

# GOALS

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purchases on the ballot this November, a move that Councilor Mike Fleck said he could support if the tax didn't disadvantage businesses here in relation to other communities.

Meyers also put forth the notion of amending the City's charter to put the City in first position for any liens it levies against the owners of decrepit properties or, as he called them, "limbo houses."

"People get up and leave, and as soon as they walk away, nobody is responsible for the house," Meyers said. "The bank doesn't have it back yet. The property owners usually disappear. What can we do? Some of these houses, people are now living in, but we can't kick somebody out because nobody told us they're trespassing."

Meyers said some communities have a restriction that if there's no

water or sewer running to a residence, the City can declare a nuisance, asking the Council if they wanted to explore that notion.

With regard to road maintenance, the City's gas tax receipts barely fund basic maintenance, let alone major overhauls, and the Council seemed to support a bond levy to repair some of the City's nastiest examples, such as South Sixth St., which was mentioned more than a few times. The City's fiber optics network was put forth as an area that could benefit from expansion, and Councilor Jake Boone said such an upgrade should appear near the top of the list.

"Fiber is our best chance of changing our town from a used-to-be timber town to a town with more entrepreneurship," Boone said. "The sooner we start, the sooner we can get there. If we can be the first ones to complete our system, we can get all the business

that could come with it."

Fleck said he approved the idea of bonding for road repairs and letting the voters decide if they supported the bond.

"We put out for a bond, and if they turn it down, it's their choice," he said.

Near the close of the meeting, Meyers asked for still more clarification.

"I've got priorities all over the board here. What are the top ones?" he asked.

Councilor Kenneth Michael Roberts said that he favored more police patrols to address a rise in crime. Councilor Jeff Gowing advocated public safety above all else, while Burbuck reiterated his backing for fiber optics and road improvements. Councilor Amy Slay said she wished to fund road improvements and address the community's "limbo houses."

# MEETING

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from individuals that seemed intent on taking matters into their own hands.

"I saw things getting a little bit out of control," she said. "I saw comments that honestly scared me as much as what's going on. But we can't have that; it makes us both victims and villains."

In his comments, Shepherd reiterated that he hoped volunteers would be willing and could be most useful by observing and reporting any suspicious activity to law enforcement.

"I support the idea that all of these eyes and ears are able to supply the police department with information that will help us address a crime that has happened or is happening. That helps give us some investigative opportunities. But I don't want people to take enforcement into their own hands. That's a big concern of mine," he said.

Slay advocated a network organized around Cottage Grove's ward system that includes ward coordinators tasked with maintaining a list of participants, acting as

a liaison between the community and law enforcement and distributing crime prevention material. In addition, block captains would work with coordinators to organize meetings, notify members of events and serve as a community resource.

"We're here to help you get it off the ground, but it's up to you guys and the people who couldn't attend tonight to make it work," Slay said.

During a more informal question-and-answer session, residents asked about the connection between drug use and criminal activity, with Shepherd responding that many property crimes are motivated by drug use. Shepherd said those who suspect drug activity among their neighbors are encouraged to observe and report all useful information.

Shepherd said he would like to revitalize CGPD's reserve officer program and invited those interested to schedule a ride-along with an officer.

Shepherd said he would love to work with a higher budget and hire more officers but it likely

won't happen, adding that the help of local residents could help fill the gap.

"Under a model like this, we think there might be an opportunity to have a better chance of follow-up, of linking certain crimes together," he said.

Many residents spoke of what they see as a pattern of brazenness by the local criminal element, which involves acts such as people casing neighborhoods in broad daylight and stealing items from front porches.

"You can't believe the people you see wandering around at night," one attendee said.

"I had my front porch light on. They snuck through that front gate, all the way onto the front porch," said another.

Shepherd said such activities also confound law enforcement.

"As frustrated as you folks are, we experience those same frustrations," he said.

Those interested in more information on Cottage Grove's emerging community awareness program can contact Slay at councilorslay@cottagegrove.org.

# OFFBEAT

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attendant and eventually a communicant was gained in this way."

Other itinerant men of the cloth found it convenient to cooperate with the proprietors of the more secular temples at which frontiersmen were wont to worship: saloons. Another future Episcopal bishop, Ethelbert Talbot, built a church in Murray, Idaho, right next door to the local saloon. Both buildings were quite flimsy and very close together, so the prospect loomed of noisy barroom activity disrupting services. Fortunately, the Rev. Talbot got along very well with the publican next door and soon had worked out an arrangement: At the time for services on Sunday morning, the saloonkeeper would close up shop for two hours. "That's all for now, gents," he'd holler. "Let's all step over and hear the Reverend talk!"

Out the door and around the corner would go the crowd of day-drinkers to sit down in the pews next door and soak up some religion before returning to resume their celebrations.

"Many of the fellows fresh from their drinks were hardly able to realize just where they were," Talbot later recalled.

On one particular occasion, Talbot selected a sermon on the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican – a gracious nod to his saloonkeeper friend next door.

"I proceeded to condemn the pride and self-complacency of the Pharisee, and, in correspondingly strong language, to praise the publican for his humility and self-abasement," Talbot said.

But it soon became clear that one of his audience members – one of the saloon patrons who'd come next door when the bar closed – was not having any of it. As the sermon continued, he glared fiercely, then started muttering angrily to himself as his fellow congregants eyed him nervously. Finally he leaped to his feet, apparently able to take no more.

"Tha'sh all wrong," he yelled resentfully, and would have continued, but the other bar patrons – perhaps pleased to have an opportunity to leave the church without offending the keeper of the only saloon in town – leaped to their feet and hustled him, still incoherently protesting, out the door.

Back in the saloon, everything became clear. The disruptive day-drinker was a hard-core Democrat, and all the praise of the 'Publican Party without so much as a nod to the Democrats had simply been more than he could take.

Of course, it was all well and good for an Episcopal pastor to make friends with the saloon keeper. For preachers of denominations with less worldly attitudes toward Demon Rum, that sort of thing would have been unthinkable.

Legendary Methodist circuit rider James H.

Wilbur – better known as Father Wilbur – rather set the tone for his denomination's attitude in the Umpqua gold fields in the 1850s, during the California gold rush. Wilbur was leading a team of Methodist ministers holding a week-long revival event of sorts for nearby miners and had attracted a considerable crowd. This crowd had, in turn, attracted the attention of a duo of itinerant liquor peddlers. These two gentlemen had a wagon loaded with distilled spirits and a big tent they'd pitch beside it, forming a portable saloon; the wagon sides would serve as the bar. Like modern "tailgaters" partying in the parking lot at a Beavers game, they now came and set up this booze wagon as near to the revival tent as they dared, ready to slake the miners' always-prodigious thirst.

You can imagine how this went over with the Methodists.

The men of the cloth tolerated the interlopers for several days, putting up with the nearby whoops and howls of drunken revelry during services in hopes that the booze-wagon soon would move on; but finally, several days into the revival, things came to a head.

The event that set it off was a gang of drunken miners, fresh off the wagon, who decided to attend services. At the back of the congregation, they started laughing and disrupting the meeting. Finally Father Wilbur could take no more.

"Sing something," he muttered to the other preachers. "I'll be right back."

Slipping out the back of the meeting, Wilbur made his stealthy way to the booze wagon. He caught its two proprietors alone and completely unawares.

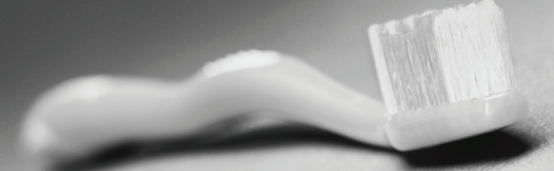
Fired up with righteous wrath, the good pastor seized a bottle of whiskey and, using it as a club, set about getting the local earthworms drunk as skunks. Shards of glass flew; cheap whiskey and rum splattered everywhere. The two liquor peddlers, belatedly realizing they were under attack, leaped upon Wilbur; but Wilbur was a very large and powerful man, and more than a match for two half-drunk liquor men even when he was not animated with a spirit of crusading fury. They didn't have a chance.

Wilbur didn't stop swinging until he saw that every bottle had been broken. Then, bleeding from several cuts inflicted by flying glass, he ordered the two liquor men to pack up and move on (which they meekly did, on the spot), and returned nonchalantly to his congregation – where, his face and shirt smeared with blood, he finished his sermon as if nothing had happened.

(Sources: Wells, Lemuel H. A Pioneer Missionary. Seattle: Progressive Publishing, 1930; Kennedy, G.W. The Pioneer Campfire. Portland: Marsh Printing, 1913)

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