

# Pot opponents want new vote in Cannon Beach

## Challenge to dispensaries could be on ballot

By R.J. Marx  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Marlene Laws doesn't care what voters think about legal marijuana in Oregon. But she does want people to come out and vote against cannabis dispensaries in Cannon Beach. If she and others on a new committee can round up 140 signatures, the initiative could make its way to the ballot. If the initiative should succeed with voters, cannabis sales would be off limits in the city.

"I just want it to go to a vote, so we know the will of the people if they want a shop in Cannon Beach," Laws, a lifelong resident, said. "Sixty-three percent voted to legalize it. But that does not mean they want a shop in Cannon Beach. This is why I want it to come to a vote. So we can know for sure if people in Cannon Beach do want a marijuana shop in Cannon Beach."



Glenn Boring speaks against bringing cannabis dispensaries to Cannon Beach.

The ordinance can still be presented as an option to the electorate in November.

Cannon Beach residents Gary and Marlene Laws, Jeremy Randolph, Nancy Gaisson and Molly Edison have launched a committee to bring the matter back to voters.

Last Tuesday, city councilors declined to bring a call for a council vote that would have banned recreational and medical marijuana sales within the city. Despite a motion by Councilor Wendy Higgins to read the ordinance by

its title, Mayor Sam Steidel, councilors George Vetter, Melissa Cadwallader and Mike Benefield declined to second it. Without a second, a subsequent motion to ban cannabis sales was never considered, in effect opening the door for the licensing of dispensaries.

Randolph, a former prosecutor in Lewis County, Washington, is the chairman of the committee and Gary Laws the treasurer.

Laws said April 11 she sent papers to the state to form a committee and open a bank ac-

count, as law dictates, to develop an initiative to vote. Papers must be filled out before petition signatures can be collected.

Ordinance 16-01 sought to declare a ban on cannabis dispensaries, processing sites, wholesalers and retailers, which was an opt-out option offered to Oregon cities. Since the councilors took no action last week, those who oppose the sale of cannabis in Cannon Beach are obligated to bring it to the voters.

City elections official Colleen Riggs said the petition could ask for "anything." "Until they actually write it out, we don't know what they would like to put on the ballot," Riggs said.

If signatures are properly verified, it may or may not go to a vote in November, she said. "There are a lot of different options."

When the initiative is presented, City Council members will have the option to adopt the initiative, reject it or take no action. If the initiative is rejected or no action taken, the initiative would come before the voters, Riggs said.

The county deadline is Aug. 10, she said.

# Stearns hopes board will reach May decision

Chief from Page 1A

said. "It would be fine if you were gambling with your own money, but you're not."

Three fire board members turned back a recall election last week. The recall effort stemmed from frustration among some residents over the board's handling of Balzer's firing.

"I would like to compliment the entire board for the grace and professionalism with which you have handled yourselves over the last several months and to congratulate the three of you who stood for recall and were successful in defeating it," community member Marty Schwab Harris said of board members Sharon Clyde, Garry Smith and Linda Beck-Sweeney. "If the issue of fiduciary responsibility is to be brought up at this time, I would like to suggest that perhaps those who initiated the recall would like to reimburse the fire district for the cost of the recall, which will fall to the district's budget and therefore consume funds that could otherwise be used for training, fire equipment and other much-needed goods and services."

The district had 19 emergency medical services calls and 10 fire calls in March. The district had 76 total calls in 2016.

## What it takes to be chief

**Candidates are asked** to possess at least an associate degree in fire administration, although a bachelor's degree or degree from a federal fire officer program would be considered. A public administration degree is considered a plus, along with experience in a "closely related field or a satisfactory combination of education and experience that demonstrate the ability to perform the fire chief job duties."

**Candidates are required** to have at least eight years full-time paid experience, with at least five years of supervisory experience in a command position of captain or higher. Emergency medical technician basic training is a prerequisite, although paramedic training is preferred.

# School is 'in' for Gearhart's Christy Bisping

## After Cannon Beach closing, a fresh start

Yes, she was blindsided. Who wouldn't be?

Christy Bisping was the executive director of the Cannon Beach Preschool and Children's Center since June. Last month, she got word the center was suddenly closing.

She and board members had been unaware that the financial situation was so dire, Bisping said.

Competition from neighboring centers in Seaside, declining enrollment, long commutes and barriers for Hispanic students were among causes.

"We did know enrollment was dropping fairly quickly," Bisping said. "There were no plans to put it back together until it was too late to fix."

The center had been on the verge of closing before, in 2011, after years of losses, when it received an infusion from the city.

Despite a prestigious three-star rating early this year for its commitment to quality learning from Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System, the center shut its doors.



**'I don't really believe in electronic toys. I think there should be purposeful play, purposeful items.'**

Christy Bisping

Bisping, who lives in Gearhart with her husband Brandon, a 16-month-old daughter and 12-year-old niece, suddenly found herself out of a job.

She developed a concept — Gearhart Kids Academy — a certified children's center offering infant, toddler, full-day and half-day programs for children six weeks to 12 years.

Bisping secured a building in her hometown on Highway 101 at the former site of North Coast Realty and took out a personal line of credit to finance her dream.

She said she sees a niche for the new center.

Curriculum will be based on the Montessori Method and the Creative Curriculum for preschoolers.

"I don't really believe in electronic toys," Bisping said. "I think there should be purposeful play, purposeful items. That's where the Montessori inspiration comes. It's very much arts, clay, bringing things outdoors inside. But there will be play, too, because that's important for social development."

Hours will be from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. "We hope to have kids going all day long," she said.

Staffing at the new center came with some difficult choices.

There were four teachers at Cannon Beach Preschool, but "right now I can only take one of them, Susan James, who was there the longest, four years," Bisping said. "But my goal would be to take all four of them. They're all wonderful, so it's very hard."

## If you want to know more...

**WHERE:** The Gearhart Kids Academy is located at 3537 Highway 101 in Gearhart.

**WHEN:** School starts May 2. Hours will be from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**CONTACT:** 503-440-8560; gearhartkids.com.

Fees will be fixed and on a monthly basis — "very competitive to the other children's center that's in town, a little bit less," she said.

A Gearhart volunteer firefighter, Bisping will offer emergency medical service, fire and police families a 10 percent discount on tuition. Capacity will be 46. School starts May 2.

For more information, visit gearhartkids.com.

# Veterans services outreach meetings coming to area

Veterans are invited to outreach meetings in Seaside, Elsie and Cannon Beach for assistance with forms, benefits, medical care and transportation.

Veterans Services comes to the Hamlet School House, 81485 Mattson Road, Wednesday, April 27, from 5 to 6 p.m.

Outreach comes to Elsie Vine Maple Fire Protection

District at 42644 Loyd Lane on Monday, May 2, from noon to 1 p.m.

The Cannon Beach American Legion hosts the third outreach meeting on Wednesday, May 4, from noon to 1 p.m.

For more information contact Shana Verley at 503-861-5372; shana @ridethebus.org, or Dick Lang at 503-298-8757; dicklang@chart.net.

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