

A bit about Bend’s home energy score program and critics

Critics of Bend’s proposed home energy score have raised a number of issues. We thought we’d take a look at two — the importance of having enough inspectors and the use of utility bills, instead of a score requirement.

A home energy score is like a miles per gallon rating, but for a home. The city’s draft plan is to require an inspection before a home is listed for sale. A licensed assessor would be required to do it. It might cost between \$150 to \$300. That cost would be the responsibility of the seller.

The idea is it gives a buyer more information about the actual cost of operating a home. And it might encourage some people to make more investments in energy efficient heating and cooling, solar panels or more insulation. In turn, that might make Bend greener.

The city has developed a website with lots of information and to try to anticipate some of the inevitable questions. An ordinance has been drafted and council members are scheduled to take a look at it on July 25.

Critics and supporters have asked about having enough certified assessors to do the inspections. Nobody wants a bottleneck created so people would be unable to move swiftly to sell their homes or that the cost of an inspection would rocket up.

City staff has said “staff will review the availability of assessors before the launch of the program and

recommend delaying the program launch if an insufficient number of assessors are ready to offer the service.”

OK, how many assessors does the city say are enough and how is it determining that number? It should establish that methodology now, not adjust it on the fly. Some city documents say the estimated number of assessors for Bend would be 10. Is that the number the city is using? If that’s not it, what is it?

Another argument we have heard recently is that the program is downright unnecessary. The city could save homeowners cost and hassle by asking or requiring a seller to provide recent utility bills. That would give a seller an idea of utility costs without requiring inspections or additional cost. The city’s counter argument is that a home energy score is superior to handing over utility bills, because energy use will vary. A home energy score is a more objective measure.

Councilors will be making a decision about this program soon. There is more information available here, tinyurl.com/BendHES. You can give councilors input on the program at council@bendoregon.gov.

Should the east Bend library stay or go?

The future of the East Bend Public Library is only guaranteed until 2025. Then the lease expires.

Should it stay or go?

The Deschutes Public Library Board is going to be discussing that on Wednesday.

The branch offers comprehensive services, books, movies, music. It has lectures and story times for children. The whole library shebang. Some programs are offered in English and Spanish.

It’s small at about 8,000 square feet. It’s across U.S. Highway 20 from The Forum shopping center.

The odd thing: It is in rented space. Todd Dunkelberg, the library’s executive director, told us Monday the board will talk about options. It could renew the lease. But if the new central library is on the east side of Bend as planned, off of 27th Street, does there need to

be two library locations on Bend’s east side?

Some improvements were planned for the east Bend library as part of the district’s \$195 million bond. All the other branch libraries are going to get improvements as well. The new central library is the big ticket item.

It may be premature to make a decision about the east Bend library until the future of the central library is more certain. The library board is still doing research about its proposed site at 27th Street and Wilderness Way.

Still, the discussion Wednesday may shape the east Bend branch’s future. What do you think should happen? You can tell the library board what you think at board@deschuteslibrary.org. More information about the board meeting is here, tinyurl.com/071322Library.

■ 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.



My Nickel’s Worth

Scenic, but not wild

On June 1 Crooked River stakeholders met to plan water usage for the remainder of the year. Ochoco Irrigation District will end irrigation on Aug. 15. The Bureau of Reclamation will limit flow to 10 cfs until Oct. 1, the official end of the irrigation season. After Oct. 1 flows will be 50 cfs as required by the Habitat Conservation Plan.

Flows of 10 cfs during the hottest months of the year will be catastrophic to wildlife in the river. Fish, aquatic insects, herons, osprey, mink, otters and others will all suffer. This problem is exacerbated by over subscription of water in the system. The recent federal Crooked River Security Act added new commitments to the river. Why the federal government is managing water that belongs to the state of Oregon is an unanswered question. However, the upcoming disaster could be avoided with a little adaptive management. According to my calculations, if flows were lowered to 43 cfs in August and maintained until irrigation season 2023, the disaster could be avoided or at least postponed for another year.

— John Butler, Redmond

Don’t kill kangaroos for shoes

Yes, let’s stop the slaughter of kangaroos for shoes. This is so unfair and unnecessary.

Kangaroos are beautiful, wild animals. Shoes can be made with many other materials, not necessitating the killing of defenseless animals. The people who do this should be ban-

ished from earth.

I strongly feel this is completely wrong and should stop immediately.

— Erica Hartman, Sisters

Where is the fentanyl coming from?

It seems obvious to all of us that the fentanyl problem is becoming a national crisis. Anything that can be done to save the lives of those exposed should be addressed.

What I find interesting about the recent editorial is that it doesn’t address the root of the problem. Where is the stuff manufactured? How does it get here? What is being done to prevent it’s continued trafficking into the U.S.A.?

From all I read it is being brought in through our open southern border. I just wish the media would take some responsibility to address the trafficking problem, and not just what happens once it gets here.

— Dick Bryant, Redmond

Location for a central library

I write to support Gentry Wade’s comments in The Bulletin about a central location for a primary Deschutes Public Library building. To do this would it not be possible to: 1) revise the existing renovation plans for the existing downtown Bend library building to add two or three floors, and 2) add an elevated pedestrian walkway over Kansas Street to connect the main building to a new high rise building and a high rise parking structure on the property adjacent to Kansas Street. Lastly, to

Wade’s point about a “big auditorium”, is it really appropriate for library district-approved funds to be used to include what, on the Bend library website, sounds and looks like a performing arts center for the city of Bend? I don’t believe this structure was mentioned in the voters pamphlet, and it seems more appropriate as a stand-alone project for the city.

— John Anderson, Bend

Dear Deschutes County commissioners:

The voters of Oregon and of Deschutes County voted to pass the initiative to make the supervised use of psilocybin legal in the state. I know that you are considering opting out of the program here in Deschutes County. I don’t think that blocking our residents from using this program is the correct, or democratic, thing to do. The voters spoke. Your job is to listen to what they say.

Although I will not likely be partaking myself, I have a friend in Multnomah County who has suffered from PTSD and who has found great relief by using one of the service centers available there. There may be residents of Deschutes County who can find help for anxiety, depression, addiction, migraines, PTSD, and many other conditions. Please do the right thing and allow access to those who hope for relief. Those who are not interested, can leave it alone. There is no logical reason to block a lawful treatment from everyone just because of the objections of a minority.

— Mimi Alkire, Bend

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer’s 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.

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Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and 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
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Is there a method behind Musk’s Twitter-deal weirdness?

BY MEGAN MCARDLE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Elon Musk is not just your garden-variety weird billionaire; he extends a weapons-grade weirdness field around him that makes everything he touches turn weird, too. Case in point, the Twitter acquisition — which Musk announced this weekend he’s walking away from.

Musk’s main explanation is he believes there are too many bots using the service. As reasons go, this is kind of weird, because there’s not much evidence that Twitter is sufficiently bot-infested to materially complicate the deal. Musk is surely aware that there are plenty of real people on Twitter, since as Bloomberg’s Matt Levine pointed out, that’s where he met the mother of some of his children.

The sudden obsession with bots strikes most knowledgeable observers as an obviously pretextual excuse to cancel the merger, or at least to renegotiate its price now that the stock market has tanked. But this is really not that much less weird. Chancery judges are not very fond of BS ex-

cuses, nor of people who whimsically offer to buy a company, then try to get out of it with the legal equivalent of a text reading LOL JK hahahahah. They can, and probably will, at least make him pay the deal’s \$1 billion breakup fee. They might force him to pony up \$44 billion to buy the company as promised.

But then we get to the truly weird thing: If Musk can get out of this for \$1 billion (plus hefty lawyer’s fees), he’ll probably end up making money on the debacle.

Musk may be the richest guy in the world, but most of his net worth consists of Tesla stock and stock options. If you’re a Tesla shareholder, that’s exactly how you want it, because your interests and his are tightly aligned. But if you’re Musk’s financial adviser — or, you know, Musk himself — you would probably like a little insurance, in the form of other investments, in case this whole electric car thing doesn’t work out.

Unfortunately, it’s somewhat difficult for a CEO in that situation to do the obvious thing: selling some of his company’s stock to buy other stocks. When you’re the richest guy



Billionaire Elon Musk is backing out of a \$44 billion bid for Twitter. The social media company is preparing to challenge Musk in court.

in the world, you need to sell quite a lot of stock just to diversify a fraction of your net worth. Selling that big a chunk of one stock will saturate the market and make the price fall, so all your other shares will be worth less — particularly after people start asking themselves why Tesla’s CEO doesn’t want his shares.

It has recently become urgent that Musk solve this problem, because in 2012, he was awarded nearly 23 million Tesla stock options that will expire this August. He has presumably

been sitting on them to put off paying taxes on them, but he has reached the “use it or lose it” point. Might that explain why Musk has started manufacturing what seem like excuses to sell stock?

In November, Musk offered his followers a Twitter poll. “Much is made lately of unrealized gains being a means of tax avoidance,” read the question, “so I propose selling 10% of my Tesla stock. Do you support this?” The ayes had it, 58% to 42%, and Musk sold \$5 billion worth of shares a few days later.

On the one hand this was a very Muskian troll of Democratic legislators who have lately taken to proposing impractical and destructive plans to tax unrealized capital gains. On the other, it was a great excuse to sell shares. Now when people asked why Musk was divesting, instead of saying “because I want to have something to fall back on if Tesla underperforms,” he could say “because I am a wild and crazy guy who likes to troll libs on Twitter.”

Now, in a rational world, “I love trolling more than my company” should probably make you less bullish on the future of Tesla, but here

on Earth Prime, the lib-trolling is one reason his most avid fans love him, and the company he runs. This barely caused a hiccup in the stock.

In April, Musk sold another \$8.4 billion as he raised funds for the Ultimate Troll: buying Twitter itself. Between then and now, the stock market has swooned, and the value of Tesla has declined by more than a quarter. In other words, if Musk had held onto those shares, he’d have about \$6 billion worth of stock. Instead, he got \$8.4 billion worth of cash. Even if he gives \$1 billion of that to Twitter, he’s still more than a billion dollars to the good.

Musk couldn’t have known he was selling close to the peak, of course; the timing was fortuitous. But it’s nonetheless excellent reason for a judge to force Musk to go through with it. Otherwise, his good fortune will become legend and encourage more frivolous deals.

Things are weird enough already in the market. We don’t need to give anyone encouragement to make them worse.

■ Megan McArdle is a columnist for The Washington Post.