

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the Upper Nehalem River valley. Published monthly on the last Thursday of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 1206 State Avenue, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk and Noni Andersen, (503) 429-9410.

Opinion

Procedural change is urgently needed

Once again people trying to start a business in Vernonia have been put through unnecessary travail because of inadequate or incorrect explanations, and because of a poorly written ordinance.

Linda Davies applied for a business license to open Buckskiner's Trading Post and was told at city hall that nothing else was needed. Fortunately, she found out before too much time had gone by that she also needed a variance from the offstreet parking ordinance.

The application for variance has been made and it should be approved without difficulty. But two problems remain:

One is that she should have been told of the requirement in the first place. People asking for directions or information from city hall expect correct directions or information; it should be automatic.

The second problem is the ordinance itself. While it was intended to avert additional parking problems in the business area, it has instead become an automatic \$25 fee program for the city because all new businesses in the downtown area must apply for the variance.

Last October the planning commission committed itself to revising the forms used for business license and building permit applications. To date, one recommendation for change has gone to the council.

The planners have also talked about reviewing the offstreet parking ordinance to see if it could somehow be streamlined in order to prevent unnecessary delays to businesses that would receive the variance almost automatically. That's a little tougher, but needs the attention.

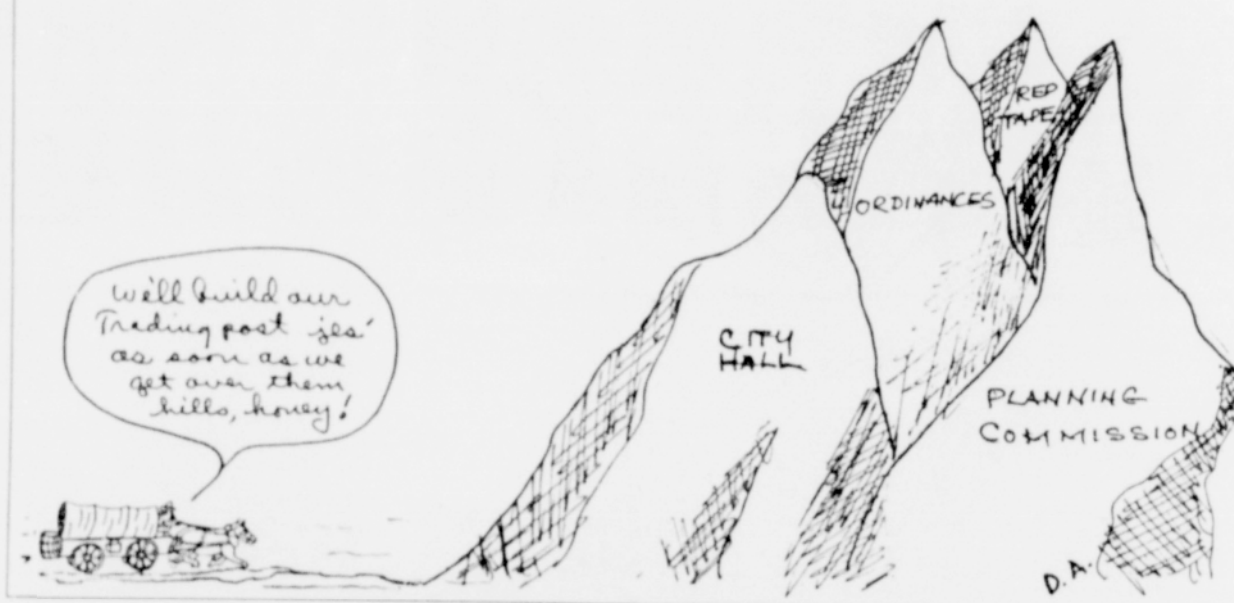
The planning commission has been working on some problems and we have applauded their efforts, but it's time the revised forms were presented to the council without further delay.

Odd, but effective

It may sound strange to "adopt a piece of the lake," but that's what's happening in Vernonia, and that strange behavior will benefit everyone who enjoys the lake whether that enjoyment comes from fishing in it, walking around it, or just looking at it.

Though anyone can adopt a piece of the lake, the adoption requires accepting responsibility to control blackberries and other undesirable growth, pick up litter, and generally make your adopted space a pleasant spot for people of all ages.

The Isaac Walton League deserves thanks for starting the action, and all those who've accepted the challenge also deserve thanks. When Vernonia Lake is divided into 50' - 200' sections it takes a lot of adoptive parents to go all the way around.



Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

My wife, Sharon, and I lived in Vernonia from 1976 until October of 1986. We have family and friends there, and have fond feelings for the city. We were both Police officers in Vernonia, and I served as Chief of Police, also.

After reading the February 26th issue of The INDEPENDENT I decided that it was time to speak out about the Police car matter.

First, I would like to say that the people of Vernonia are finally getting what they deserve, a city council that is working for the good of the city. It looks like the "Good ol' Boy" system is finally gone. At least there is a lot less fertilizer left on the City Hall floor after council meetings.

Second, I would like to call attention to a statement quoting former Councilman Joe Batty: "Before Phil took over," Batty said, "our vehicle costs and maintenance were pathetic. Nobody made any money on it, and it's been good for the city."

A check of the records will show this statement is not true, and is very misleading.

Gordon McLaughlin, Chief before me, and I both purchased used Oregon State Police cars for the city. We usually had two police cars, sometimes three, during these years. The last new car purchased, when McLaughlin was Chief, was a 1981 Chevrolet Malibu family car.

That car was less than two years old when I was appointed Chief, and the city had over \$8,000 invested in it, yet Mr. Batty tried to talk the city council into donating it to the high school for drivers

training. He argued that it was perfect for drivers training and that the Police Dept. didn't need it. Thankfully, other council members didn't allow this, and the city regained part of its investment when the car was sold.

Also, the cost of maintenance on the cars purchased from the State Police was very low because most of the repairs and maintenance were done by the regular and reserve officers and myself, at very little cost to the city. We usually worked in the city shop, but one car was overhauled and completely painted in a shop at Steve Poetter's home. Poetter, Larry Johnson, Gene Baska, Steve Weller and I donated our time and a lot of the parts that went into that car. The total cost to the city was less than \$250, and the car served the city for about three years.

Through the years, police and reserve officers have invested their time, efforts, money and materials in the repair and maintenance of patrol cars, and construction and remodeling of police facilities. The city has a debt of gratitude to these people that should not be overlooked or covered up by the "Good ol' Boys."

If only we had had the foresight to bag some of that fertilizer in the past, we could have sold it and bought each officer a new police car, and probably had enough to help build a new City Hall!

It's now time to put more effort into the city's future. Vernonia was dragged into the twentieth century, kicking and screaming, but it finally got there and will do fine with the right people at the helm.

It's a fine little city filled with good and caring people who we miss very much. Keep up the good work.

H. "Bud" Ashcraft
Astoria

To the Editor:

Pack 860 Cub Scouts of Vernonia would like to extend a hearty thank you to the citizens of Vernonia for their wonderful support of our recent can/bottle drive on Saturday, March 14th. Thank you, too, to Vernonia Market Place for taking care of all our cans that were turned in. The enthusiasm and donations were great! Several families even donated cash when they had no cans to donate! This kind of support makes "small town" atmosphere fun and exciting!

We were able to collect \$235 during our three hour effort—This money will go towards purchasing the awards needed at our monthly Pack Meetings for the boys that earn them. Again THANK YOU!!

Gary Homan
Committee Chairman
Vernonia

To the Editor:

I would like to express appreciation to everyone for their support of our carnival. It was terrific! The response and the behavior of those attending was super!

The Vernonia High School senior class made a net profit of \$950 toward their Disneyland trip!!

Thank you, so much.

Nancy Dailey, Advisor

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