

Pit bulls are legal - with special license

Proof of insurance required too

By David Sykes

It is legal to keep pit bulls in the city of Heppner, but owners must first obtain a special dangerous animals license and provide proof of \$100,000 liability insurance, it was announced at Monday's city council meeting.

Confusion about the legality of owning pit bull dogs surfaced last month when Heppner Mayor Cody High announced that pit bulls were not allowed inside the city limits. The Heppner Gazette-Times, which attends monthly council meetings, reported on his comments. Following publication of the article it was learned that under city ordinances with special restrictions residents can indeed own the dogs. At Monday's December meeting High said he "mis-spoke" about the legality of owning the dogs. "Last month I misspoke. We have a dangerous animal permit," he told the council. "You need to have a permit with insurance and there is a higher fee for the dangerous animal permit," he added. There are also other rules to go along with owning the animals.

First off, pit bulls are defined by the city as American Staffordshire terriers, Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Terrier, American Pit Bull Terrier and "mixtures containing those breeds." The ordinance also defines dangerous animals as "any animal, wild mammal, reptile or fowl which is not naturally tame or gentle" and could be a danger to the public if not kept secured.

Residents can own these animals but must follow special rules regular dog owners do not. They

must have a special higher cost Dangerous Animal Permit good for one year. Each year the city will renew the license after an animal control officer inspects where the dog is being housed. The officer will look to see if the animal is kept in a safe manner; is secure from the public; safeguards are in place to prevent "unauthorized access to the animal" by the public; the animal's health and wellbeing are maintained; the animal is not disturbing neighbors; adequate light, sanitation and ventilation for the animal; no offensive odors and that the animal is muzzled, leashed or in a cage when off the owner's property. Also, when on the owner's property the animal is to be either inside the house or in a secured pen. In addition to the annual inspections, the animal control officer can inspect the property if a neighbor complains. If the owner is in violation of any of the ordinance the license can be revoked or denied.

All dogs in the city are required to be licensed and tagged. The rates are \$7 per year for neutered animals and \$15 for non-neutered. Dangerous animal licenses are \$100 per year per animal and the owner must also give proof of \$100,000 insurance with renewal of the yearly license.

At Monday's meeting the council discussed possibly changing the dangerous animal permitting process. One councilmember strongly urged the city to specifically list the breeds of dogs the ordinance would cover. High asked who would be responsible for determining if a dog is dangerous? "The city staff doesn't want responsibility for checking

dogs for dangerous," he said. The council asked that a copy of the dangerous animal ordinance be emailed to them for study before any decisions are made. Councilmembers also reviewed an ordinance by the city of Irrigon for possible ideas. **RV park residents may not afford utility payments**

The council discussed a city ordinance that requires anyone living in an RV park for more than 30 days be considered a permanent resident and pay the city's full water and sewer charges. The issue was also discussed at a recent city utility committee meeting when Northwest RV Park owners said they may have to close the park if the higher fees are enforced. Owners are Alvin and Lina Liu. They told the committee residents of the park, many who are unemployed, may not be able to cover the higher fee and have nowhere to move to. They pointed out that there is a housing shortage in Heppner. The Lius asked for more time to survey the residents of the park to find out if they would pay higher fees or leave before the city takes any action.

The city does not want to see the RV park close, but says everyone must be treated the same. It was pointed out that the base rate is not just for water, it is for delivery and infrastructure, and the city's loan for past water improvements requires every resident to pay the fee. Mayor High said if the owners do decide to shut down the RV park, they should contact the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group to help find another

use for the property.

Necessary sewer improvements still a problem

The council spent some time talking to Civil Engineer Doug Ferguson, of Ferguson Engineering in Mt Vernon. He has been working in and around Heppner for the past 30 years and is looking into how to solve Heppner's "sewer problem."

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has told Heppner it must stop dumping its treated effluent from the sewer plant into Willow Creek. Alternatives are to upgrade the aging city plant, build a lagoon system or construct a new state of the art treatment plant. Each option has difficulties however, as the council was told.

If the current plant is upgraded and the ammonia level dropped (what is currently concerning the DEQ), it may be only short term, with the agency coming back at a later date and putting more restrictions on the city's effluent. A consensus has been established that the best option is for the city to "get out of the creek." A lagoon system would solve this, however it requires about 20 acres, which is hard to come by around Heppner. Farmers that own flat land near Heppner have said they do not want to sell, and pumping to a higher ground lagoon would be expensive and challenging. The old Kinzua Mill site has been looked at but it is in the flood plain so there are problems there. A brand-new treatment plant might be an option and it has been pointed out that John Day may have to build one at a cost of \$10 million, so cost



Owners say RV park in Heppner may have to close if city enforces full utility payments on residents there. -Photo by David Sykes

is an issue with that option.

Ferguson has a good working relationship with engineer Brett Moore of Anderson and Perry Engineering, and they seem to think the lagoon system is the best option. DEQ rules say construction plans for new treatment are due to their agency by January of 2021, with construction of the new system completed by Jan. 2023. The golf course uses the current effluent for irrigation, and there would probably be a way to keep that going if a lagoon system is established. If lagoons are built, additional effluent may also be available for irrigation by local farmers, if the water is not used on "direct consumption crops," Ferguson said.

City Attorney Bill Kuhn told Ferguson a lagoon system was looked at 30 years ago, and the same problem of no land available stymied the plans. Before leaving the meeting, Ferguson said he would talk to Kuhn about past efforts and see if a new project can get going. The city has \$10,000 budgeted for the sewer system and Ferguson said that should be enough to get the ball rolling. He said low interest loans from Business Oregon are also available for sewer projects.

As far as costs, while Ferguson did not estimate the cost of a lagoon system, he did say the city could "build a lot of lagoons for \$2 million." He also mentioned that he wasn't sure the new class A plant planned for John

Day would be built. "I will believe it when I see it," he told the council.

In other sewer business the council and Ferguson discussed the upcoming big \$2.6 million renovation projects planned for Gale, Center and Chase Streets. The council wants to make sure new sewer line is laid while the road is being replaced to avoid tearing up new pavement later. The city has the money from state grants to do the road work but needs to come up with \$100,000 to \$150,000 to replace sewer lines at the same time.

In other action the council said okay to Sheriann Martin who asked that the city allow for an RV to be parked on her property at 775 Shobe Street for a period of three months. The person living in the RV would be a caregiver she said. The RV would not be hooked to city services. The council approved.

The council also reviewed five properties for possible code violations of junk on the property. Two owners had cleaned up after being notified, and three will be ticketed.

In other business the council received an animal permit application for a turkey to be kept by Pat Walker on Sperry Street. Walker said the turkey's name was Thomas Roland Walker and noted that Thomas "is a very personable turkey and when my city nieces and nephews come this summer, they will have an opportunity to meet him and learn how to care for him," she said. The council approved.

A View from the Hill

By Doris Brosnan

November is a month viewed as one for thinking "thankful," and the Willow Creek Terrace Community had much to think about. They included their neighbors in their thoughts and demonstrated this by taking each neighbor a loaf of homemade bread on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. The thirteen loaves were tied with ribbons that held Thanksgiving cards expressing these neighbors' importance to the Terrace.

Residents on the hill continue to be thankful for the many gifts they receive throughout the year. The most recent gift to the kitchen was the meat from the Christian Church. The whole pig was a wonderful addition to the meats of a beef, pig and lamb received last month from a kind donor, so the Terrace is well stocked with meat, enough that they have rented space in a freezer at the grocery store.

The Thanksgiving-Day celebration featured a traditional turkey and all the trimmings dinner. Twenty-six diners, residents and guests, enjoyed the festive meal and conversations.

Since the Willow Creek

Terrace community views celebrations with enthusiasm, this month is one filled with opportunities.

Roice Fulleton's birthday celebration set the mood on Monday, Dec. 3. Roice was the eldest resident at the Terrace when he shared his 101st birthday lunch with neighbors and family. After that auspicious occasion, however, Roice suffered some health setbacks and passed away early on Thursday, the anniversary of his move-in day at the Terrace seven years ago. He will be missed, and the community on the hill extends condolences to Roice's family.

Last Wednesday, the youngest resident celebrated her 79th birthday. Joann Wiester recently moved into an apartment, just in time to celebrate with her family and new neighbors at her birthday lunch. Joann is a Brosnan who was raised on Little Butter Creek and retired in Heppner several years ago, after a career in Portland.

Dec. 4 was festive, filled with Christmas music while most residents and staff joined in their annual deck-the-halls activities. The Terrace is now picture

perfect for the season. As always, friends and family were invited to help trim the tree and hang the many decorations, caroling followed, and soup and breads were enjoyed by all.

Dec. 9 was recognized at the Terrace as Christmas Card Day and with that seasonal activity in mind, volunteers are invited to help residents in the coming days with the addressing of their cards. Readers are encouraged to call 541-676-0004 to volunteer.

Next Sunday, Dec. 16, will be National Caroling Day, and residents and staff will be pleased to welcome carolers who want to share yuletide carols. Calling 541-676-0004 can ensure a spot on the day's agenda.

The following day will feature another birthday celebration. Mary Ramey will become 92 years old on the 17th, so she will have her choice of birthday lunch menu to share with neighbors and family.

The residents will head for the kitchen on the 19th, ready to bake some cookies and decorate cookies that

will be served to guests beginning the next day. That is when Mrs. Lemmon's piano students will return to the Terrace for what has become an annual piano recital, always enjoyed and appreciated by the community.

Dec. 23 will mark the publishing of Clement Clarke Moore's poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas" in 1823. First printed as written by "Anonymous," the famous piece has become better known as "The Night Before Christmas," and a reading of the poem will be included in the Christmas Eve event. After everyone has settled down for "a long winter's nap," the Terrace Angels and Santa will see that each stocking is filled with a special gift and another gift is tucked under the tree for each resident.

Christmas morning will begin with a continental breakfast and the opening of gifts from under the tree. The festive atmosphere will continue with music, and everyone will gather for the luncheon feast that will feature the prime rib roast once

again donated by Charlie and Marcia Anderson. Included in this and other menus this season will be the fruitcakes made at the Terrace. This long-standing staple has its special day of recognition, Fruitcake Day on the 27th.

Volunteers are invited to join the community on the hill for cards on the 28th. That will be Card-Playing Day, when cribbage, Uno, Crazy 8's, Skip-Bo and/or pinocle could ensure that every player has a good time. By phoning 541-676-0004, individuals can get more information and claim a spot at a table.

The sun room will be alive with football fans

on the 29th, which is when NCAA championship playoffs will be airing. When the championship game airs on Jan. 7, fans will surely return for more fun at the TV.

New Year's Eve will end on the hill with a late-night activity yet to be selected, but everyone will be encouraged to get enough sleep to feel up to the New Year's Day crab feed for which Colin and Erin Anderson will again guarantee enough crab meat for everyone's appetite. The residents view this kindness as a great way to usher in the new year after viewing December as one of the year's finest months.

VALBY LUTHERAN CHURCH
VALBY ROAD
IONE OREGON. 97843
CHURCH SERVICES 1ST & 3RD SUNDAYS
 AVAILABLE FOR:
WEDDINGS ♦ FUNERALS
FAMILY EVENTS

OLD COUNTRY CHURCH ALL ARE WELCOME

Holiday
FOOD DRIVE
 Wheatland Insurance
 annual Canned Food Drive
NOW THRU
DECEMBER 18TH
 at Heppner & Ione
Wheatland offices.

ALL DONATIONS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER TO HELP LOCAL FAMILIES IN NEED.

The **GREATEST GIFT** you can give
 someone is your **TIME & ATTENTION**
Happy Holidays
Morrow County Veterans Services
541-922-6420

DEADLINE:
MONDAYS
AT 5PM