



EO File Photo

The Stanfield City Council has talked about ways to preserve the historic water tower in the center of town.

Stanfield survey shows opposition to dispensaries

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Stanfield residents support keeping their landmark water tower but are still against letting marijuana dispensaries into town, according to a survey conducted by the city.

The wide-ranging survey asked for citizens' opinions on everything from automatic payments for utilities to Main Street upgrades. It got responses from 266 residents, representing about 12 percent of Stanfield's population.

City Manager Blair Larsen said the impetus for the survey was the old water tower that stands tall over the city. The tower was built in 1920, but taken out of service in the early 2000s due to leaks. At about one-tenth of the capacity of each of the city's other water storage tanks, it wasn't worth the cost to put it back in commission, Larsen said.

"The only function it serves now is as a landmark," he said.

The tower's condition is deteriorating, and last year

Larsen asked the city council if he should put money into the 2018-19 budget for refurbishing it or tearing it down. He said an estimate from a company that could repaint and repair the tower put the costs at roughly \$180,000. Due to lead paint in the tower, demolition would cost only slightly less, but would eliminate future maintenance costs.

The council was divided on what should be done, so Larsen put the money in reserve for a year and posed the question to residents. Sixty-seven percent of respondents said they preferred to use city funds to refurbish the landmark. He said he will take that information back to the council during budgeting discussions for the next fiscal year.

Larsen also added a question about whether the city should maintain its ban on marijuana dispensaries.

"We had a couple of business folks come to the city and say, 'We know you've got a ban, but we're really interested in bringing a dispensary into the city,'" he said.

Larsen said under current state law, in order to lift their ban the city would have to put the question to the voters during a November election in an even-numbered year — 2020 at the earliest. And given the fact that 57 percent of residents surveyed supported keeping the ban, Larsen said for now the city has no plans to place the question on the ballot.

Another question asked residents about changes to Main Street to slow out-of-town traffic as it speeds through Stanfield on Highway 395. While Larsen said there wasn't an immediate funding source available, the Oregon Department of Transportation is planning a repaving project along that corridor and there could possibly be some money available for related work.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents supported having the same number of travel lanes with bumped-out curbs and landscaping to make the road feel narrower. Only 20 percent supported reducing the number of travel lanes, while the

rest supported no changes or tactics such as increased enforcement.

The final question of the survey was an open-ended chance for citizens to express other thoughts. Nine percent of responses included references to the odor coming from the 3D IdaPro Solutions dehydration plant, which has drawn complaints for more than a year. Overall, however, Larsen said he was pleased to see that question provide mostly constructive suggestions for the city instead of a "rant-fest."

Some suggestions were unaffordable or out of the city's control. But Larsen said the answers are something city staff and city councilors are taking seriously as they look to Stanfield's future, and his door is always open for further discussion.

"We're not all-powerful, we have constraints, and those constraints are there for a reason," he said. "But we're not opposed to changing things if they were put in place based on someone's opinion."



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Todd Perkins is one of the owners of Five Star Car Wash, which just opened on Southwest 11th Street and Highland Avenue.

Five Star Car Wash opens

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

The owners of a Hermiston car wash have started a second one on the opposite side of town. Five Star Car Wash is now open, and is located at the corner of Southwest 11th Street and West Highland Avenue, near a cluster of new businesses.

Todd Perkins, who owns the business with Hermiston native Russ Greene, said they had been looking to expand for a few months. They run the Five Star Auto Wash, near Hermiston's Wal-Mart on the northeast side of town.

"This side of town doesn't have much," he said.

The car wash officially opened on Jan. 16, and Perkins said as of now, they are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hours will expand as the days get longer.

Perkins said the car wash has some new amenities that aren't available at their other location. Customers using the self-wash station now have access to dryers and "triple-shine" conditioner, which gives the car a colorful shine.

The tunnel car wash also has some new LED lights that create a show as cars get washed.

"It looks like a curtain of lava," Perkins said.

Perkins said he and Greene previously owned Five Star Auto Sales, which they recently sold to Toyota.

"We always needed to wash our cars, and we would always see the land (by Wal-Mart)," he said. "The location was so good, we decided to start washing them."

The new business is located at 1180 West Highland Ave.

Heppner council fires city manager

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Six of Heppner's seven city councilors voted on Friday, Jan. 11 to fire the city manager, citing issues with budget management.

Eddie Ball's firing was effective immediately, and the mayor has appointed Kim Cutsforth, Ball's predecessor, as the interim city manager while the council conducts a nationwide search for a new manager.

The city's contract with Ball states that they were

required to give her 30 days' notice, but since they let her go immediately, they paid her for 30 days' worth of service upon termination.

The *Hermiston Herald* attempted to contact Ball, but was not able to reach her for comment.

Council president Corey Sweeney said they hope the new manager will be more of a project manager.

He said the council had a list of concerns with Ball, including that budget issues were slow to be addressed, if at all.

Good Shepherd welcomes new speech therapy manager

By HERMISTON HERALD

Good Shepherd Health Care System's speech-language pathology department has a new manager.

Heidii Roberts, speech-language pathologist, will head up the department. She comes from the Portland metro area, where she has run her own practice for the past 10 years.

According to a news

release from Good Shepherd, Roberts has a particular passion for working with children with autism.



Roberts

"There is nothing more rewarding for me than getting silly and teaching them about social skills and how to be flexible," she said in a statement.

"I also care for individuals with tongue thrust and lisping articulation, and I plan

to contribute my experience with Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy (OMT)."

OMT is used to treat individuals with orofacial myofunctional disorders, which interfere with the development of bones and muscles around the face and mouth, in some cases causing problems with speech.

Roberts and her husband have two daughters, who also work in the medical field. Roberts said she applied for the Hermis-

ton position because she was ready for a change of scenery, and she enjoys the friendliness of Eastern Oregon.

Speech-Language Therapy, at 600 N.W. 11th St., Suite E-25, is accepting referrals. For more information call 541-667-3635.

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