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Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2016 SOUTH LANE AND NORTH DOUGLAS COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889 VOLUME 128 • NUMBER 48

Marijuana tax to appear on November ballot

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Let the people decide.

The Cottage Grove City Council declared as much Monday night with a vote in favor of placing a three-percent tax on recreational marijuana purchases on the ballot this November. A large crowd and representatives from several television news outlets viewed the proceedings, with attendees adding many comments supporting a vote on the tax and a few in opposition.

The Council had indicated a similar disposition regarding the potential tax at its final meeting in April, and City Manager Richard Meyers pointed out this time that, contrary to some news reports, Cottage Grove should be far from the first or only city in Oregon exploring a recreational marijuana tax.

“This resolution has been taken from a sample used by other cities,” Meyers pointed out.

In April, the Council indicated enough interest in referring the tax to voters that Meyers included proceeds from the tax in the City’s budget for 2016-17. He calculated \$15,000 in tax revenue from an estimated \$500,000 in sales of recreational marijuana, though he and Finance Director Bert Olsen indicated during budget hearings that those numbers were basically “a guess” and a “placeholder.”

As had occurred in April, City Councilor Jake Boone was again outspoken on Monday night in his opposition to the tax.

“Because our dispensaries are going to be competing with Eugene and Springfield, we’re going to be putting our people at a disadvantage,” Boone said, adding that a tax on a minority to benefit the majority typically has the support of the majority.

“When you’re robbing Peter to pay Paul, you can count on the support of Paul,” Boone said.

Mayor Tom Munroe said he approached the possibility of a recreational marijuana tax simply.

“Why should we not get our fair share?” he asked. “People ask why we should have the tax. I say why not?”

Darby Valley, majority owner of the Apothecaria dispensary in Cottage Grove, said that his business had “no objection” to a three-percent recreational marijuana tax.

“The average sale amount is \$45, so you’re looking at a tax of \$1.20,” Valley said. “You can’t get to Eugene and back for \$1.20.”

Valley encouraged the Council not to dedicate the

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photo by Jon Stinnett

Supporters of Measure 20-240 use a variety of devices to monitor the bond's progress at Stacy's Covered Bridge Restaurant on Election Night.

Voters approve Harrison bond

'Now the work begins,' Superintendent says

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

South Lane School District Superintendent Krista Parent wasn’t convinced by the first round of election returns. So she waited for another. And then another.

By 3 a.m. the morning after Election Day, Parent said she was satisfied that the results of Oregon’s Tuesday, May 17 primary showed that the District’s voters had supported Measure 20-240, a \$35.6 million bond to replace the aging Harrison Elementary School building, make security and technology upgrades throughout the District and tackle deferred maintenance projects.

Results calculated by 3 p.m. Friday indicated that the measure earned the support of 3113 voters, or 56.79 percent of those who cast ballots. A total of 2369 voted ‘no’ on the

measure in an election that featured a 54.97 percent voter turnout and also saw voters support a levy for the OSU Extension Service and its 4-H programs.

Supporters of the South Lane bond met in an air of cautious optimism at Stacy’s Covered Bridge Restaurant downtown on election night, with many hoping that they would not need to work to pass the bond again if it failed.

“We did a good job,” said Joel Reiten, a member of an organizing committee dedicated to the bond. “I just hope we never have to do it again.”

Parent, South Lane Communications Coordinator Garrett Bridgens and Darby Valley, head of the political action committee that worked to garner support for the bond, thanked the crowd of supporters. Valley said that the

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Processing facility approved, with conditions

Planning Commission gives OK to marijuana processing business

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The future of a mostly vacant lot on 10th Street drew a large crowd to the Council chambers in Cottage Grove on Wednesday, May 18, and many attendees there had a lot to say about a proposed new business on the lot.

The Cottage Grove Planning Commission reviewed an application for a Conditional Use Permit related to light manufacturing use for a marijuana processing facility on the lot at the corner of 10th Street and Adams Avenue, which has sat unused for years and contains a small garage-type outbuilding on an asphalt slab.

The applicants, Paul Hampshire and Ruby McConnell, spoke first in favor of the operation and later answered additional questions related to specifics. Members of the public then lined up with their concerns and/or opposition during the public hearing.

Hampshire and McConnell said the facility will host the extraction process of essential oils from marijuana, a process that they said can fit inside the small building already standing on the lot. It was a plan that irked many of the site’s neighbors. City staff said that a number of letters in opposition to the proposal dealt with the site’s location across the street from Bohemia Park.

“It is about the children,” said Mickey Pattingale, who operates an auto dealership nearby. “This type of operation does not belong across from a family park.”

Parking and traffic at the site were also a concern, though Hampshire and McConnell said they will only be allotted three parking spaces and trucks will not be required to haul material into and out of the site.

Neighbor Jane Rapier said she worried about odors from the site, in addition to its location near Harrison Elementary School.

“I volunteer at a school, as does my husband,” Rapier said. “I don’t think it’s to our advantage

Please see **PLANNING**, Page 10A

Changes for downtown park proposed with sticky notes



photo by Jon Stinnett

Ruth Linoz and Travis Palmer discuss aspects of All-America City Square at a public meeting held Tuesday, May 17 to help plot the park's future. Suggestions for changes were examined at a subsequent meeting.

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Post-It notes stuck to the walls of a room inside the Cottage Grove Armory are expected to provide a road map of sorts for the future of a downtown park nearby.

On Tuesday, May 17, an ample crowd joined Cottage Grove City Planner Amanda Ferguson and architect David Dougherty to discuss the future of All-America City Square, also known as Opal Whiteley Park, at the corner of Seventh and Main streets. Guests shared their hopes and expectations, including changes they would like to see (or not) on dozens of sticky notes, which Ferguson explained that she would use to inform a design charrette the following week.

Ferguson explained that the deterioration of the flagstone pavers in the park led to the meeting, which she said was designed to tackle other “issues” that have come to light in its nearly 10 years of existence. The services of Dougherty were secured with a \$3000 grant, and Ferguson said any plans for change would likely have to be funded with another grant.

“We have heard concerns expressed over the flag stone flooring, traffic flow, safety, lighting, use, signage, maintenance, etc.,” Ferguson wrote in a press release announcing last week’s meeting, during which she asserted that the City has “no preconceived notions” regarding the future of the park. The sentiment was later echoed by Dougherty.

“If you would like to change

nothing at all, that’s fine, too,” Ferguson said.

Marston Morgan, architect of the original All-America City Square redesign, was on hand to assert that he and others (Morgan said he represented the Friends of Main Street, a group founded in opposition to 2015’s Main Street Refinement Plan) wished to see the park remain largely as it is today, though he also read from a lengthy list of updates he felt could enhance the park, including the possible repurposing of the restrooms, which he said “attract the wrong type of people.” Morgan said that the park “stands alone as a piece of sculpture” and is “beautiful unto itself,” and as such the City should not be overly worried about its usability.

After two hours of Post-it commenting, a list of desires for

the park began to emerge. Attendees seemed to love the idea of lighting the park at night, in addition to refurbishing the Opal Whiteley mural and adding interpretive signage detailing its significance. Opening up the back of the park to the nearby parking lot was suggested, as was seating in the form of benches. The removal of a circular planter at the center of the park was also a frequent suggestion. Permeable pavers were suggested to replace the aging flagstones, though other materials were also suggested. More native plants were suggested for the park’s landscaping, as were more garbage cans, containers for cigarette butts, security cameras and a reflecting pool.

A design charrette was scheduled to take place at the Armory on Tuesday, May 24.

Rain Country Realty Inc.

RainCountryRealty.com raincountryrealty@gmail.com 1320 Hwy 99 • 541-942-7246

Have a Happy, Safe and Sane Memorial weekend, but keep in mind... if it was not for our soldiers we would not be free to do that!

Principal Brokers
Teresa Abbott221-1735
Frank Brazell.....953-2407
Lane Hillendahl942-6838
Broker
Valerie Nash521-1618