



NEWSLETTER



CITY OF YACHATS March 2005

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

WHAT NOW?

By Mayor Sue Smith

Yachats voters wisely, I think, passed the recent bond issue to authorize the City to issue General Obligation Bonds for repayment of the loan for the new Waste Water Treatment Plant. The City is continuing its work of looking at all possibilities for repayment of the loan. The Public Works and Street Commission is looking closely at rates, connection fees and System Development Charges. When they arrive at what they think makes sense, they will forward a recommendation to the City Council.

This is the time for all interested property owners to make their wishes and opinions known! How do you think we should structure the repayment schedule? Rates? Property taxes? New money? (If you suggest new money, please also suggest a source for that). Surcharges? Visitor Amenity funds? I know that many of you didn't have a say in the voting process because Yachats is not your primary residence, so now is your opportunity to be heard. Write us a letter. Come to a Council meeting. Stop by City Hall. Call me (547-4679). E-mail me: suemiks@pioneer.net. I want to know what you think.

The price for living in Paradise keeps going up! Believe me when I say that I am as acutely aware of that as are you. Perhaps this is a good time to spend more time appreciating where we are privileged to live as we contemplate the hard realities. I keep reminding myself that most places where it would be less expensive to live are places that I don't want to be. How about you?



WHY CAN'T I VOTE HERE IF I HAVE TO PAY?

By Mayor Sue Smith

Many owners of second homes in Yachats have expressed concern over being required to participate in paying for a major and expensive project (the new Wastewater Treatment Plant) when they have no official say in the method of repayment. It is frustrating at best and infuriating at worst. There is talk of "taxation without representation", which this would seem to be. Voting law was enacted hundreds of years ago, long before people even considered owning second (or vacation) homes. Until the laws change, an owner of more than one residence must decide which is his PRIMARY or PERMANENT voting residence. In this country, we still function under the "one person, one vote" rule. However, your City officials are most interested in hearing from all property owners. Fortunately, no residency requirement is necessary in order to share information or express opinions!



City Council Holds Public Hearing for the Five Year Capital Improvement Plan

Mayor Smith opened the public hearing and explained that a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a plan for the

financing of construction, major rehabilitation and other capital projects. A sub-committee was appointed by City Council to meet and discuss future improvement projects for the City of Yachats and prepare a recommended five-year plan for City Council consideration.

Following the public hearing City Council adopted the five-year plan by Resolution and directed the Budget Officer to put the first year project in the proposed budget for the 2005-06 fiscal year.

In adopting the plan City Council made it clear that this was a plan that will be reviewed and updated annually.



New Commission Members Appointed

Gerald Stanley was appointed to serve on the Parks and Commons Commission to fill a vacancy with a term ending December 31, 2007. Stanley told Council during his interview at the March meeting, that since he moved to Yachats he has made it a point to attend meetings of all the various commissions. Following the Parks and Commons Commission meeting, Commission Chair, Cy Kauffman asked him if he would be interested in serving on their commission.

Annette Howarth will be making the move from Library Commission to the Planning Commission this month. Howarth, who was recommended by the Planning Commission, was appointed by City Council to serve on the Planning Commission, until December 31, 2008.



In Other City Council News

- City Council adopted their official "City Council Rules." The new Charter, which was recently approved by the voters, provides that the Council shall adopt rules for the governing of its proceedings.
- City Council adopted an Employee Handbook. This manual covers issues not already in the current employee contracts.
- City Council approved an application for use of alcohol on City property for a wedding reception.



DRY, DRY, DRY

By Mayor Sue Smith

The winter of 2004-2005 is shaping up to be one of the driest on record. Forecasts indicate that our spring will also be dry. While we may all be reveling in the abundant sunshine, we must also be aware that dry seasons bring their own unique issues and concerns. Will we have enough water? Are fires a real threat? While it is still too early to have a definite sense of the answers to those questions, it is never too early to exercise caution. This may be a good time to drag out and dust off all those water saving measures we are provided with every year. Are there ways we can be more "conservative"? Each of us knows the answer to that. As for the possibility of fires, we live with that threat every summer. Each of us can be a bit more aware.....and also a bit more watchful, vigilant, and careful. And pray for rain!



Fire Danger High This Year

At the March meeting, Council discussed their concerns regarding the potential fire danger this year due to the dry conditions. Uncleared lots mean additional danger. Because the weather has been so warm and dry this spring tall, dry, dead grass is much more of a problem than normal.

The City would like to remind all the owners who have undeveloped lots to make sure they rid their property of any vegetation that may be a fire hazard. Absentee owners of vacation homes should also be aware of the potential

dangers this year.

City Council adopted an amendment to the nuisance ordinance requiring that all lots be cleared of vegetation by July 1 each year or at any time City Council declares a fire danger.

And speaking of fire danger, the Fire District has a brochure available on creating a defensible space around your home to help protect it from wild fire. Go by the Fire District office or City Hall to pick one up.



TSUNAMI DRILL

Mark Wednesday, April 20 at 11 a.m. on your calendars for a Tsunami Evacuation Drill. Many of you will remember last fall, when we held a drill and each person in town was asked to, as swiftly as possible, leave their homes or places of business and move east and up the hill. Cooperation and compliance was good, according to the Yachats Rural Fire Department. YRFD, the City of Yachats and Southwest Lincoln Water District are joining forces this time to encourage more participation. The likelihood that an earthquake resulting in a tsunami occurring off the Oregon Coast is high. It behooves each resident and visitor to be as prepared as possible. In the twelve minutes (estimated) between the shaking and the first wave, people NEED to move quickly uphill. (If the earthquake occurs farther out in the Pacific Ocean, more time will be available to evacuate.....possibly even one or two hours or more. Warning systems will be effective in those instances.) Being prepared means having a small easily carried bag filled with enough supplies to last several hours. Items included should be: water, foods that require no cooking, eyeglasses, medications, a first aid kit, a plastic poncho, a space blanket, matches (and dryer lint....good fire starter), a flashlight, and items as needed for the family members. REMEMBER: the most important thing is saving one's life.

The City and the Fire Department are looking into funding for facilities up the hills out of wave danger for storing the above mentioned items and more in greater quantities for those visitors or residents who do not have them. What is yet to be determined is where those storage containers should be placed and exactly what should be placed inside them. Tsunami Preparedness is an ongoing process for the City of Yachats, as well as towns up and down the Coast.

NO SIREN WILL SOUND TO START THIS DRILL! HEAD UPHILL AT 11:00

DICK GUFFEY TSUNAMI PRESENTATION

Joy McCaslin, C.E.R.T. Manager

As a forerunner to the **Yachats Area Tsunami Evacuation Drill**, Mr. Dick Guffey, of Tidewater, Oregon has agreed to share his recent experiences in Thailand with the Yachats Community.

Mr. Guffey and his son Greg went to Thailand in mid January to assist the people in the aftermath of the unspeakable tragedies that occurred there. Greg is still in Thailand.

The slide and video presentation will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 6, in the multi-purpose room of the Yachats Commons Building (441 N. Hwy. 101).

The purpose of the presentation is not to frighten the wits out of the citizens or visitors of our own coastal paradise, but to increase awareness, which is the first step in the process of disaster preparedness education.

There will be no charge for admission. Those who wish to may make a donation to **Global Involvement Through Education**.



Yachats Library News

The Library has seen a number of changes in the past 6 months. We have added more than 175 new library card holders. There are more new volunteer librarians to greet the patrons. The Library hours have been extended on Wednesdays; we're now open from 12 to 6 p.m.

We have also added many selections to our collections; history, gardening, cooking, religion, and the northwest collection plus our many fiction books. We have added more than 200 new books to the Children's Library. There are also new audio books as well as a growing collection of books on CD.

Come check out the Library. We're open 6 days a week; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 12-4 p.m., Wednesday 12-6 p.m., and Saturday 10-4 p.m.



Special City Council Meeting Held

City Council scheduled a special meeting for March 17, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss what the City

wants the Visitors Center to be, how to draft a request for proposal that will be clear about those objectives and make it easy to compare the proposals when submitted, and what should the contract should include.

Each year the City Council advertises for an independent contractor to operate the City's Visitors Center. The procedure is intended to ensure that it be a competitive bid process. Each year since the City assumed responsibility for operations of the Visitors Center the Yachats Chamber of Commerce has been the successful bidder, and in most years, the Chamber has been the only bid received.

WHERE IS MY EVACUATION ROUTE?

While it may seem quite simple to say "head up the hill" during Tsunami drills and in the event of an actual emergency, the most efficient route may not be obvious. The Yachats Rural Fire Protection District is on hand to assist individuals and businesses in determining the best way to get there.

Leave a message at 547-3266 and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.



BUDGET COMMITTEE OPENING

By Mayor Sue Smith

There is one opening on the City Budget Committee. The Budget Committee is made up of ten people: The Mayor and four City Councilors, and five members of the public at large. As with all City Commissions, members must be residents and must be registered to vote. They may not serve on other City Commissions.

The Budget Committee analyzes the budget as presented by the City's Financial Officer (who is Nancy Otterson, City Recorder) and presents a balanced budget to the City Council for approval. Meetings are held in May with a series of workshops (one to three, depending on need) held beforehand. If you have some financial knowledge and an interest in City spending and are looking for a way to contribute to the community, but don't want to commit to a year-round meeting schedule, the Budget Committee may be just what you are looking for. Applications may be obtained and filled out at City Hall.



NEWSLETTER

By Mayor Sue Smith

City Council decided to send the City newsletter with the water bill for the next three months in an effort to save money and staff time. While the Newsletter is one of our most important communication tools, our city website (www.ci.yachats.or.us) has all the information that will keep any interested person current. On it, one can find minutes of Council and Commission meetings, the members of each Commission, meeting dates and times, the City Charter, Goals, a Citizen's Handbook, building permits, zone maps, water information, sewer information, the Little Log Church and Museum, the Yachats Library, Events calendars, and more. It is kept current by Nancy Otterson, City Recorder and is a wealth of information.

Budget Comparison - Fiscal Year July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005
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<i>Reporting Through</i>	<i>3/31/05</i>	
Program	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Administration	\$615,500	\$474,263
Library	\$15,758	\$9,732
Little Log Church & Museum	\$13,418	\$11,002
Parks & Commons*	\$117,412	\$94,185
Streets	\$121,913	\$84,622
Water	\$405,769	\$265,784
Sewer	\$690,714	\$553,225
In Reserve for Future Uses	\$1,289,151	\$1,282,306
Debt	<u>\$128,138</u>	<u>\$80,615</u>
	<u>\$3,397,773</u>	<u>\$2,855,733</u>



Building Permit Questions

City staff frequently receives questions regarding the need for building permits for various home improvement projects. There are some types of projects that do not require a permit. Fences not over 6 feet high; accessory buildings not over 120 square feet or a height of 10 feet tall; patio covers; porches; sidewalks; driveways; and some decks are examples.

While these projects do not require a building permit, there are many other factors that need to be considered before proceeding. A quick visit with the City Planner before you start could eliminate problems and additional expenses "down the road." Some things can be confusing. For example a deck less than 30" high does not need a permit, but if it is more than 8" high it must be considered when determining total lot coverage. Lot coverage, easements, set-backs, and safety concerns are some of the things the Planner may be able to help you with.

The City Planner is in Monday and Tuesday from 8:30 to 4:30 each week and is available to discuss your plans before you start.



Sewer Water Quality Information

Why are wastewater treatment plants important? Because, wastewater treatment plants help us enjoy life to the fullest. They protect the public's health from disease causing bacteria and viruses. Treatment plants actually disinfect wastewater, eliminating many harmful organisms. Second, they protect water quality so that we can enjoy clean oceans, lakes, streams and rivers. The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) establishes effluent limits for all point-source discharges in the United States. The limits imposed on each discharger are determined by the receiving water's capacity to assimilate the waste, as well as the water's use. Water intended for drinking requires more protection than water used only for boating. All water quality should be suitable for swimming and fishing.

To help keep the Yachats sewer system running smoothly and effectively please follow these "conservation" tips.

- No Grease - Grease that is liquid when you pour it into the drain from your frying pan quickly becomes a stiff, sticky, and insoluble lump inside the pipe. Grease should never be flushed or put down sink drains.
- Avoid flushing chemicals into the wastewater treatment system. Introducing chemical compounds such as drain cleaner, paint, thinners, or other household cleaners result in imbalances at the wastewater treatment plant.
- Do not use the wastewater system to clean unwanted food from refrigerator or other solid matter. Flushing disposal diapers, items of clothing, dirt, gravel, plants, foodstuffs, or other items that do not quickly dissolve in water will block the sewer lateral leaving your home or business.
- Try to limit use of your garbage disposal to relieve the burden on the sewer plant.. Besides, composting is an important practice that can assist you with this next subject:



Landscaping

Planning with water conservation in mind is especially easy here on the central coast. Many native plants thrive in this area so you can have green plants and colorful flowers instead of just cactus.

The native plants are resistant to the wind, slugs, and animals. Resistance to wind is the most important factor when considering water conservation. Wind robs the plants of moisture and if the plant is not hardy, extra watering is necessary.

Planning is the most important part of successful conservation landscaping. Begin by deciding if you want to entertain, have privacy, provide area for children to play, or have a garden. You must also consider the areas where sun, shade, terrain and drainage will affect the plants you choose.

A local landscaping architect or nursery can help you with information for a specific area, but the following tips are true everywhere:

- A tree's shade lowers air and soil temperature, this in turn reduces the moisture requirements of nearby plants.
- Reduce grassy areas whenever possible and separate it from other plantings so it can be watered separately.
- Place plants with high water requirements in areas that receive a lot of water naturally.
- Slopes and hills should have a ground cover or spreading plant that keeps erosion down.
- Place shrubs away from the house's foundation watering may damage its foundation.
- Mulches cover and cool the soil and discourage evaporation.
- Soil improvement allows for better absorption and retention of water.
- Group plants with similar water needs together to avoid water waste and reduce maintenance.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Yachats is known for its volunteer commitment. While there is certainly no lack of volunteer opportunity within the community, there is one that might strike a chord with some of you. When Lincoln County's District Attorney, Bernice Barnett, made her annual report to the City Council recently, she expressed a need for Victims' Advocates. Volunteers are needed to help with paperwork that supports victims in the criminal justice system; volunteers can act as telephone advocates for victims of domestic violence (some training is needed for this); volunteers are needed to sit with victims on Grand Jury days; and there is a need for someone to help with the 501c3 designation for the department. For an application, call Kathy Gottfried at 265-4145. Applicants will be screened and interviewed. This can be a very important way to make a difference. Brochures are available at Yachats city Hall.



PUBLIC SAFETY

By Mayor Sue Smith

The process for having a volunteer Safety Patrol in place by this summer is continuing. Applications are still being received and gratefully accepted. Current applicants have been through the screening process with the Sheriff's Department and are being interviewed by the Yachats Interview Committee. Stay tuned for further information about the process and also about how citizens might help.



COMMONS NEWS

By Susan Garner, Commons Coordinator

The playground equipment has a new coat of paint and the rocking animals have faces again. What an improvement this is to the overall look of our little play park. Now we need some good weather again so the weeds can be pulled out there.

In the next several months, you can expect more and more improvements to the park area around the building as our parks task force gets busy in implementing all the new plans for our grounds.

April will be another month for lots of activities at the Commons:

2nd – Good Times Family Sock Hop – 7 pm

4th – Concert Band Performance – 7 pm

6th – Tsunami Information Presentation – 7 pm

7th – Big Band Dance – 7 pm

9th – Animal Assisted Therapy Fair – all day

17th – Youth and Family Talent Show – 2 pm

22nd – Oregon Coast Chamber Orchestra – 7 pm

23rd – Earth Day Celebration – starts at 1230

28th – Senior Luncheon - 1230

30-May 1 – Fiber Arts Festival – all day

- And of course, yoga classes are held Tuesday, Thursday, Friday at 8 am weekly, as well as 9 am Wednesdays
- Tai Chi group meets every Monday at 8 am
- Aerobic exercise classes are taught at 10 am and 4:30 pm Mondays and Wednesdays

For information about these and other events, please call me at 547-4634

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