

County Planning Commissioners needed

Morrow County is looking for volunteers on the Morrow County Planning Commission. Planning Commissioners serve four-year terms. One appointment, representing Irrigon, is to fill a term ending December 31, 2020.

The other two positions are for vacated positions, and therefore are to fulfill those terms. One position, to represent Heppner, has a term ending December 31, 2018. The other position is at-large, and has a term ending December 31, 2019.

The planning commission generally meets once a month,

alternating meeting locations between Heppner and Boardman. Duties of the planning commission include approving land-use actions, maintaining the county's subdivision and zoning ordinance, and working with the county court to manage the county's land use comprehensive plan.

Parties who are interested in taking a more active part in land use planning in the county are encouraged to submit a letter of interest to the Morrow County Planning Department, PO Box 40, Irrigon OR 97844, by close of business Oct. 7, 2016.

Health district, emergency services plan disaster drill

Morrow County Health District and area emergency services will be conducting a disaster drill in Heppner on Tuesday, Oct. 4, from 6 to 8 p.m. This will include but will not be limited to hospital staff, emergency services, Life Flight and Heppner Fire Department.

Morrow County Health District personnel say they want community members to understand that the Oct. 4 event is just a drill, but add that they do take it very seriously as an important component for emergency

preparedness.

People in the area of Pioneer Memorial can expect to see and hear emergency vehicles, and could witness a great deal of traffic around the hospital and clinic. They ask that the public remains out of the area during that time unless there is an actual emergency.

Anyone who lives in the vicinity of the hospital and has questions about how the drill might affect them, please contact Diana Grant at 541-676-9133 ext. 2932.

CITY WATER ORDINANCE

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the renters and the city, not the landowner.

"The city enters into an agreement with the person who uses the services, not the property owner," he said. "This only adds undue burden on landowners."

Sheryll Bates, a Heppner resident who also owns a rental unit, said the practice is common in other cities including Gresham.

"Hermiston, Pendleton and La Grande do not have it," High responded. "I don't think Heppner needs it to fix a small problem that affects just three to four people."

City officials estimate that the city loses on average over \$1,000 per year on renter's unpaid water bills. City Manager Kim Cutsforth said the city has lost \$397 so far this year.

City councilmember Dale Bates said it should be the landowner's responsibility.

"It is the landlord's responsibility, that is part of being a landlord, you take it in the shorts once in a while," he said.

High testified he would like to see the council not pass the ordinance and send the issue back to the utility commission. "You have other options. Homeowners are taking a gamble as it is, and there has to be a better way," he told the council.

Also part of the same ordinance was a provision to give relief from water and sewer bills when a landlord is working on an apartment and it is not rentable. "A multi-family dwelling that is unrentable for a period in excess of 30 days because it is being remodeled or repaired may be granted rate relief," the ordinance reads.

High testified against this portion of the ordinance saying that it would do no good and would cost the city money.

"Rate relief seems like it will do no good," he told the council. "Thirty-day remodel where you are expecting to use no water? This is nearly impossible. He said he thought the city was passing an ordinance "to make people feel good but costing the city money."

After discussion the council passed the new ordinance by a unanimous vote.

In other business the council heard from a local citizen who said certain streets in town are deteriorating badly, and she wanted to know when the city was going to fix them.

Sharon Inskeep, who lives on Summit Drive in Heppner, says her street is so bad half of it is complete pot holes with drivers "bottoming out" on it. She also said Willow Street downtown and Water Street are in very bad shape and need to be fixed. "We have real problems with our streets," she told the council.

City officials and the council had little to offer saying there is no money to do any fixing, although Public Works boss Chad Doherty said he could fill in the potholes on Summit Drive and then blade it out, but that would only be temporary fix. He also suggested putting a sign farther down the hill warning people that Summit is not a through street, thus decreasing traffic that goes up that way thinking they can drive through.

The city just finished paving Chase Street and adjacent Bruce Kelly and Skyline Drive. That project, however, was funded through a cooperative agreement of the Cemetery District, Morrow County, Oregon Department of Transportation, Special City Allotment Grant, and an un-named foundation grant.

Bad sidewalks were also a topic of discussion at the meeting, with reports of a woman tripping on a raised section of sidewalk on Main St. The raised section was caused by tree roots growing under the sidewalk section, lifting it up and leaving a gap. Apparently this was not the first person to trip in the same place.

In her report to the council Cutsforth said a company named Terra Firma Foundations, which specializes in lifting and leveling sidewalks, was in Heppner and walked all of Main St. with city officials looking at problem areas. Cutsforth said the company would be sending the city an evaluation of the sidewalk problems and a solution and bid for repair. She said it was only in option stage at this time and no plans have been made to fix any sidewalks.

Under city ordinance each property owner is responsible for paying to fix the sidewalk in front of their home or business.

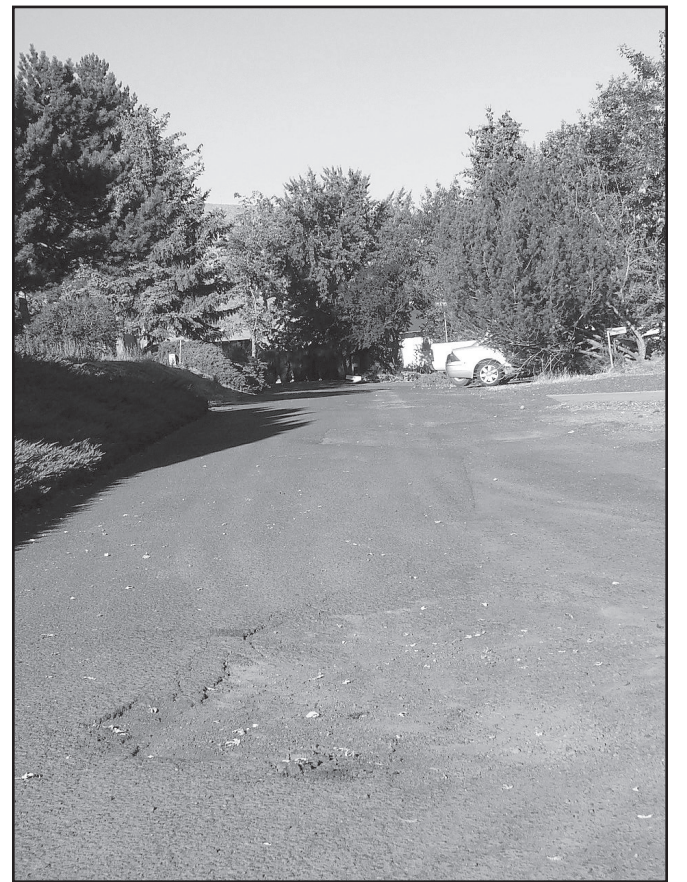
"We have quite a bit of problems on city sidewalks," Cutsforth told the council, including sidewalks located in front of city-owned property. On sidewalks located in front

of privately-owned property she said one plan would be for the city to either do the work and charge the landowners, which is what the city ordinance calls for, or find another way such as the city providing the manpower and the landowner buying the materials.

Doherty said fixing sidewalks is a tricky business, especially when tree roots are involved. He said

John and Kathy Marick to have 20 chickens on their property at Center Street in Heppner. The council was wary of giving a permit for that many chickens in one place, and sent the request back to the Maricks with instruction to get an okay from the neighbor before approval.

The council also voted in favor of transferring the liquor license from the cur-



Heppner City Council heard complaints about potholed and deteriorating streets such as this one at Summit Drive.

you can lift up a section of sidewalk and remove the roots, but "what happens to the trees after that I don't know," implying that the tree may or may not survive having a root cut out.

In other business at the meeting the council received a request from

rent Heppner Family Foods to the new owners, who have renamed the business Heppner Market Fresh. The license is for carry-out beer and wine. According to the application the new owners plan on keeping the market open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days per week.

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Kudos on keeping roads litter-free

To the editor:


Last Thursday I did a "Windshield Inspection" of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce ODOT Adopt a Highway segment. This was in anticipation of our neighbors from John Day being here for a high school football game. I observed and disposed of the one small item of litter that I found on the 1.7 miles of highway that the chamber does.

I am very pleased and proud of our community for doing a good job of keeping our highways and streets litter-free for ourselves and for our visitors.

Keep up the good work, Heppner!
John Edmundson, Heppner

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COUNTY COURT

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finished so that it would be both nice and appropriate when raised above the level of the existing bench," Blaine added.

In a related matter judge Terry Tallman asked that the courtroom be left open so people from the public can go in. "Lots of people come to our courtroom," Tallman said. "And they should be able to see the courtroom." He said it is always locked and pointed out that it is a public building and should be available for people to look inside when court is not in session. "You are right; it is a historic place," Blaine responded.

In other circuit court related changes, it was said that the current jury room at the courthouse will now become the circuit court judges' chambers, and the current chamber will eventually become the jury room. Blaine said the purpose of the change was to "address the discomfort jurors experience in the cramped deliberation room."

In other action at the Sept. 7 meeting the County Court:

-Approved a request to allow the public works director to approve permits for construction work in

county road right-of-ways.

-Heard from new OSU/Morrow County 4-H Youth Outreach Program Coordinator, Damion Turner, who said he

was looking forward to building up the youth outreach program, possibly by putting in new after-school programs.

-Signed an agreement with physician assistant Amanda Fabian, PA-C, to provide services for the Morrow County Health Dept. Public Health Director Sheree Smith was on hand to urge the county court to agree to the contract. The agreement allows Fabian to provide services to the county health department.

In other contracts the county agreed to award a janitorial contract for all county buildings to Heppner Janitorial LLC. A five-member county committee had evaluated applicants for the contract and rated Heppner Janitorial the best for the job. The company will be responsible for all county buildings county-wide.



Damion Turner



Multi-County Veterans Resource Fair & Vietnam Commemoration 50th Anniversary

Thursday, September 29, 2016 2 pm - 8 pm

Port of Morrow Conference Center 2 Marine Drive, Boardman

Come with your questions about your VA Benefits. Representatives will be on site to support you with information and application for services through local, State and Federal agencies.

Presentations by: Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Health Care & more! Veterans Town Hall at 6:30 pm. Spouses, families and loved ones of Veterans are encouraged to attend!

Flu shots available for veterans.

For transportation call 1-844-676-5667 RSVP 541-922-6420



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