

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

The First Amendment
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



LETTERS

VIRTUALLY WONDERFUL

RHODY PARADE

Thank you so much staff of the City of Florence! The Virtual Rhody Parade was outstanding and I really, really appreciate that you and the amazing city took the time to do this, supporting community and pride for each other.

I am so thrilled, even in this dark time, to be a Citizen of Florence/Siuslaw Region. Your inspiring actions keep our City in Motion and our community an amazing place to be. You set the example of love, pride and getting things done for

our community.

Keep up the good work!

Thank you as well to those who submitted their virtual parade entries. You also help keep our beautiful City on Motion.

—Jo Beaudreau
Florence

THANK YOU CITY, AND ADOPT-A-STREET PROGRAM

The City of Florence posted two Adopt-a-Street signs for “Mike and Pat Allen” on Rhododendron Drive; one just north of 35th Street and the other south of Sebastian

Street.

We’ve been cleaning trash from this 2.1-mile stretch four times a month for the last three months, averaging about 30 pounds per month. It’s great exercise and we get lots of horn toots, waves and thank-you’s from passersby.

We thank the City of Florence for recognizing our commitment.

Hopefully, the signs will encourage travelers to keep our street clean by not littering and others to join us by adopting a city street in their neighborhood.

—Mike and Pat Allen
Florence

Council should make public meetings public inclusive

(Editor’s Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

I listened to and watched the live Florence City Council meeting May 18 via CPTV and was horrified at what I could not see.

The slides lacked clarity — fuzzy to say it best. How is a citizen of Florence to understand what councilors and city staff are talking about if we can’t see the details on the slides?

This is unfair and certainly does not reinforce transparency. In addition, the only people visible were members of City staff in the council chambers while council members and the mayor were hidden from view except for their photo in front of where they normally would sit.

Secondly, the mayor declined to ask everyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance. Why? Just because we can’t all see the same flag doesn’t mean you dismiss this important beginning to any meeting of this kind in this country.

Heck, this is a standard operating procedure of the Florence Rotary Club that meets by ZOOM every Tuesday at noon.

I submitted an email May 18 to the City Recorder (with copies to council) asking that future public meetings, including City Council, be presented live via a format similar to ZOOM — and recorded for future viewing.

It’s unfair to citizens who cannot see our elected and appointed officials during public meetings. I want to see faces and reactions to what is being said “as if”

I was sitting in the audience at City Hall.

With this kind of format, the host of the meeting would allow citizens the opportunity for their three (3) minutes of verbal comments in full view of all who are watching.

The host would also have full control to “mute” when needed.

Organizations worldwide are conducting business in this manner, we should as well. I received a reply to my request informing me that the “City Council has adopted updated public meeting policies which can be found on the City’s website at www.ci.florence.or.us/em/public-meeting-during-covid-19.”

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Sally Wantz Florence

Since these have been adopted, the City Council has not held general public comment on items that are not on the City Council agenda.

This is unfair. Those protocols don’t allow a public comment period during business in this manner, we should as well. I received a reply to my request informing me that the “City Council has adopted updated public meeting policies which can be found on the City’s website at www.ci.florence.or.us/em/public-meeting-during-covid-19.”

od on the agenda for meetings, including last Monday night, unless your submission relates to an item already on the agenda.

As a result, I was not able to read this as part of public comment at the recent City Council meeting. As with other Council correspondence of a general nature, the response was “[I] will forward your email to the full Council for their review and consideration.”

Well, it seems the Mayor did not consider these written comments worthy of consideration since he said there are “no public comments” during Monday’s meeting.

It’s for these reasons that I strongly urge our citizens to reach out and demand our voices be heard and our elected officials be seen as if we were sitting right in council chambers.

Let’s go live where we can invite the public to be a part of the process and actually see our officials in action.

On the plus side is the awesome staff who continuously inspire me with their dedication to our City.



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Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, OR Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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DEADLINES:

Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.

Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$79; 6-month in-county, \$56; 10-week subscription, \$25; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$102; 6-month out-of-county, \$69; 10-week subscription, \$35; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$134; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or documented will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside the Siuslaw News readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

POLITICAL/ELECTION LETTERS:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) Explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn’t follow the above criteria.

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