

COUNCIL *from page 1A*

There has been considerable public discussion regarding the role PAC has played in the process of selecting and placing art in Florence, and recently the committee has been operating under the threat of dissolution. The controversy was at its height last spring when plans for the installation of the mural, “Stitching Time, Weaving Cultures,” were approved and made public.

The reaction from the community was mixed, with some residents taking efforts to stop the installation, although those attempts ultimately proved unsuccessful.

The personalities involved in the PAC story became as much a part of the discussion as the art.

Mayor Joe Henry and Councilor Joshua Greene feuded openly about the direction the committee had taken during Greene’s tenure as the PAC ex-officio representative from the City Council. Henry questioned whether the city should be involved in funding public art on any level, particularly in regard to receiving money from the Florence Urban Renewal Agency (FURA).

This past July, the funding mechanism that had been used by PAC was discontinued and future funding for additional public art acquisitions remains unclear.

These are just some of the issues that the PAC has been working through during the last 90 days, during which the city council had directed the committee to come up with a new workplan pending a final decision on the PAC’s future.

The result was the workplan presented to the council Monday night, which proposed changes including a shift of authority from PAC to the city council. Previously, the selection process was weighted towards decisions made by PAC members. Under the new workplan, all major decisions made by PAC will need final approval from the council.

Given that approval of the new PAC workplan was listed merely as a consent item on Monday’s agenda seemed to signal that the issues of the past have dissipated, with the resolution passing unanimously.

In addition, the council also unanimously approved a liquor license for Eatwell Organic Noodle.

Later at the meeting, Miller brought good news to councilors in the form of a \$93,628 grant from State Homeland Security.

He reviewed the process that led to the funding for equipment to create a Public Works Operations Center for the city, in addition to funding for an alternate energy power generating station.

“We are very pleased to bring this to you tonight,” said Miller, who was given permission to apply for the grant last January. “The grant will pay for a 175-Kilowatt generator, the emergency generator for the Public Works Facility, and it will provide funding for new conference equipment in our training room that will also serve the main purpose of being the Operations Center for the city.”

According to Miller, the current Emergency Operations Center is at the Florence Justice Center. He also stated there are logistical issues related to security and access that

make the location less than ideal.

One aspect of the grant funding is the allocation of money for the purchase of three solar wind hybrid parking area lights. These will run alternately on solar or wind power, depending on the weather.

In addition, Miller also presented a finalized plan for the official creation and recognition of a Highway 101 Reimbursement District. This plan would require residents to share in the cost of infrastructure improvements on a section of Highway 101.

Under the plan presented by Miller, the improvements could be repaid to the city — by the owners of the upgraded properties — over a 15-year time period.

Miller then requested councilors approve the scheduling of a public hearing to present the plan for the construction improvement project and to accept the grant from State Homeland Security.

Both of Miller’s requests were approved unanimously.

City Manager Erin Reynolds presented the next item on the evening’s agenda for councilors to consider, Resolution No. 25 2019, submitted by Henry.

Resolution No. 25 would change the order in which those wishing to provide public testimony, either for or against a particular item, could speak.

The genesis of the request by Henry was again the result of the PAC controversy this spring. Public testimony rules, as currently written in the City Council Rules of Procedures, allows proponents of a discussion item to speak first.

Those opposed and those that are neutral are then afforded the oppor-

tunity to speak. This led to an inordinate wait time for many opposed to the mural and, in the case of the PAC decision, some community members opposed to the project left without speaking to the council.

Henry insisted that the reason for the change was a matter of equity.

“As a matter of simple fairness, it makes sense to have those speakers alternate. Have a proponent then an opponent and then a neutral, and that is the intent of this resolution. It is a very simple change; it just changes the order of speakers,” Henry said.

Resolution No. 25 passed unanimously after one member of the public spoke in opposition to the resolution.

The council was then asked by Reynolds to consider the many committee and commission openings that will exist at the end of the year. Reynolds requested councilors to become

involved in the process of identifying and speaking with potential individuals to fill those positions.

Councilors Greene and Ron Preisler both commented on their belief that the process for selecting committee members should be altered to allow for more input from individual councilors on the final selection of committee members. No action was taken on the councilors’ concerns and Reynolds received approval to move forward with the posting and notifications necessary to fill the openings.

Reynolds then reminded councilors of the upcoming Housing Code update and informational session. The public meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. tonight at Florence City Hall.

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Nov. 18, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Florence City Hall.



Christmas on the Coast
with
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Saturday , December 14th • 6pm
Florence Events Center

Charles Suniga a Florence native, Siuslaw High School Alum, and two time grammy nominee brings his classic holiday cheer back to the coast. Charles will be backed up by the “Angels” **Audrey Breznikar, Jeannine Harwood,** and **Julia Weiss** along with returning guest vocalists performing many of the holiday tunes we all grew up with.

For more information or to charge by phone, call the Florence Events Center’s ticket office at 541-997-1994 or visit their website at www.eventcenter.org
Tickets for the performance are \$20 each

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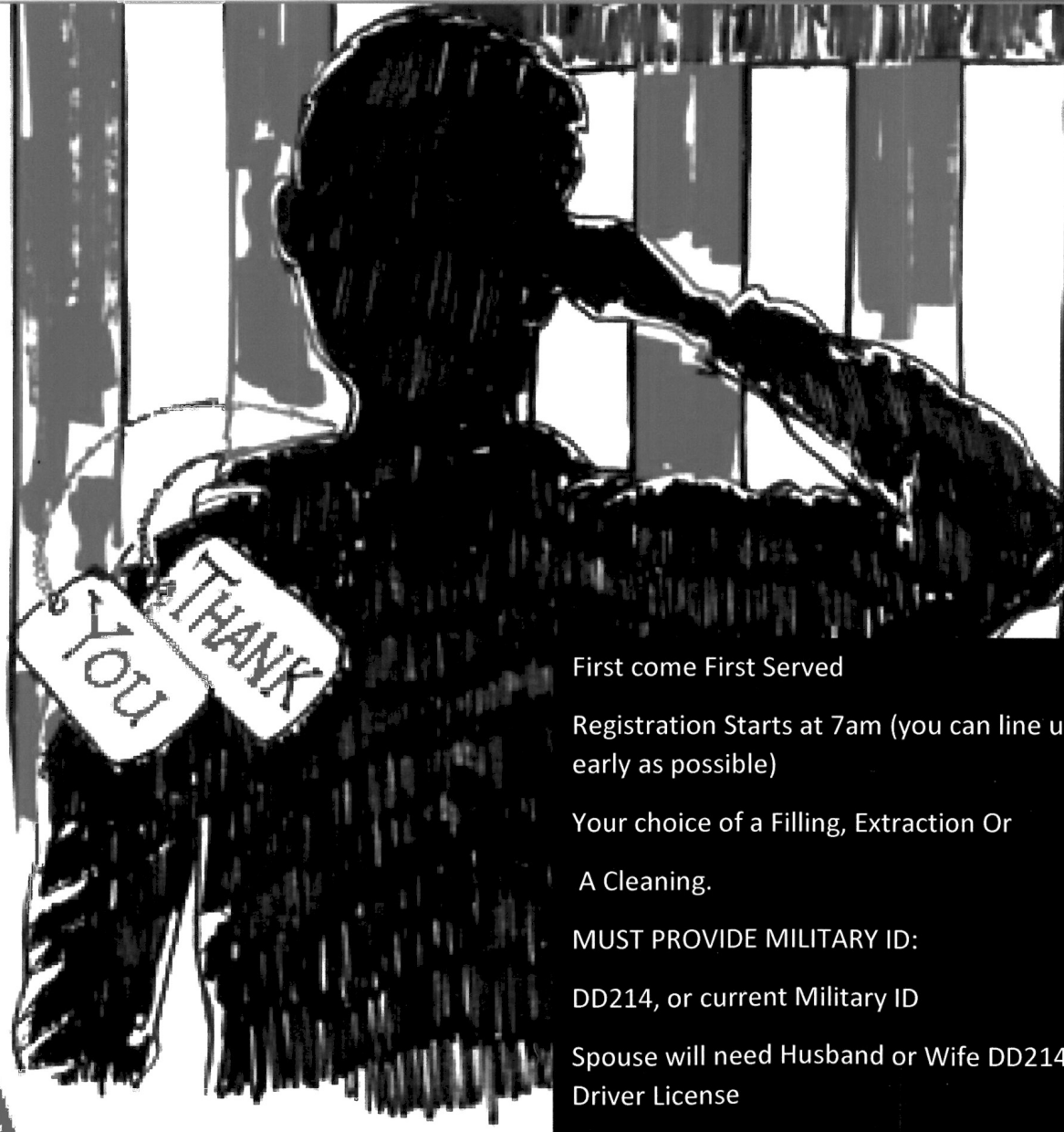

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Spouse will need Husband or Wife DD214 &
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