

Special needs foster care asks city for help

City Council tables discussion on possible loading zone for bus pick-up, drop-off

Bobby Krasneski is quiet. While the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce discussed his request for a loading zone in front of his home, councilors weighed in, fired-off questions and city staff presented findings to the board. Krasneski, however, sat in the back of council chambers, arms folded over his neatly buttoned flannel and his face flushed slightly red each time an official mentioned his name in discussion. It wasn't until several questions arose that only Krasneski could answer, did a request from a board member inquire as to his presence. Reluctantly, he stood and walked the few feet to the podium to offer that, yes he would like a loading zone.

Krasneski, 25, operates a special needs foster home out of his house and currently has three special needs children that ride a South Lane School bus school. One child uses a wheelchair occasionally and the dead-end street the family lives on is, according to Krasneski, becoming an issue.

Currently, the school bus cannot pull up to the curb in front of the foster home because cars are routinely parked there. A loading zone, the family said, would solve that problem and prevent the bus from having to block off a portion of 4th St. to load the children safely. The city council however, had questions on the "overwhelming need."

"I feel for you," councilor Mike Fleck told Krasneski. However, the councilor went on to note that if the council granted him a loading zone, it may open the door to other residents coming forth to ask the board to do the same, leading to limited parking within the city.

Several members of the board noted their desire to speak to a South Lane School District bus driver after Krasneski said he was told the drivers can refuse to load the children.

Retired driver Karen Munsell stepped forward, citing the urge to speak up for the applicant.

"South Lane School District can tell him to bring the kids across the street," she said; a claim echoed by city engineer Ron Bradsby.

"It gets political and it gets messy and it gets mixed-up," Munsell said of discussions with the school over bus pick-up. "It comes down to this quiet man trying to help children he didn't bring into this world," she said.

Councilor Burbuck and Mayor gowing both wanted to hear from the school district before taking further action with councilor Boone noting that illustrations submitted with the application did not paint a dangerous picture for him.

"If there are cars there, the parked cars act as a wall, preventing other cars from driving through. I just don't see a kid getting hit by a car in this situation," he said.

Krasneski said the more dire issue with the current situation was that it was difficult to cross the street with three special needs children and a wheelchair when there was no sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. Without the parked cars on his side of the street, he said, the bus could pull up to his driveway; a solution the bus driver on his route recommended to him.

The board tabled the issue until its next meeting on Wednesday, February 1.



Resident Bobby Krasneski is requesting a loading zone from the city for his special needs foster care home.

School *Continued from A1*

ing of Measure 20-240, which granted a \$35.6 million bond to replace the current elementary school which was considered to be aging.

The new school will be located by the Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center, which is also schedules for renovations. Voters heavily supported the measure which passed on May 18, 2016.

The design of the school is to encompass elements of the region. Covered Bridges will have a strong motif within the design even if the name wasn't selected, and more tributes to things such as the lumber industry will be included.

The school will begin construction in March of 2017 and should be ready for the start of the school year in September of 2018.

Homeless *Continued from A1*

or camping grounds. Children in emergency and transitional housing or awaiting foster parents are also counted. If a child's primary nighttime residence that is not designed for ordinary use as a sleeping facility, they are also counted as homeless.

Community Sharing has a handful of programs to assist with housing but the overall housing market in Cottage Grove has slim options.

The organization's Home Tenant Based Assistance, or HTBA, Program works with individuals on a short-term basis. Community Sharing's Mary Ellen Gonzalez said the program has never seen a decrease in interested parties; only an increase.

To qualify for the program, applicants have to meet certain requirements including income. The housing list opens the first working day of the month and according to Gonzalez, the organization does its best to make it through the list and help the people it can. Individuals selected for the program are given a year with the expectation that they create certain goals towards self-sufficiency. There are quarterly inspections and while the stay can be extended, it is never beyond two years.

"I wish I had the magic answer," Gonzalez said. "But we can give people hope and when they have a good self-sufficiency plan, I have seen success."

State Senator coming to town

The Blackberry Pie Society will be hosting Senator Prozanski in Cottage Grove. The following is an offering from the senator on the event:

Thank you to everyone who attended Rep Paul Holvey's and my town hall in Veneta last night! We enjoyed a thoughtful discussion about how Oregon can move forward.

As the second in a series of town halls that I'm holding in Senate District 4 this month, please join state Representative Cedric Hayden and me next Thursday, January 26, at 6:30 p.m. for a town hall meeting

in Cottage Grove. As the 2017 Legislative Session approaches, our state faces urgent budgetary challenges. We will discuss Oregon's anticipated shortfall of \$1.7 billion for the 2017-19 biennium, the need for a statewide transportation package, and other issues that may come before the Legislature this session.

Thank you to the Blackberry Pie Society for hosting this event!

Senator Town Hall

What: Joint Town Hall with Sen Prozanski and Rep Hayden

When: Thursday, January 26, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Cottage Grove Community Center, Reception Room

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Cottage Village Coalition holds monthly Q & A session for the public

The Cottage Village Coalition, a group of local citizens attempting to create an affordable home village made up of tiny houses, holds its monthly public meeting on Thursday, February 2, at 6 pm. The meeting takes place at the First Presbyterian Church, 216 South Adams in Cottage Grove. CVC members will answer questions and review the current project status with the public. All are invited.

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