

Our Town

A Publication of The City of Coburg

March/April 2013 Issue

Mayor's Corner

Jae Pudewell - Mayor

More on Communication

One of the things I've heard several times in discussions around town is that Council doesn't seem to listen or want to hear from citizens. Perhaps the source of this misconception is a misunderstanding of how Council meetings function and how they are constrained.

A sample scenario. A citizen comes to a City Council meeting, signs up for their three minutes, reads their carefully worded statement, and sits down. The Mayor thanks them for coming to Council and refers the issue they've raised to city staff. And the Council meeting moves on to the next agenda item. Less than satisfying. The citizen should at least be entitled to some feedback and perhaps a little discussion, right?

For a number of reasons this isn't the right forum for interactive dialogue. Oregon's Public Meetings Law (ORS 192) gives the public the right to be present at decision making meetings. Council deliberations must be made in the open and citizens are able to thus observe the process. But public involvement doesn't necessarily mean public discussion. Except for extenuating circumstances, Council meetings need to be restricted to the pre-announced agenda.

For example, many issues raised by citizens require significant staff time to research and prepare an appropriate response and/or Council discussion materials and Councilors need time to prepare for any necessary discussion. It is generally unfair to the city staff and to the Councilors to expect a reasoned immediate response.

Also, Council meetings and other public forums must be publicly noticed, including the agenda, a reasonable amount of time in advance so

continued on page 2 - Mayor's Corner



In This Issue

PAGE 2

Wastewater Project Update

PAGE 3

Sharyl Brannon-Abbaspour,
City Council Since 2012

PAGE 4

A New Councilor Perspective

PAGE 5

Keeping Track of Time
Coburg Food Pantry

PAGE 6

City Council Brief
Awards Presented at the State
of the City

Page 7

Calendar

PAGE 8

Volunteer Opportunity

from page 1 - Mayor's Corner

the public and the press have ample time to make arrangements to attend if they're interested; Coburg Council meetings are noticed the week before.

So, why should citizens speak out? So the Council knows what citizens care about. Citizen-raised issues often become the subject of subsequent Council discussions.

What if citizens want dialogue, to learn more about a topic or to find out what Councilors and the Mayor are thinking? First, there are Council Work Sessions. These are more informal meetings of the Council where time is given to delve more deeply into topics. No decisions (votes) can be made at Work Sessions

and public input on a topic can be more interactive. Second, there are town-hall meetings. These can be scheduled for a particular topic, e.g., development initiatives or water rates, or we can just meet for coffee, pastries, and talk.

The Council holds frequent Work Sessions and we welcome citizen participation. I enjoy town-hall style meetings and would love to hear what you have to say. Please let me know if you'd be interested or feel free to contact City Hall.

Best regards,



Wastewater Project Update

The Wastewater Project is moving forward. The collection system in the City streets is done. The treatment plant is close to being finished. It is projected to be done and ready to start accepting wastewater mid-May. The next big element of the project is the connection of homes and businesses in town. The contractor will start work on this soon, probably sometime in April. The first area will be the businesses along Industrial Way and Roberts Road. Work will begin there, so that as soon as the treatment plant is ready, the City can switch them over to start sending wastewater to the plant. Work on residences will start later, when the ground is dryer, so the disruption of yards might be lessened.

For residences, the first step will be a notice from the contractor to arrange a meeting to schedule the

work. If you have an old tank that we know needs to be replaced, that, and the electrical service, will be the main topic. If we are not sure of the status of your tank, the first step will be to pump the tank and inspect it and test it for leaks, if it passes (no leaks) then the contractor will install or upgrade the pump, and install the connection from the tank to the collection system.

The plan is to put the replacement tanks in a convenient spot. Remember that from now on, the City will be pumping the tanks, so easy access to the tank is important. At some point electrical work will also be necessary, since the new system will rely on electrical pumps. Part of the arrangements to be

continued on page 3 - Wastewater

from page 2 - Wastewater

worked out is where the electrical service will be put.

In all of this we will be working to balance convenience for the property owner and cost for the City. The contractor has been instructed to be careful of the property owner's concerns. But if there are long delays or extra accommodations that have to be met,

the cost will increase for everyone. Every property owner can help keep costs down by being flexible and understanding.

As the project moves forward there will be more updates. The City will have an additional round of public forums as we get closer to work in the residential areas.

Sharyl Brannon-Abbaspour, City Councilor since 2012

I moved to Coburg almost twenty-one (21) years ago. I choose this lovely community because of its small town charm and have never been disappointed.

For the majority of the time I have lived here I was a marketing consultant at McKenzie River Broadcasting. I also owned a small business that was located in the Mill Street Square called Imagine That. It was at that time that I became involved with my community as part of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce.

I am married to John Abbaspour and between us we have three (3) adult children and ten (10) grandkids that are the center of our lives. My husband and I spend a great deal of time gardening, camping and entertaining friends in our home. The door is always open at the Abbaspour's.

I ran for City Council because a wise friend of mine said that, "most people don't get into politics because they want to, but because they see a need". I saw a need to become more involved with my community. Our new wastewater system is close to becoming a

reality and it will open up all kinds of possibilities for our community.

I want to do everything I can to help in the decision making process in

Coburg to help retain the community feel and spirit that we have all come to know as "Coburg."

I believe that we are a vital community of citizens who don't wait for others to fix our problems but (we) jump right in to find the solutions that are best for the whole of Coburg, while maintaining the integrity of our town.

Feel free to contact me with your thoughts and ideas for Coburg; I would love listening to them.



A New Councilor Perspective

I am well into my second month as Coburg City Councilor. It has been a whirlwind of activity. Meetings for orientation, lots of information to read and digest so I can try to make an informed decision when Council acts. I was a former Chairperson of the Coburg Planning Commission, and have volunteered with many committees and organizations in Coburg. I have lived in Coburg for over 25 years and thought I had a good grasp of the city government. Wow, was I wrong! The one thing that has been reinforced in my beliefs is the mandates from federal and state governments create a lot of work for our small town.

Our small city is responsible for a multimillion dollar infrastructure which is increasing significantly with the new wastewater treatment facility.

I am working with an incredible group of volunteers that are our Councilors and Mayor. They have diverse views and knowledge that leads us through an intimidating mountain of information to try to make an educated decision that will benefit our community. The six Councilors and the Mayor have given over 30 years of Council commitment to Coburg! That's an average of over three years apiece; amazing numbers since Councilor Abbaspour and myself have less than a year.

Long-time residents probably notice a lot of new faces at City Hall. We have a relatively new work corps. Only two staff members have more than six years with the city. The average time with Coburg is only 3.5 years for all of our staff. That being said, I am impressed with the knowledge and abilities of

our staff. I am confident in our staff's ability to deal with the many issues facing Coburg. The sewer project is a huge undertaking, and with that, comes many other issues such as Planning and Development, Transportation Planning, infrastructure maintenance and updating. All very important.

My top priority is to keep Coburg's small town feel and monitor planning and development so that it blends well with that goal. The last two months has been a whirlwind on the Council, but after working with the Mayor, the Council, and the City of Coburg staff, I am more confident that our small town is in good hands. I invite you to become informed about YOUR city, ask questions and get the facts. I think you will like what you find.

- Ray Smith, City Councilor

Things you might want to know...

Garbage Rates

New garbage rates and upgraded service starts April 1st! Contact Coburg Sanitary with questions at 541-683-5929. Bins and curbside recycling, oh my!

McDonald's and Shell

McDonald's and Shell gas station/convenience stores open in March on South Coburg Industrial Way.

Heritage Committee

The Coburg Heritage Committee is back! Happy 120 Years Coburg!



Keeping Track of Time

Every culture has its own way of marking time. As I write these words, millions of Hindus are gathered on the banks of the Ganges River for a festival known as Kumbh Mela. With more than 100 million people in attendance, it is literally the largest gathering on earth!

Here in the West, hundreds of millions of Christians are observing the season of Lent. "Lent" is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "the lengthening of days." This year, Lent started a bit early (February 13) because Easter is a bit early (March 31). The timing of Easter is topic for another day!

Traditionally, Christians were encouraged (required) to give up something for Lent. The goal was to focus on self-discipline, along with an awareness of suffering in the wider world. Some give up meat or alcohol for Lent. Others give up chocolate, or deserts. One year I gave up coffee, but my family asked me not to do that again. Apparently, I was too "grumpy" without my coffee!

In recent years, I have encouraged people not to "give up something" for Lent, but instead, to "take up something" for Lent. To take on a personal goal or discipline that might help others. For example, writing a note of encouragement each day, or reaching out to a neighbor, or doing a random act of kindness for a stranger. Imagine what would happen if every person who receives this letter decided to practice one act of kindness each day, or to volunteer one hour per week.

I frequently hear people speak wistfully about "the good old days." The time when neighbors knew each other and people reached out to help. These days don't have to be just a memory. They can be right now if we are willing to take a few minutes to extend our heart and hand to one another. Who knows, maybe our Lenten discipline will become a lasting habit. I'm sure this is something that we could all get behind.

-Dr. Gary Powell

Coburg United Methodist Church

Coburg Food Pantry

Remember, The Coburg Food Pantry is open to all residents of Coburg who meet the income guidelines. These guidelines are available at the pantry, and on Food for Lane County's website. The pantry is open on the 2nd and 4th Monday's of each month, from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Call for more information. Kathy Emerson 541-434-6404



City Council Brief (City Administration Report)

JANUARY

State of the City Highlights:

Employee of the Year: Robert Butler, PW Director

Citizen of the Year: Katie Thiel

Thank You to Councilor Fox

City Administration Report:

Major Projects Updates

APPROVED – Parks/Tree Bylaws

APPROVED – Budget Transfer in the General Fund for Sidewalk Repair

DISCUSSED – City Hall Feasibility

APPROVED- Construction Inflation Factor Application

APPROVED – Budget Calendar

UPDATE– Pioneer Valley Estates Water Rates Litigation

FEBRUARY

City Administration Report:

Major Projects Updates

APPROVED – Kennedy Jenks Contract Amendment

PRESENTATION – Greenhouse Gas Scenario Planning

APPROVED – Coburg Sanitary Rate Increase

DISCUSSED – City Hall Feasibility

APPROVED - Phase III Wastewater Contractor, Canby Excavating Settlement

APPROVED – Historic Preservation Certified Local Government Application to State

Public Hearing – Historic Preservation

APPROVED – Coburg Heritage Committee

Sidewalk Repair Update

City Council Retreat held Saturday, February 16th

Awards Presented at State of the City

Citizen of the Year – Katie Thiel!



Katie Thiel and Mayor Pudewell. Katie has been a Planning Commissioner for over 15 years!

Employee of the Year – Robert Butler!



Mayor Pudewell and Public Works Director Bob Butler at the January State of the City.

Calendar

STANDING MEETINGS

1st Wednesdays

PARKS TREE COMMITTEE

6:30 pm, City Hall

Contact, Bob Butler, Public Works Director

541-682-7857

1st Fridays

POKER NIGHT

6:30 pm Registration, 7:00 pm Game Begins

Coburg Community Grange

2nd Monday

CCCS SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

6:30 pm

2nd Tuesdays

CITY COUNCIL

7:00 pm, Coburg

Contact, Sammy Egbert, City Recorder

541-682-7852

2nd and 4th Wednesdays

GRANGE/GOLDEN YEARS MEETING

7:00 pm, Coburg Community Grange

2nd Thursdays

METROPOLITAN POLICY COMMITTEE

11:30 am, (usually at the Eugene or

Springfield library)

Contact, Petra Schuetz, City Administrator

541-682-7871

3rd Wednesdays

PLANNING COMMISSION

7:00 pm, City Hall

Contact, Petra Schuetz, Planning Director

541-682-7871

4th Mondays

COBURG FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS

7:00 pm, Fire Hall

4th Wednesdays

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

7:00 pm, City Hall

Contact, Sammy Egbert, City Recorder

541-682-7852

4th Wednesdays

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

7:00 pm, City Hall

Contact, Sammy Egbert, City Recorder

541-682-7852

Mark your calendars!!

Coburg Colossal Clutter Clear Out is May 18th!!

All you have to do is clean out your unwanted treasures and put up a sign.

Ads will be placed in the Register Guard and on Craig's List for a city wide Garage Sale. Just in time for Spring Cleaning....you will have a nice way to get rid of those discards.



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Address Correction Requested

Volunteer Opportunities

Budget Committee Members Needed

Help Shape Coburg's Priorities!

- Applications available at City Hall
- Only three scheduled 2-hour meetings between April-June
- Term ends June 30, 2014
- Applicant must be a qualified elector and have resided in the City one year immediately preceding appointment to the position.
- Applications may be picked up at City Hall, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., or contact Sammy Egbert at sammy.egbert@ci.coburg.or.us

Planning Commission Vacancy

Applications available at City Hall or online at <http://www.coburgoregon.org/?q=jobs>

- Must be at least 18 years old
- All but two positions must be Coburg residents (i.e. live within the city limits)
- Seven (7) positions
- Voluntary, two-year term.
- No term limits
- Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM at Coburg City Hall
- Additional meetings are occasionally scheduled