

Hotel owes city more than \$100,000

The Columbia Press

Warrenton's Shilo Inn owes the city \$126,000 in room tax money collected by the hotel from patrons who stayed there.

In letters dated Jan. 18 and Feb. 15, City Attorney Spencer Parsons demanded payment of the taxes that were collected by the hotel in the second half of 2018.

The letters are addressed to Shilo's corporate office in Portland, its management corporation, and the Warrenton hotel.

The city-imposed deadline to prevent further legal action was Feb. 22. But the fees still had not been received by Tuesday

night.

The city intends to file a lawsuit, according to letters obtained by The Columbia Press through a public records request.

"Further, if payment is not received, we have been directed by the city to refer the matter to the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office for potential criminal proceedings," the Feb. 15 letter states.

The Shilo Inn hadn't responded to the city's Jan. 18 letter, which prompted the more serious stance.

"The city intends to compel Shilo Inn to remit payment of the tax revenues it has collected

from its guests on behalf of the city as well as the accrued interest and penalties," according to the Feb. 15 letter.

The lack of payment has been the subject of two executive sessions, which are held behind closed doors.

The hotel fell behind in its payment of the fees in 2016. The account was eventually brought current.

A Jan. 18 letter demanding payment of transient room taxes also was sent to South Jetty Inn in Hammond, which owes the city several thousand dollars.

It, too, failed to turn over the tax money for the third and fourth quarters of 2018.

Spur 104: City to pay for cohesive building plan

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much of the project's traffic would feed into the city's busiest intersection, Ensign Lane at Highway 101.

Mayor Henry Balensifer, the sole vote against the zone change at the Feb. 12 meeting, voted in favor Tuesday after other commissioners voiced a desire for a plan to address the traffic and other aspects, such as a cohesive plan for building design, lighting, sidewalks and landscaping.

Lisa Lamping, who owns property in the area, reminded commissioners that she and others paid for water and sewer improvements that benefited the entire town.

"It's time these folks realized their investments," Lamping said. City commissioners "have the ability to control how crazy that area gets. ... It's not a blank check. Have you ever known a government to be a blank check? They're always in the driver's seat."

Ken Yuill, who serves on the city's Planning Commission and owns about 20 percent of the project area, said Wednesday that he was somewhat perplexed by

the action.

"I understand where the commission is on this issue," he said. "I just hope that the property owners in Spur 104 will not just be trading one restriction for another."

The commercial mixed-use zone is a great transition between the heavy commercial uses on Ensign and residential neighborhoods farther north and west, Yuill said.

"From the property owners' perspective, this is another delay before they get a return on their investment," said Kevin Cronin, Warrenton's Community Development director.

"But we're trying to create a new, sustainable neighborhood that will fit seamlessly with what's developed across the street," Cronin said. "We're looking at this from

a long-term perspective instead of a short-term gain."

Since the initial approval on Feb. 12, several commissioners said they'd been approached by concerned residents or had given more thought to the zone change.

"I'm a big property rights person," Commissioner Tom Dyer said. "Then again, we have a big traffic issue. ... I want them to be able to develop. It's terrible, but we have to have some plan to deal with the traffic."

Some of the city's codes and policies have holes in them and that's how Wendy's got approved without an adequate traffic plan, Mayor Henry Balensifer said.

"We have an opportunity ... to get this one right," he said. "It's our duty to take a look to make sure it's done right."

Senior lunch menu

Monday, March 4: Thai shrimp, rice with peanut sauce, mixed vegetables, turkey soup, chocolate cake.

Thursday, March 7: Meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, navy bean soup, pumpkin pie.

The Warrenton senior lunch program is at noon (doors open at 10:30 a.m.) Mondays and Thursdays at Warrenton Community Center, 170 SW Third St. Suggested donation is \$6 for ages 55 and older; \$7 for those younger. For more information, call 503-861-3502.



Senior Moments with Emma Edwards

All activity is good for the brain

I recently read an advertisement from an exterminator that reminded us "*March winds and April showers bring May flowers and June bugs.*" I guess one could call that nature's definition of synchronization.

That same bug company says this is the reason: "Cold air is sitting in the north while warm air is coming in from the south. When these winds collide, things get emotional, and March throws a windy, gusty tantrum." It makes sense to me, but what do I know?

In case you need a reminder, today (March 1) is National Pig Day, which recognizes and gives thanks for domesticated pigs. Reportedly, pigs are clever and intelligent animals. But most people are unaware of their high level of intelligence.

They can be taught to do tricks. Some people keep them as pets. "This is a day to give pigs the respect that they deserve." I'm not sure whether that means we should boycott the local Pig'n Pancake restaurants on this day or honor the pigs by going there?

Prime Rib doesn't have pork in it, does it?

Back to the weather. I think many seniors are ready for warmer days. I also think we older people, when questioned, are more likely than younger people to say we value our time. I, for one, am not bored easily. We find things to do!

I like to tell people that I'm old enough to make my own decisions, but not young enough to remember what I decided. Most seniors know how to maintain good health, which includes nutritious

food, exercise and being social.

I realize exercise is important, but I prefer to exercise my brain. It's not all about walking or calisthenics.

Some of us enjoy crafts like crocheting, knitting and needlework or painting, sculpting or taking pictures. Reading is high on my list. Believe it or not, all those activities are said to improve health. And even the over-80 age group enjoys dancing.

Then there is gardening and golfing. Both require bending, stretching and other motor skills.

It's said that calmness comes from both golfing and gardening as they require fresh air, sunshine and problem-solving. Knowing what plant to put near another and monitoring the weather is an important gardening skill. In golf, learning to position the ball correctly uses the brain and not just muscles. Golf has an added social aspect as does gardening (talking with neighbors over the back fence).

That reminds me, in looking at special March dates, I see that Ash Wednesday is March 6 (Lent begins that day) and another important date is Sunday, March 10, when Daylight Savings Time begins.

On that day, we witness another amazing synchronization of time pieces being manually reset. Then there is St. Patrick's Day on Sunday, March 17.

One more: Don't forget that Wednesday, March 20, is the first day of spring.

Be encouraged and encouraging! And remember, "*Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right.*" —Henry Ford