

# Gearhart coalition responds to short-term rental initiative

Open letter to short-term rental owners: On Wednesday evening, the Gearhart City Council unanimously passed an ordinance regulating vacation rental dwellings. This ordinance was a result of months of work by the Planning Commission, several public hearings that were so large they were held in the firehouse and months of work by the City Council with input from the city manager, city planner and city attorney. The ordinance as adopted is fair to both residents who do not rent their homes, and non-residents, who are the majority of short-term landlords.

Now the short-term landlords say they have drafted an initiative that they claim they are going to put on the ballot for a vote by Gearhart voters. They claim the initiative is a fair compromise. A fair comparison of the initiative to the ordinance adopted by the City Council says otherwise.

## Lodging taxes

First, the ordinance adopted by the City Council makes it a condition of obtaining a permit to rent your home that you have paid your lodging taxes to the city for the previous year. The proposed short-term rental owner's ini-

## GUEST COLUMN

FRIENDS OF GEARHART

tiative does not make that a condition. We are not sure why that would be a problem for those proposing the initiative, because we are sure they all have paid their lodging taxes that are due.

Second, the ordinance adopted by the City Council limits occupancy to two people per bedroom. Children under 2 years old are exempt. Septic systems for a home are designed to accommodate two people per bedroom.

The proposed STR owner's initiative limits occupancy to two people per bedroom, plus two more in the house, with a maximum limit of 18 people, plus exempts people under 18 years old. Therefore, a three-bedroom home could accommodate eight adults and eight children. Not a good prospect for the septic system.

Third, the ordinance adopted by the City Council requires that there be one parking space within the property boundary line for each bedroom. This new STR-owner initiative has no park-

ing requirements. The proposers of the initiative make the argument that those homeowners who do not rent can park as many cars as they want on their property. But how often do homeowners who do not rent have eight adults and eight children occupying their home seven days a week for three months during any given summer?

Fourth, the ordinance adopted by the City Council requires a septic tank inspection approved by the Clatsop County Health Department. The ordinance further does not allow a rental where there are cesspools. The proposed initiative requires no such inspection.

## Making contact

Fifth, the ordinance by the City Council requires that the homeowner who is renting his home provide a name and telephone number and a response person. The ordinance further requires that the person be available to respond physically within 30 minutes, and in fact physically respond within 30 minutes if requested. The new STR owner-proposed initiative only requires that a phone number be provided. That phone number may be to a person in

**"In the old days we would say 'See you in court,' but today we say, 'We will see you at the ballot box.'"**

Friends of Gearhart

Portland, Seattle or California.

Sixth, the initiative by the City Council does not allow a permit to be transferred if the property is sold. The proposed initiative does not have that restriction.

Seventh, the ordinance adopted by the City Council has general restrictions on the appearance of the property to be rented. The STR-owner initiative has no such restrictions.

Eighth, the ordinance adopted by the City Council requires a safety and fire inspection. The proposed initiative has no such requirement.

Ninth, the initiative adopted by the City Council has penalties for violations of the ordinance. If a homeowner who rents his home is in violation of the ordinance, his permit may be revoked. The proposed STR-owner initiative has no penalties for violation whatsoever.

er. That may be because the ordinance has no restrictions that may be violated.

And then there is the poison pill that has been written into the initiative. The new STR-owner initiative provides that if it is adopted, it may be only amended in the future by the voters, not by the City Council.

There is one thing that we agree with those who are proposing the initiative: That the voters should have a say in this matter. Therefore, if short-term rental owners go forward with their initiative, we will be providing a counter initiative that will be placed before the same voters.

The counter initiative will be very simple. It will state as follows: "A rental of less than 30 days is a non-permitted use in R-1 and R-2 zoned neighborhoods. Any violation of this ordinance shall result in a penalty of \$500 per day." In the old days we would say "See you in court," but today we say, "We will see you at the ballot box."

**Jeanne Mark  
Wilson Mark  
Penny Sabol  
Rick Sabol**  
On behalf of the  
Friends of Gearhart

## LETTERS

### Letters from Page 4A

essential objective of persuading voters to approve this very much needed bond measure.

**Tim Crawford  
Arch Cape**

### Immigration truth

It is frustrating to read letters to the editor that either demonstrate a complete lack of factual knowledge on the topic being discussed, or are intentionally spreading disinformation and lies. A case in point is Jim Elvin's letter, "Lax laws" (The Daily Astorian, Aug. 19). It opens with, "Obama's idea of ignoring our immigration laws and encouraging those who break them..." What?

Here is a reality check for Mr. Elvin: The Obama administration has deported more people than any previous administration, ever. It is true that in 2015 the number of deportations dropped significantly. However, they still outpaced all but one year of the Bush administration, where it was essentially a tie, and remain on track to do the same again in 2016.

The reduced deportations were because of huge pressure from both sides of the aisle. The reasons were two-fold. Some business leaders complained to their representatives because they were finding it tough to staff their businesses, thanks to the

previous six years of aggressive enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

But what really prompted the blowback was when ICE began aggressively enforcing existing employment laws and investigating, fining and incarcerating business people who knowingly hire illegals. That, apparently, crossed the line. Why do so many businesses hire illegals? The answer is simple (if not particularly moral): They can pay them far less, and they don't have to worry about worker protections or workplace safety and health regulations.

With aggressive enforcement of the already existing laws regarding hiring illegals, two things will happen. First, the illegal immigration problem will significantly diminish. If there aren't any jobs, the vast majority of illegals will not come here. Second, wages will rise, workers will be treated better and job sites will be safer because legal residents have recourse to the law, while an illegal will remain silent and suffer what they must out of fear of deportation.

Plenty of businesses thrive without hiring illegals. But they complain it is hard to compete against those who do. So they blame the illegal immigrants, who are not the problem. The overwhelming majority of them are just simple hard-working

people trying to make a better life for themselves and their families. In reality, the problem is the scofflaw business owners who knowingly hire illegals to cut their costs.

The right wing noise machine has grown accustomed to having its fearful following accept any lie it tells, so the lies keep getting bigger, and farther from the truth. But when someone from 100 miles away tries to spread these lies and disinformation in my neighborhood, I'm going to speak up.

**Bill Graffius  
Gearhart**

### A good local election

It is shaping up to be a good local election with two important local races. First is the election for Ward 3 Seaside City Council between two longtime residents of the city: Tom Horning and Don Johnson. Both have a long history of providing service to Seaside. Johnson has been on the council for 16 years and wants to make it 20. Horning is well-known both inside and outside of Seaside as a reputable individual who has finally run out of patience with the city's lack of progress in preparing for a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami. Seaside's website says the city's tsunami evacuation map (thousands are spread around town) "directs

evacuees over bridges that have been seismically retrofitted." As Horning pointed out, the city has not done these bridge retrofits. We could be politically correct and say that this was just an error by someone, but it was probably a big fib.

The second major election issue is a recycled Seaside school bond vote. The total bond amount is now \$100 million rather than \$128 million because the district decided it is feasible to modify Seaside Heights Elementary to survive a Cascadia event. Gearhart Elementary is old and totally unsafe and must be closed. The district has determined that it is feasible for Gearhart students to be relocated to Seaside Heights by completing a small expansion. The State of Oregon has pledged \$4 million if the district matches the \$4 million. This is a plan that everyone agrees with and it can be funded. It ensures elementary students a good safe learning environment.

Broadway Middle School is located adjacent to Broadway Park and the facilities of the Sunset Recreation District. This school is capable of being retrofitted to survive a Cascadia earthquake except for the gymnasium, which must be replaced. Students at this location could easily reach higher ground for tsunami evacuation

if the city would seismically upgrade the east Broadway Bridge over Neawanna Creek. The city should use money for this retrofit rather than their plan to replace the Avenue U Bridge, which has absolutely no value in the event of tsunami evacuation. With a new gym and science laboratories added, this site together with refurbished existing school buildings and existing athletic fields would provide a needed addition to Broadway Park. Siting the relocated high school on Highway 101/Roosevelt Drive would also eliminate future traffic safety problems on Spruce and Wahanna streets that will be caused by following the district's plan. Total cost for the conversion of the Broadway Middle School to a relocated Seaside High School should be \$10 million.

A new middle school should be built adjacent to Seaside Heights Elementary School. A new middle school sized to meet current school enrollment should be \$20 million dollars since there is no land cost.

The existing Seaside High School must be closed and the site converted to its highest and best use, which is housing. The portion of the old high school site adjacent to Highway 101/Roosevelt Drive should be used for affordable housing. The portion of the old high school site adjacent to Holladay Drive is ocean view property and would support higher priced housing. By elevating the housing over its parking, the residences could be designed to meet tsunami safety criteria. Money from the sale of the old high school site would support replacing and upgrading of school furnishings.

I believe Horning is correct when he states that funding priority should be given to seismically retrofitting Seaside bridges for tsunami evacuation. In my opinion, a more affordable school-funding package should be developed with continued local pressure to obtain matching funds from federal and state governments.

**John Dunzer  
Seaside**

# Fire and Rescue fundraiser is an annual tradition

### Firefighters from Page 1A

fundraiser at the organization's facility Sept. 10. The event includes community outreach and relationship building, as well as fundraising for tools and equipment for the Seaside fire station, apparatus and the training facility.

Holding an annual community fundraiser to support the agency is a longstanding tradition of the Seaside Fire & Rescue Association, a non-profit organization comprised of volunteers that oversees social facets for the department, according to Dugan. The event has taken various forms over the years, but it was turned into an afternoon barbecue four years ago to make it more family friendly and inclusive.

During the event, volunteers grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, sold T-shirts and oversaw several activities for the children in attendance, many of whom wore bright red plastic junior firefighter caps. The fire station was opened, inviting guests to tour the inside. Guests even got to see the firefighters in action, as they left to respond to a few calls throughout the course of the afternoon.

Fire trucks, rescue vehicles and equipment were set up in the parking lot between the station and City Hall to help community members learn more about what the agency does and give them an idea of how their donation will be used, Dugan said.

Seaside Fire and Rescue is included in the city budget and receives some funding from that source. The association's



Seaside Fire & Rescue volunteers man the raffle and T-shirt booth at the organization's annual fundraiser, which included a barbecue, games and an inflatable bounce house. KATHERINE LACAZE

fundraiser is used "to enhance it," and help the agency stay current with life-saving skills, training and equipment to keep the community safe, Dugan said.

By providing quality training and equipment, the department can entice and retain its most valuable asset: the volunteers. Of the roughly 35 members on the squad, there are three paid full-time staff members and one part-time employee. The rest of the members donate their time and service, which is imperative for the department to answer the quantity of calls it receives.

"A very valuable tool is to keep the volunteers coming back," Dugan said.

Fire Chief Joey Daniels estimated the annual number of calls the department responds to has doubled during the past

15 years. For example, the department responded to about 517 total calls in 2001 compared to 1,155 in 2015.

The department has to be

prepared to serve not only Seaside's approximately 6,500 permanent residents, but the thousands of tourists who come to town each year.

**ROBERT CAIN LD,**  
45 Years of Experience

Cain  
Denture  
Centers

**TWO LOCATIONS  
SEASIDE & HILLSBORO**

740 Ave H • Ste 2 • Seaside  
232 NE Lincoln • Ste B • Hillsboro

**FREE CONSULTATION**

- Dentures for all ages, New, Partials and Custom Dentures
- Dentures for implants
- Relines & Repairs
- Denture repairs done same day!
- Personal service and attention to detail

**Open Wednesday and Friday • 9-4:30 • 503-738-7710**

102.3 fm

# KCRX

the Classic Rock Station

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

FLOORING

**Randall Lee's 0% FINANCING AVAILABLE**

## Flooring America

Window Treatments, Fabric, Designer Wallpaper, Visit Our Counter Tops, All Flooring and Miele Vacuums *Outlet!*

2311 N. Roosevelt Dr., Seaside, OR 97138 • 503-738-5729  
rfflooring@yahoo.com • www.RandallLeesFlooring.com

**Randall Lee's Flooring Outlet • 3579 Hwy 101 Gearhart • 503-738-6756**  
Warehouse pricing • Open to the Public • Hundreds of instock rolls & remnants • In House Binding

LANDSCAPING

Laurelwood Compost • Mulch • Planting MacMix Soil Amendments

**YARD DEBRIS DROP-OFF**  
(no Scotch Broom)

**503-717-1454**

34154 HIGHWAY 26  
SEASIDE, OR

## Laurelwood Farm

CONSTRUCTION

**BOB McEWAN CONSTRUCTION, INC.**

EXCAVATION • UNDERGROUND UTILITIES  
ROAD WORK • FILL MATERIAL  
SITE PREPARATION • ROCK

OWNED AND OPERATED BY MIKE AND CELINE McEWAN

**503-738-3569**

34154 Hwy 26, Seaside, OR  
P.O. Box 2845, Gearhart, OR

SERVING THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST SINCE 1956 • CC48302

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY