

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

More on Committees

Committees were the topic of this column in the March 15, 2007, issue of The INDEPENDENT. The basics were covered then, but a second look is needed for some situations.

The City of Vernonia uses several *ad hoc* committees that they describe as created "from need" and not by ordinance. This makes a lot of sense when there is a specific project that needs community input. A good example is the Public Works Committee, which was formed at the request of community members who wanted to be better informed about the very expensive wastewater improvement project and also be able to make recommendations when they looked at the project differently from the consulting engineers.

One problem with *ad hoc* committees is that they tend to become permanent, but a greater problem is that they operate without rules and regulations. The responsibilities of committees formed by ordinance are described in the ordinance and require official action when changes are needed.

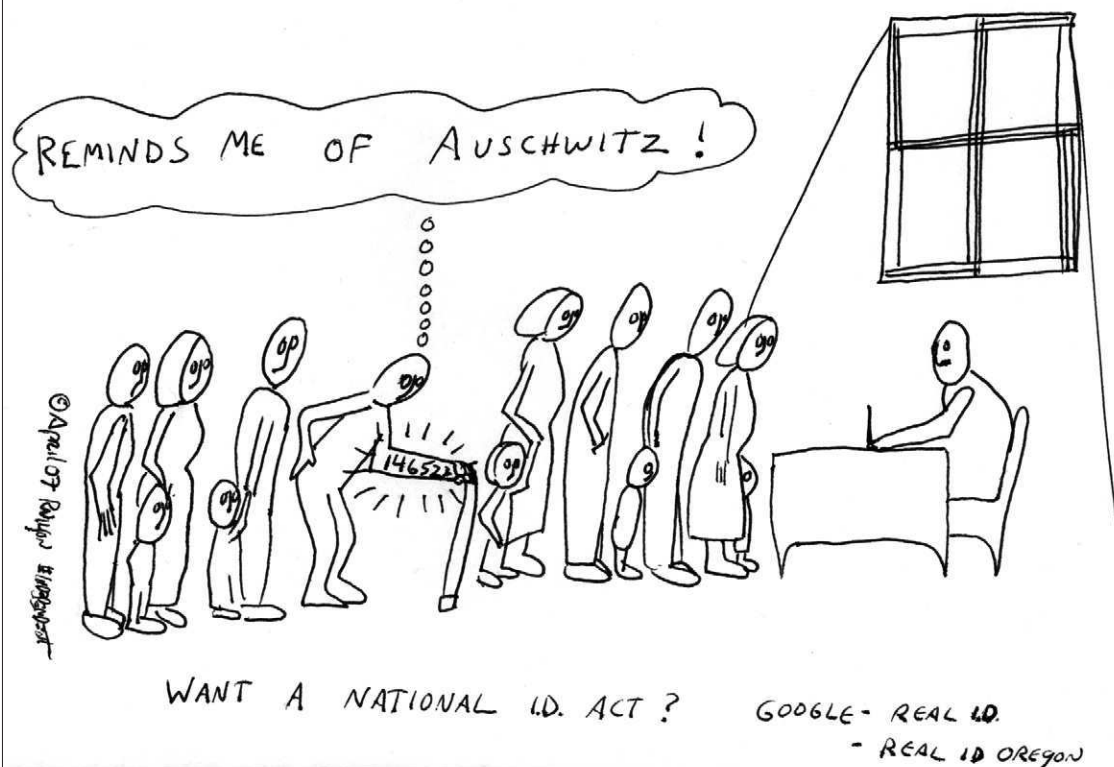
The Learning Center has had two *ad hoc* committees—the first appointed by then Mayor Cindy Ball. The second committee was appointed by Mayor Sally Harrison, who may have assumed the prior committee had been disbanded, as she didn't contact the former members before deciding who she wanted on the new committee.

At this time, according to the city website, the committee is assisting the City Council and staff to make decisions regarding building, staffing, funding, and programming the Vernonia Community Learning Center. Two members of the committee are Mayor Harrison and Councilor Steve Whiteman, who chairs the committee.

So, with no written instructions, no written requirements, and no formal structure, this committee – which has no specific number of members but includes the mayor and a councilor – is expected to assist in decisions about "building, staffing, funding, and programming" a community endeavor that got off to such a bad start that the whole city budget had to be altered to accommodate the problems. This was *not* the fault of the committee.

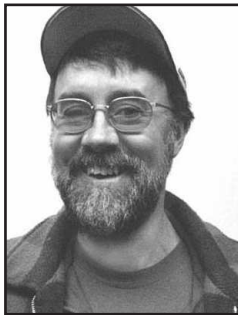
This council and administration need to do some serious organizing. They can't keep running the city via *ad hoc* committees, but they can sure run it down that way.

REAL I.D. CARD REGISTRATION CENTER



Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



Can you think like a woodpecker? Ok, just imagine that you are a woodpecker and that you live in the local area. Actually, you live near Mist, up on Clatskanie Mountain. Ok, you are out doing your woodpecker thing, eating bugs and such and it is time to find a house so you can raise your young. Woodpeckers are what are called cavity nesters, so you have to find a tree big enough to peck out a hole large enough to make a nest. For a Pileated woodpecker, that is a fairly large hole. So you fly around looking for old snags or dying trees big enough to build a nest. Hmm...there aren't any. Clatskanie Mountain was logged fairly heavily starting in the mid '70s through the 80s. So most of the timber is fairly young or is just about reaching harvest time again. There are not very many dead trees or trees of the right size for woodpeckers to nest in. But this story does not have a sad ending.

The woodpeckers have found an alternative nesting site, power poles. West Oregon Electric has a major power supply line that runs over the top of Clatskanie Mountain and down to the substation near the Mist fire station. The woodpeckers have pecked hole after hole into the power poles until some of them have had to be replaced. Work crews have also filled the holes

with filler and, in some cases, have had to splint crippled poles. The woodpeckers just keep drilling new holes. This is getting to be a real pain for W.O.E.C and a costly one too. There is hope at the end of the tunnel, though. The Forest Practices Act was changed after most of Clatskanie Mountain was logged and now a certain number of trees have to be left standing for wildlife. Birds especially need places to perch and in the case of woodpeckers, they need trees to build nests in. Starting with the new harvest of the newly grown forest, there will once again be trees for the birds. So the next time you drive by a clearcut in our local area and see a few trees standing in a corner or scattered out in the clearcut, you will know they are for the birds! Well, flying squirrels too.

Recently, Jim Zumbo, an outdoor writer and editor for Outdoor Life magazine, came under fire for a blog he wrote on the Outdoor Life website. The gist of Mr. Zumbo's blog was that he expressed his feelings about the AR and AK type of rifles that are being used in the field for hunting. He went as far as to call them "terrorist rifles" and stated that he felt they should be banned from hunting. So what are these AR and AK type of weapons? Basically, the ARs are a variant of the M-16 rifle used by the U.S. military and the AKs are variants of the AK-47 military rifle used by the Soviet Union. The key word here is "variant". The military versions are equipped to fire a single shot with each pull of the trigger, or three shots with one pull of the trigger, or can

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