

Public safety, medical marijuana part of Creswell's conversation

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The City of Creswell has decisions to make regarding its future, and a recent City Council meeting gave the community a few hours to try to hash out those decisions.

The Creswell City Council joined interested citizens for a marathon meeting on Monday, March 9, with the issues of public safety and medical marijuana chief among a list of agenda items that kept the gathered crowd busy throughout the evening.

Public safety figured heavily into the conversation, with a public hearing scheduled to help the Council determine whether to continue, discontinue or change a fee added to local utility bills to pay for patrol services by the

Concerning Creswell

News and notes from our neighbor to the north

Lane County Sheriff's Office.

Three scenarios are under consideration by the Council, as reported by the 'Creswell Chronicle' — one would fund three full-time sheriff's deputies and a half-time sergeant at a cost of \$641,579; option two would fund three deputies and a third-time sergeant with a \$611,318 price tag, and the third option would fund 2 ½ deputies and a half-time sergeant for a \$563,038 total.

Last year, the City enacted a \$6 public safety fee that was added to water bills to fund a third deputy in response to a spike in crime, though the fee was designed to sunset on June 30, and the question of whether to enact funding again this year looms large as the time to prepare the city budget approaches.

"The question has always been whether to fund three deputies or a third-time sergeant," said City Administrator

Michelle Amberg, who said a report on local policing conducted at Portland State University is due in June but may be too late to impact the conversation.

"We need to discuss whether to keep the fee or make changes," Amberg said. "We need the numbers now, but we'll probably go ahead for budget purposes with the conservative estimate of 2 ½ deputies and a half-time sergeant."

The Chronicle reports that Lane County Sgt. Billy Halvorson advocated the first scenario, noting that property crime decreased by 33 percent following the addition of the third deputy.

Creswell also faces the appearance of medical marijuana dispensaries in the City, as the one-year moratorium it enacted to delay their establishment expires and applications for new dispensaries will be accepted on May 1. The

City Council was asked to help outline any restrictions it may choose to place on where dispensaries may locate before that time; Creswell's Planning Commission has reportedly favored restricting dispensaries to operations in commercial and industrial zones while keeping them out of the core of downtown. State law currently prohibits municipalities from restricting dispensaries' hours of operation, etc.

The Council unanimously passed an ordinance restricting the location of dispensaries to commercial or industrial zones.

Amberg said there has already been talk of "a couple people" interested in opening dispensaries in Creswell.

OFFBEAT

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Oregon and Washington issued a proclamation giving them full law-enforcement authority.

The life of a Sand Pounder was not easy, and although it wasn't combat, it could be dangerous at times. There was always the danger of being swept out to sea if one got too close to it while rounding one of the capes or outcroppings; Coasties on Sand Pounder duty frequently got soaked up to the bridle in

spray from the waves. And the horses added an unpredictable element as well. One unfortunate fellow was patrolling along the coast near the Southern Pacific railroad track when the engine, passing by, fired up its boiler burner, startling the horse — which threw the rider (35-pound radio and all) and galloped off into the night.

The Sand Pounders shared the fate of the Aircraft Warning Service volunteers and the Tilla-

mook-based blimp squadron: by the time their program was up and running, the Japanese menace to the Pacific Coast — other than balloon bombs — was entirely gone. So the Sand Pounders of Oregon didn't get much action — other than the frequent drills they participated in, practicing repelling amphibious invasion. And in early 1944, as the tide of the war started turning, the beach patrols started being cut drastically back. Patrol-

men young enough for combat duty were sent off to help the Navy deliver the D-Day invasion force; surplus horses were auctioned off at the Tillamook County Fairgrounds.

And, of course, with the end of the war came an end of the Beach Patrol entirely.

So, were the Sand Pounders a success? It depends on how you measure it. Although they never had the opportunity to catch an invasion or infiltration force, had

one been dispatched to Oregon's shores, there's every reason to think they would have. Their effect on morale alone may have made them worth having around; their presence on the beaches was a real comfort for the nervous residents of Oregon coastal communities during the dark, fearful year that followed the Fort Stevens and Brookings attacks.

But it's also possible that the Sand Pounders had won their


fight before they even suited up. When that unarmed, untrained Coastie stumbled across the Nazi saboteurs on Long Island, in the incident that caused the Beach Patrol to be organized, the message got back to the Axis Powers, loud and clear, that the American home front was not going to be an easy target. The prompt arming and organizing of the beach patrols would have been a topic of intense interest to Axis spies in the U.S., and would have been observed and reported back to Berlin and Tokyo. The fact that the patrols were mounted and equipped with battlefield radios meant that all that would be needed to ruin a months-long operation would be a glimpse. Who knows what diabolical plans were never hatched by wartime enemies because they knew the beaches were so thoroughly monitored?

The Sand Pounders had a boring time of it during their lonely beach duty. None of them ever saw a single enemy combatant. But they were never meant to be a combat force. The fact that they never saw any action doesn't mean they were a failure; in fact, if anything, it's a certification of their complete success.

(Sources: Bishop, Eleanor. Prints in the Sand. Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories, 1989; Noble, Dennis. The Beach Patrol and Corsair Fleet. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, 1992)

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