

Bend parks may waive more fees for affordable housing

The Bend Park & Recreation Board could vote Tuesday on a resolution to lower district fees on affordable housing.

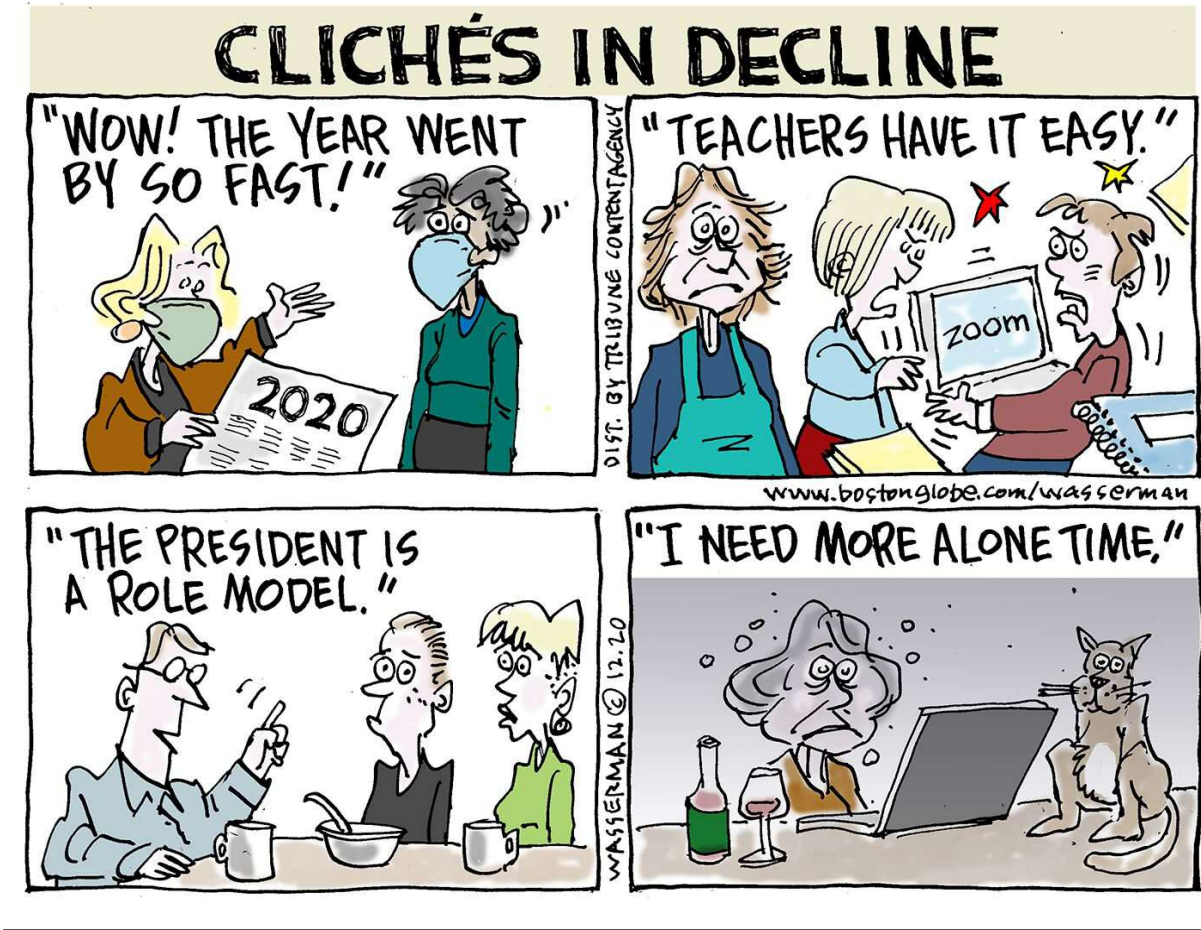
The trick for the board is to find a solution that enables the district to keep Bend parks great and help more affordable housing to be built. One thing is for sure: The proposed resolution won't please everyone. It's certainly better than doing nothing. The board approved a resolution in 2019 that waived park SDCs for up to 400 units of affordable housing. That program was set to sunset at the end of 2022, but projects are already bumping up against the cap. As of December, some 380 waivers had already been used. So the city, affordable housing advocates and others asked the district to do more. Some want the district to just get rid of the cap. The district already has programs to help low-income residents. For instance, scholarships enable children to participate in district programs. And any reduction in fees comes at a significant cost for the district. It has already sacrificed more than \$2 million because of the existing waiver. It could have built another neighborhood park for that. Expanding the reduction in waivers means some projects might not happen or will be delayed. It's not clear what might be sacrificed. Three projects that have at least been discussed — include future plans for the Pine Nursery, Discovery Park and the Big Sky Bike Park. The resolution the board will consider Tuesday would provide another 75 additional waiver per calendar year over the next two years. The additional cost to the district would be up to \$1.2 million, bringing the total expected waiver reduction cost to up to \$3.5 million for the district.

district. The resolution would also put additional requirements on the additional waivers. Smaller projects with affordable housing of up to 50 units would get a 100% waiver. Projects larger than that would get a waiver of 50% for the total units requested. It is not spelled out in the staff report why larger affordable housing projects don't get the same benefit. Why should a project that provides more affordable housing effectively get punished? Another condition is that the park district would like the city to establish a work group to look at ways to provide additional incentives to build more affordable housing without the need for such waivers. The board and district staff are looking for a solution, not looking to avoid the issue. The district has already received some feedback from members of the community and builders of affordable housing. If you would like to comment, you can email the board members at board@bendparksandrec.org.

Keeping transparency in Bend superintendent search

The board of the Bend-La Pine Schools faces a steep challenge to navigate a superintendent search in the middle of a pandemic. It seemed likely that the transparency of the process would suffer. Candidates could not mingle with the community. And the board would not be able to visit the home districts of the candidates and ask questions. No doubt, transparency did suffer. But the board made every reasonable effort to prevent it. Board members outlined all the steps they took in a three-page summary. They did get a broad, diverse range of candidates. The information accumulated for each applicant came to about 25 pages — resume, reviews of social media accounts, web searches, student achievement data and more. Journalists were able to attend the executive sessions where board members were sorting through candidates and narrowing down the list. We aren't allowed to write about what happened in executive session. But after we left, we certainly weren't brimming with anxiety. Of course, the transparency of a superintendent search means little if the superintendent chosen turns out to be a dud. The two candidates do seem to be high quality options. We will all have to wait and see. You can find more information about the candidates and the search here: <https://tinyurl.com/Bendsuper>.

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.



2020 in the rearview mirror and an altered life ahead



As we emerge from behind our masks in the coming months and begin to live a more “normal” life, what will the new year look like? If you're an optimist, you see a rebound coming that will boost the economy, reopen schools and bring customers back in the doors of local businesses. The fear and frustration that has fueled so much divisiveness in 2020 will give way to fence-mending in 2021. If you're more skeptical by nature, the new year will continue to be a struggle on many fronts. For me, it's a little of both and a recognition that our world will forever be altered by what we've experienced this past year. Time will tell if the changes made out of necessity this past year bring us to a better place in the long run, both professionally and personally. I am hopeful they will. For The Bulletin, if someone had said to me a year ago that we'd be doing some of the most important journalism of our time — from covering the local impact of a global pandemic, to catastrophic wildfires that burned over 1 million acres in Oregon, to civil unrest on the streets of Bend, all while working remotely for the most part — I would have thought it not possible. But it was and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. This change hasn't weakened us,

but rather has made us more flexible and resilient, with a sharpened focus on the reason we exist — to provide credible community journalism to our readers and an audience for our advertisers, regardless of how we get the job done. This past year has also made us look hard at the sustainability of our business and make some tough decisions with staffing levels and legacy costs that would have been at our doorstep at some point, with or without a pandemic. And for many businesses, ours included, it was a year of innovation and tenacity, finding a way around the roadblocks and moving forward. Not a path any of us would have chosen a year ago, but we're coming through this more flexible, financially stable and able to innovate and grow. For that I am very thankful. On a personal level, my hope for the new year is we try to better our civic relationships in a post-pandemic world. If you are passionate about your political (or other) beliefs, try building just one bridge to a family member or friend who holds an opposing viewpoint. You might not be

successful, but you may find a way to be less exhausted by the outrage that consumes so much passion and energy, especially in social media channels. A recent City Club forum featured two friends who held opposite views on the protection of hate speech under the First Amendment. Not an easy conversation to have, especially with an audience watching, but they did it. It's worth checking out the conversation on YouTube. It's called “How to Respectfully Agree to Disagree.” Our altered world can be a better place, with a little effort. For The Bulletin, it's been a privilege to mark the happenings and events of Central Oregon that will serve as a record of these historic times and to shine a light on those who rose above the difficulties and found a way to help. Thank you to our readers, advertisers and community partners that made it possible for us to be here this past year. We take the responsibility of providing accurate, relevant news for Central Oregon seriously, in this time of crisis and beyond. No doubt the new year will be filled with many challenges and triumphs and, because of your support, The Bulletin will be here to report on it all. ■ Heidi Wright is publisher of The Bulletin and COO for EO Media Group.

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred. Email: letters@bendbulletin.com Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column P.O. Box 6020 Bend, OR 97708 Fax: 541-385-5804

Where are the statues to Black liberation in America?

BY KAREN ATTIAH
The Washington Post
“What I want to see before I die,” Frederick Douglass wrote, “is a monument representing the negro, not couchant on his knees like a four-footed animal, but erect on his feet like a man.” The fiery abolitionist was expressing, in an 1876 letter to the National Republican newspaper discovered this year, his vexation over the design of a new statue of Abraham Lincoln and a formerly enslaved Black man named Archer Alexander, the last man captured under the Fugitive Slave Act. The monument, meant to celebrate the Emancipation Proclamation, was funded by enslaved people, but it was designed by a white man, Thomas Ball, and the result was a rendering of Lincoln towering over and looking down at Alexander, crouched and half-naked. Lincoln's right hand

grasps a stack of documents, his left floats over Alexander's head, as if to bless him and all enslaved Black people with freedom. Douglass called it a “highly interesting object” in a speech in Washington, D.C., marking the commemoration of the statue. More than 140 years later, the Emancipation Memorial and its replica in Boston have become highly contested objects in the historical battle for Black liberation in America. Last week, Boston removed the replica of Ball's statue that had stood in Park Square since 1879. All that remains is the pedestal with the words: “A race set free / and the country at peace/ Lincoln / rests from his labors.” The city said the statue will be held in storage until it can find a new location where it could be “better explained.” It is good that Boston has removed the statue. But how does one better explain a work that reinforces mis-

truths about the passivity and inferiority of Black people? How does one soften the erasure of the humanity of Alexander? Lincoln gets praised by name and portrayed as single-handedly setting the Black race free. Where is Alexander's story? None of his efforts to pursue his own freedom — including a daring escape from slave catchers — was recorded on that pedestal. His name wasn't even inscribed. Still, Boston is ahead of Washington, where the original statue remains in Lincoln Park. Plenty of people defend these monuments, of course, and argue that removing them is tantamount to erasing history. But that's wrong. “Admirable as is the monument by Mr. Ball in Lincoln park, it does not, as it seems to me, tell the whole truth,” Douglass wrote. The unmistakable message of the statues serves to erase the humanity and history of nonwhite peoples.

White supremacy feasts on that kind of erasure. For Black people, unbreakable hope and unspeakable horror have danced side by side since the birth of this nation. This pas de deux between horror and hope is reflected in monuments to Black liberation leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean. When I lived in Curacao, I visited the monument to Tula, an enslaved man who led a 1795 rebellion against Dutch slaveholders. In Cuba, there is a monument to Carlota Lucumi, a Yoruba woman who led a large slave rebellion against the Spanish in 1843. These rebellions were bloody and violent; both Tula and Carlota paid with their lives. The monuments are a reminder that freedom always carries a heavy price. Where are the monuments to the strength of enslaved individuals in America, and to their efforts to liberate themselves and others? In Vir-

ginia, historic sites associated with Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion, the largest slave revolt in U.S. history, have been left to deteriorate or hidden away from the public. The bloody rebellion nearly led Virginia to abolish slavery, yet the history has been neglected while plantations are romanticized as wedding destinations. It's all testament to just how steadfastly much of America still refuses to face for the horror of slavery and racism. “There is room in Lincoln Park for another monument,” Douglass concluded in his 1876 letter. “I throw out this suggestion to the end that it may be taken up and acted upon.” There is more than enough room to publicly commemorate the Black people who stood proudly and struggled bravely across this vast land so that we all one day may be free. ■ Karen Attiah is The Washington Post's Global Opinions editor.