

HEPPNER



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Heppner residents protest youth crime

Heppner residents concerned about youth crime in the city were out in force at the Heppner city council meeting Monday night, and after listening to complaints, the council and police chief said they were going to "crack down."

About 30 people attended the meeting mostly to complain about the activities observed at one particular house in Heppner.

The house wasn't named, but neighbors in the area complained of parties, noise, drugs, weapons and other problems, and they asked the city council and police to do something about it.

One neighbor, who has been writing down license plate numbers of vehicles visiting the home, then turning them into police, said he has seen "booze, sex on the street, guns on the lawn and drunks passed out in cars and on the lawn. This is getting out of hand," he said.

Other neighbors in the area echoed the same complaints, with another saying "It is big problem. I am afraid that something major is going to happen down there."

Others at the meeting said they are afraid to go to the city parks because of menacing youths and the fear of being harassed. Another man who works early morning hours around Heppner said he was afraid if things get out of hand people in town "might do some shooting."

"We are well aware of the problem," Mayor Bob Jepsen said. "It has been on the increase."

Police Chief Doug Rathbun said the police are going to "end this problem. We will do just like they do in Portland. If they have a problem in a neighborhood they take care of it. That's what we are going to do. We are not backing off," Rathbun said.

Rathbun also said the police would be targeting the troublemakers and if there was



Heppner Mayor Bob Jepsen swears in new reserve police officer Jenny Eng at Monday's city council meeting. Eng has lived in Heppner for three years. She moved here from Scappoose.

problems, "we are taking them to jail."

The council took emergency action Monday night and voted to close all city parks between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. Any adults caught in the park will be fined \$100. The parents of juveniles caught in the park will be fined.

Police officer Merle Cowett warned that the law was going to be applied equally. And said that "anyone" caught in the park between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. would be ticketed.

The city has three parks. One

on main street by the library; Hager park under the dam, and a small veterans park near Hinton creek on main street.

The council also talked about maybe extending the city's curfew hours, but took no action on that at the meeting.

A planning meeting to discuss other options will be held next Monday, July 20 at the Senior Center in Heppner at 7 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

Law enforcement, juvenile and family workers, as well as the District Attorney will be at the meeting.

Sidewalk sale, celebration planned July 31

The Heppner Merchants' sidewalk sale will be held Friday, July 31, at various businesses in downtown Heppner.

Everyone is invited to attend the sidewalk sale, and meet at the Shamrock on the intersection of Main and Willow Streets to "celebrate Heppner".

The sidewalk sale will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The day will also feature "Kiss a Pig" sales and organization-sponsored booths.

At 4 p.m. will be the Shamrock tournaments, featuring chalk drawing, a coin scramble and tricycle races, among others.

The city/Chamber Tug O' War will be held at 5 p.m.

The BMCC quartet, "Absolutely Nobody" will perform at 5:30 p.m. and the Main Street dedication and recognition will be held at 6 p.m. with a "hip, hip hooray" lead by Heppner cheerleaders. The audience is invited to participate, grab the mike and give a cheer for a project, person or group to celebrate Heppner.

Absolutely Nobody will continue performing at 6:30 p.m. while cake is being served. Everyone can get their "hand-in-hand sports bottle with free pop.

The Kiss a Pig winner will be announced at 7:30 p.m., when Tim Cundell begins playing requests for listening and the street dance. Everyone is invited to "put on your dancing shoes" or bring a chair to sit and enjoy.

Drawings will be held at the Shamrock periodically throughout the day. Restaurants are planning to-go specials so people can "eat on the street" as they shop or enjoy activities.

Waterpark manager resigns amid controversy

The Willow Creek Park District Board accepted the resignation of Willow Creek Waterpark manager Sarah Carlson at their regular meeting July 8 in Lone.

Carlson, in a letter of resignation, said that if the board would give her autonomy to manage the pool, her resignation would take effect August 24, after the summer swim season comes to a close. But, she added, if they would not give her assurance, her resignation would take effect Monday, July 13. The board said they could not give her any assurance and voted unanimously to accept the July 13 date. Carlson was on vacation and not present at the meeting.

Carlson said in her letter that there were "too many issues for the which the board of directors and I do not agree. This, coupled with the demands of the job are more than my health and family can take. I have given everything I have to give to make the waterpark a success this summer season. I cannot, however, ensure that success if the programs set forth are continually tampered with by the board of directors."

"We have a tremendous amount of respect for Sarah Carlson," said board member Patty Wehrli. "We've all tried to sit down and work things out. I've got to give her credit, she stands up for what she thinks is right." Carlson's resignation follows heated controversy surrounding management of the pool, the pool's hours and the waterpark's financial situation.

George Nairns, who recently resigned as an assistant manager at the pool, said at the meeting that she resigned because of "disrespect from the board." "I feel like the board has disrespected Sarah greatly," she said. "I feel like the board is running our swimming pool into the ground."

Russ Morgan commented that he felt the board was "the most unprofessional board" he'd ever heard of. He accused the board of holding an illegal meeting and blamed the pool's problems on the board's "willingness to micromanage the day-to-day operations" at the pool. Morgan is the ex-husband of Karen Morgan, assistant pool manager who also resigned following Carlson's resignation.

However, other people at the meeting said that they feel that the board is responding to the community. "I think the board is taking direction," said Diane Kilkenny, who was also present at the meeting. "They are listening to the community."

"The bottom line is money," added Patti Allstott. "Let's get out the budget. We wouldn't be having all this crap if we had the pool open and our kids swimming in it."

"If it's closed all of the time people aren't going to come," added Lorrie Fox, who often works as a volunteer at the pool's concession stand. "I'd like to see hours on the weekends be more."

Carlson said earlier that the pool's census is down on weekends and that she shortened weekend hours to save money. The pool is now open from 1-5 p.m. on Saturdays and 5-8 p.m. on Sundays. The board says that they have received complaints from the public that the pool's hours are not sufficient.

Another issue of contention is Carlson's interpretation of child labor laws concerning lifeguard breaks. She had insisted that the pool be closed from 3-3:30 p.m. for lifeguard breaks. But, in her letter to the board, she modified that stance, saying that she found an error in her interpretation and would close the pool to swimming from 3-3:15 p.m. so each employee would get one paid 15-minute break during a four-hour work period.

The board maintains that the employees can all get their 15 minute break with the pool remaining open. They also believe that the pool is over-staffed with too many lifeguards

and assistant managers on duty at the same time. According to the board, six lifeguards are now on duty at every session. The waterpark also employs one full-time manager, one full-time assistant manager and one part-time assistant manager.

Carlson says lifeguard scheduling is a safety issue and claims that all the lifeguards she has scheduled are needed to prevent a tragedy at the waterpark.

Newly-appointed board member Kim Cutsforth-Armato, who says she has had 10 years pool management experience and 17 years of business experience, outlined several options which, she believes, will save money at the waterpark, but will still fulfill state regulations and keep the facility safe for swimmers.

Option A, which they hope will save approximately \$539 a week, will set pool hours as follows: 9 a.m.- 9 p.m. Monday through Friday with lessons from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 5:10-6:50 p.m., open swim from 1-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.; adult lap swim from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; adult swim from 5:10-6:50; and weekend hours from 1-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. If there are no swim lessons scheduled, the adult lap swim from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. will be cancelled.

Proposal B, which they say could save approximately \$958 a week, calls for closure of the pool on Monday, but all other hours as in option A.

The proposal calls for at least three lifeguards in chairs except for the 1-5 p.m. session which would have four, unless attendance drops below 60 people. One guard would be on duty during swim lessons. The manager would guard during evening swim and will act as an instructor during lessons and no more than one acting manager will be on duty at a time. A cashier will be responsible for the front desk during all open hours.

The board also voted to seek a \$16,000 line-of-credit loan for operating expenses to keep the pool open for the remainder of the summer swimming season. The waterpark had a total ending balance of only \$3,447 on June 30. However, it took around \$18,445 to operate the pool for the month of June and the board expects around that much in expenses for the remainder of the season. Income, however is not expected to be as much, since many people bought season passes at the beginning of the season. The board consequently voted to set half-season passes at \$80 for a family and \$37.50 for an individual starting July 20 to increase pool receipts.

The biggest monthly expenses in June included \$8,527 for wages and payroll taxes, \$4,578 to Columbia Basin Electric for electricity, \$2,087 for concession stand expenses and \$2,018 for pool chemicals and exercise equipment. On the income side, admissions and season tickets brought in \$13,496, concession sales-\$2,279, property taxes-\$2,045, and interest-\$17.93 for a total income in June of \$17,839.

As a taxing entity, the board is allowed to borrow up to the amount that they expect to receive in property taxes. But Morrow County Assessor Greg Sweek caution the board not to count on the money in future years. "A lot could happen down the road," he said. "The value of the county could go down."

On the positive side, board member Archie Padberg said that the electric bill goes down to around \$400 a month in the off season. The financial picture is expected to improve greatly after three years, when final annual \$17,500 flex-lease payment has been made.

Watermelon Festival, July 25

The 15th annual Irrigon Watermelon Festival will be held Saturday, July 25, at the Irrigon Marina park.

Activities will include breakfast from 6:30-9 a.m.; a softball tournament beginning at 7 a.m.; a parade at 10 a.m.; and a street dance and video show with "Radioactive Music" from 9 p.m. to midnight.

Continuous entertainment will go on throughout the day with Steve Blum, country-western and old-fashioned gospel; Chris Lee Loid, 40s and 50s music and country; Absolutely Nobody, the BMCC quartet; the Quetzalcoatl Dancers; Chata Addy, a professional drummer, composer, dancer and choreographer from Ghana, West Africa; entertainer Tony Madrigal; and Steff Nelson, 1998 Oregon State Junior Fiddle champion.

The day's activities will also include: arts and crafts booths, bingo, dunk tank, food booths, kids' games, hula hoop contest, a giant raffle, free water testing by the Master Gardeners from noon-4 p.m., and the Umatilla Chemical Depot ammunition demonstration trailer.

The entertainment and advertising is funded by the Morrow County Unified Recreation District.

For more information, call Donna Eppenbach, 922-3197, or LaVelle Partlow, 922-3386.

Bicycle law to be enforced

The law against riding bicycles on the sidewalk in Heppner, was going to be more strictly enforced, Police Chief Doug Rathbun announced Monday night.

The ban is only on main street in town, and also covers skateboards and rollerblades.

Anyone breaking the law will have their bike confiscated for one week for the first offense and 30 days the second time.

Sidewalk art show held at library



(L-R): Cory McGuire, Seth Morgan, Cole Morgan and Jessica McGuire participating in the sidewalk art show

A sidewalk art show was held at the Oregon Trail Library in Heppner on Friday, July 10, with 20 children participating. The artwork was judged by Heppner mayor Bob Jepsen.

Winners are as follows: age 10 and up, first place-Isaac Stillman, second place-Kelly Straley; four-

nine year olds, first place-Alanna Beason, second place-Sarah Johnson.

The Summer Reading Program will continue on Fridays at 1 p.m. until July 24. A book swap will be held this week. Children are encouraged to bring in their old books to trade and will be able to play bingo after the book swap.

Livestock growers to hold meeting

A meeting of the Morrow County Livestock Growers Board will be held Monday, July 20, at 7 p.m. at the conference room at the Gilliam Bisbee building in Heppner.

Glen Stonebrink, Oregon Cattlemen's Association executive vice president of membership and administration, will update the group on the recently held OCA quarterly meeting.

All Morrow County Livestock Growers members are invited to attend.

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