

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Citizens responded, 47J board must do their job

Something remarkable happened this month when the Vernonia School District asked for applicants for two vacant school board positions. Not only were there applicants, there were nine citizens who expressed both the willingness and desire to accept responsibility for these unpaid positions.

Before the interviews started, one applicant withdrew because of job changes and another missed the interview because she is an emergency medical technician and was on an ambulance call. That still left a pool of seven applicants but, at that point, the 47J board looked like they were trying to act out the meaning of the word "dysfunctional."

Following the interview process, the board used a numerical system to rank the applicants. One person easily came out on top, with two others close behind. None of that mattered once they actually had to vote.

Five board members were at the meeting and at least four of them must agree in order to take any action. The first ballot, for Leslie O'Leary, was 2 yes, 2 no, one abstain. The second ballot, for Jim Krahn, was 2 yes, 3 no. The third ballot, for Schann Nelson, was 3 yes, 2 no. The fourth ballot, for O'Leary, was 3 yes, 2 no. The fifth ballot, for O'Leary, was 3 yes, 2 no.

At this point, there was a motion to table the appointment until the October meeting; 3 yes, 2 no.

Sixth ballot, for Krahn, 2 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain.

Finally, they approved a second effort to postpone the appointment until October.

It is now abundantly clear that two more directors are desperately needed. What isn't clear, is whether the board can reach agreement.

How about acting out the meaning of the word "compromise?"

City now has vacancy on the Planning Commission

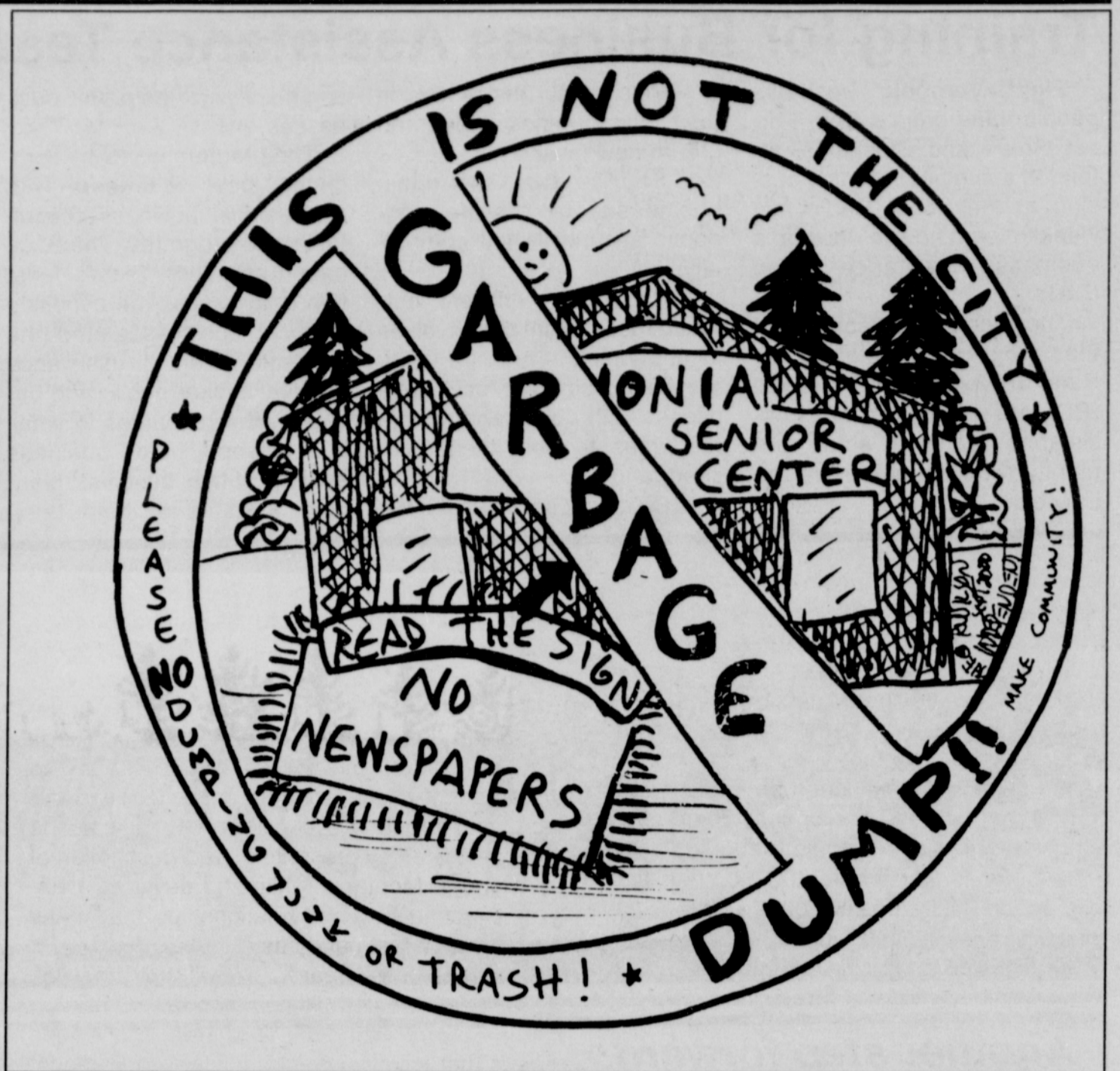
Another important volunteer position is open, this time in city government. Volunteer applicants are needed for a position on the Vernonia Planning Commission.

The planning commission is an advisory board to the City Council and, in that capacity, often sees the results of ordinance compliance or non-compliance before the council is aware of a particular situation. Applications for variances and non-conforming uses go to the planning commission. As the name implies, there is a lot of planning involved, also.

For anyone with concerns about the direction of growth in the community, there is no better position to learn the ins and outs of what can and can't be done.

Interested citizens may send a statement of interest with a brief description of their qualifications. Applications must be received in City Hall no later than Oct. 13, 2000. For more information, call city Planner Julie Coontz at 429-5291.

Oct. 17 is the last day to register for the Nov. 7 General Election.



Measures coming up on the ballot in the November 7, 2000 General Election

By Noni Andersen

Because of the number of ballot measures facing voters in the general election, *The INDEPENDENT* will start reviewing them now.

MEASURE 83, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - Would increase by about \$50 million per biennium the amount for veterans home and farm loans by changing language for eligibility. Primarily, the change eliminates language that no longer applies, such as requiring that active duty include service between Sept. 15, 1940 and Dec. 31, 1976. The additional funds would come from the issuance of bonds.

We recommend a YES vote on Measure 83.

MEASURE 84, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - Would continue the requirement that state government pay local governments for costs of new state-mandated operations. In truth, there are huge costs to local government that are the result of federal and state mandates, and which are paid by local government (that is local taxpayers). Insofar as this is of some help to local governments, it should be retained.

Recommend a YES vote on Measure 84.

MEASURE 85, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - changes population and minimum area requirements for formation of new counties, reducing the geographic area but increasing the minimum population. It is unlikely that it could apply to Western Washington County, and it doesn't apply to any part of Columbia or Clatsop County.

Statewide measure, but it applies only to urban areas.

Measure 85, no recommendation.

MEASURE 86, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - Would place the "kicker" law for refunding general fund revenues to taxpayers, which is now a statute, into the constitution; no other changes. Oregon's poor Constitution is going to develop fallen arches if the trend continues to add everything to it that can be adequately covered by statute. This amendment is not needed.

We recommend a NO vote on Measure 86.

MEASURE 87, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - Would allow zoning of sexually oriented businesses without having to show threatened or actual harm to the neighborhood. We don't think sexually oriented businesses should be allowed near schools or in residential districts; aside from that, where should they be allowed? The business isn't illegal so what is the intent of this measure and how would it work? Where would the sexually oriented business zone be established? What are the criteria?

Without specifics, we recommend a NO vote on Measure 87.

MEASURE 88 - Will review this at a later date in conjunction with MEASURE 91.

MEASURE 89 - Would dedicate earnings from tobacco settlement proceeds to specified health, housing and transportation needs, including el-

derly and disabled transportation. As good as this sounds, we think it is the wrong way to use the funds. The settlement is for measurable public health costs resulting from tobacco use; it should be used for the Oregon Health Plan and tobacco prevention programs, nothing else, or it will end up being spread all over the map of social services.

Recommend a NO vote on Measure 89.

MEASURE 92 and MEASURE 98, are two faces of the same coin. They both are designed to weaken the collective strength of public employee unions.

MEASURE 92, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - Would prohibit payroll deductions for "political purposes" without specific written authorization by each individual employee. For the purpose of this measure, deductions would be used for political purposes if any portion is spent directly or indirectly on contributions, lobbying, ballot measures or initiatives. In other words, if a letter went to a campaign committee or political party and the stamp was paid for with union funds, that would be a violation.

Not only is this ridiculous, if it passes it's a good candidate to fail judicial review, which would only cost us (the taxpayers) to defend it. Unions cannot require political contributions and the U.S. Supreme Court has made some pretty strong rulings regarding the role of payroll contributions and free speech.

MEASURE 98 WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT ISSUE, OCTOBER 4TH.