we know what the public wants. ... It’s important that people communicate, so we know what’s important to all of our citizens, and not just those who make it out to a city council meeting.

“I would really like to see people get involved in the city. If there’s this much passion over one topic, maybe they can have passion over serving. Please, share your passion by getting involved.”

To get involved, contact Dunes City Hall at 541-997-3338.

Dunces City Council meetings, which are open to the public, are held every second Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. The public is invited to attend or view live online via the UStream app.

Constitution from 1A

Beveridge continued, “We feel very fortunate to have a place like the library to do a display where a lot of people will be able to see it and hopefully raise their awareness.”

According to the national DAR, the U.S. Constitution “stands as a testament to the tenacity of Americans throughout history to maintain their liberties and freedoms and to ensure those unalienable rights to every American.”

DAR supports this by emphasizing citizens’ responsibilities for protecting and defending the Constitution; informing people that the Constitution is the basis for America’s heritage and the foundation for residents’ way of life; and encouraging the study of the historical events which led to the framing of the Constitution in 1787.

“It’s amazing to think that this document was created and has stood all this time,” Beveridge said. “Sure, there have been amendments, but we’ve evolved as a nation.”

The Florence area has 28 DAR members, women who can trace their lineage back to people who brought American independence during the Revolutionary War in the 1770s and ‘80s.

The Oregon Dunes chapter is nine years old. Beveridge got involved as the group was forming after she learned about her own heritage.

“I’ve always been patriotic,” she said. “Growing up, it was always important to respect and honor our military.”

Beveridge, a child of the Navy, grew up during the Vietnam Conflict. She later went into a career in law enforcement in California, but wanted to return to her home state of Oregon.

In 2006, she was introduced to a side of her family she hadn’t met, and discovered a cousin who was in a chapter of DAR.

“Once I started doing my genealogy, I discovered that I had a patriot ancestor. It was right around the time our chapter was being formed here. It was just synchronicity to be able to know, ‘I had a patriot in the American Revolution,’” she said.

To be eligible to be in DAR — or partner groups Sons of the American Revolution or Children of the American Revolution — a person needs to be able to prove direct lineal descent from someone who either fought in the Revolution on our side, or provided goods or services.

Worldwide, there are more than 105,000 DAR members, including overseas units in Mexico, Japan, Australia, Canada, Russia, U.K., Germany and France.

“DAR members are amazing because not only are they involved in DAR, they are involved in their communities as well,” Beveridge said. “We have a three-fold purpose: historic preservation, education and patri-

otism. There are many ways to meet those goals.”

The Oregon Dunes Chapter gives out scholarships; supports active and retired military members, including the efforts of Oregon Coast Military Museum, Veteran’s Memorial Park and the Roseburg VA Health Care System; and promotes literacy through books and the U.S.

Constitution. In addition, statewide DAR chapters encourage conservation by planting trees and preserve history through three DAR-supported museums

“It’s an extremely worthwhile organization,” Beveridge said.

The group raises funds several times a year through community events and the sale of its cookbook, “Delicious Ancestral Recipes,” on sale at Oregon Coast Military Museum.

“As a nonprofit, 100 percent of our proceeds go back to the local community,” Beveridge said.

At the end of his reading, Henry said, “I ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787.”

For Beveridge, “I always felt patriotism was very important,

especially having traveled as extensively as I have and meeting people from all over the world. People everywhere support and love their country, and we are very fortunate to be in America, and we need to support and love our country.”

For more information on Constitution Week, visit www.DAR.org.



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