

LETTERS

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To the Editor:

As owner of the former Wild Mountain roadside market and plaintiff in the \$2.5 million discrimination lawsuit filed in federal court against the city of Sisters, it never ceases to amaze me how the City continues with business-as-usual politics of disregarding concerns of the community. The apparent policy of special dispensation given to the well-connected and businesses which matter personally to some seated on the planning commission and city council demonstrate that not only has no one within city government learned from past mistakes, but in fact affirms they're not even listening to the growing voice of concern among the citizenry.

The latest controversy over the food carts permitted for outgoing Mayor Boyd's property has me scratching my head over how what is happening there differs from what Celia Hung and Richard Esterman want to do on their leased property? During my quest for code amendment to help Wild Mountain survive by allowing it to operate year-round there were many comments by commissioners and councilors that my business model unfairly competed with brick-and-mortar businesses in town when my request was denied. The outcry from business owners over the special events of Hung and Esterman is now strangely silent over the food carts on Mayor Boyd's property. Yet from Melvin's Market's popular deli case and soup counter across the street from Eurosports, to the many restaurants within walking distance, nobody has raised a voice of concern even though these low-overhead year-round food carts will clearly impact trade at all of these businesses. Is fear of retaliation the reason for the silence?

Ky Karnecki



To the Editor:

I would like to provide some context and background information for the Sisters community regarding the recent food cart decision by city staff:

Yes; it is true that the Sisters Planning Commission was not copied on the site plan review for this application.

This was a simple mistake by a planning department employee and we all need to acknowledge that mistake and move on appropriately to make

sure similar errors do not occur. From talking to the employee and other city staff, it is clear that this was an oversight and not malicious or subversive in any way. There was certainly no attempt to hide the decision or circumvent proper process. Mistakes do happen, have happened in the past and will likely happen again.

To date it has been an informal policy that site plan reviews were copied as an FYI item to the planning commission. This was done properly most of the time but not every time.

At a minimum, every single site-plan review "must and should" be sent to every planning commissioner "as an FYI copy." I was very unhappy that this particular site-plan review was not sent to me and have strongly recommended to city council and staff that this permanent change be put in place ASAP.

Site-plan reviews are not automatically put on the planning commission agenda for a public hearing. The commission can, with the request of three or more commissioners, "call up" a site plan decision for full. This is meant as a "check and balance" and is typically a very rare event.

In my own personal opinion as chairman of the planning commission and as one commissioner, I would not have asked to call up this decision. The application completely and totally followed current city code, did not request any variances and had no unusual circumstances.

While we definitely should have been copied on the original city staff decision, that does not mean that this site-plan review or any other site-plan review will automatically come before the planning commission as a formal agenda item.

Any business owner in Sisters is eligible to submit an application, but significant site improvements and upgrades will be necessary prior to approval even on those lots where there is sufficient room. This is not an insignificant business cost, hence we are not likely to be inundated with hundreds or even dozens of food carts now or in the future.

Alan Holzman
Chairman, Sisters Planning Commission



To the Editor:

Hood Avenue Art is working on a project with OTE and ODOT to establish Hood Avenue as an Arts Destination within the state of Oregon. This designation will possibly allow signs to be put up on Highway 20 coming into town from both directions,

directing traffic onto Hood Avenue.

We qualify for this designation because we have five galleries within a six-block area. The original galleries that met the qualification were Hood Avenue Art; Gary Cooley; Clearwater Gallery and Open Door; Ken Scott's Imagination Gallery; Sisters Gallery and Frame. But now, in addition to those we have added Cha for the Finest gallery; Redfield's Gallery; Things, Etc. Gallery; Heritage USA; Old West Antiques; Cowgirls and Indians Artifacts; Beacham's Clock Co. and Bedouin.

There will be a meeting at the Chamber of Commerce, 291 E. Main Ave., on January 15, 4 to 6 p.m. to discuss and inform interested parties about future plans and ideas. All business owners on Hood Avenue will benefit and are encouraged to attend. Actually, the whole town will benefit and all are welcome.

Our thoughts are to establish an arts association (or to work in conjunction with the established art association) and an arts council to work with the City and help manage and direct our group in events planning, marketing and future public arts exhibition. You do not have to be a member of the chamber of commerce to attend or participate.

This is an independent group of merchants that see the vision of a working group of professionals to bring Hood Avenue together as a vibrant marketplace. The City has offered to meet with us, listen to our ideas. But this is a state-level project. The monetary investment is minimal; the signs are approximately \$300 split between all of us. Future investment is optional.

We realize that there have been many issues that have separated business and people in this small community; it is normal. We would like you to bring an open mind and put the past behind you. We will all raise up together and hopefully heal some of what has gone before us. There are many possibilities: new hotels; restaurants; entrepreneurs looking for investment opportunities right now. Together we can create a thriving arts/cultural district.

We will all need to write letters of support. There will be a sample letter at the meeting you can take with you to help frame your own. Then we will bring these together with photographs and our logo, which is underway, with the application to be submitted to the state. The process takes about 90 to 120 days. Hope to see you all there.

Tina Brockway and Michelle Deaderick
Hood Avenue Art



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