

Linking Letter readers: Here is a new format for 2/19/2017. "**City council topic**" articles (separated by lines) & followed by "**The PIN Report**" — public interest news. Ending with **Date-to-Note**. Thanks on behalf of *The Independent & The Linking Letter*

BOAT NOISE: Measure Passes For Downtown 'Livability' With Watercraft

Affirming support for a state regulation to control motorboat noise, the Independence City Council passed a resolution last week recognizing the potential need to muffle loud watercraft.

The resolution centered on an existing Oregon Administrative Rule. It passed after Police Chief Robert Mason, who was asked to comment on it, observed that noise could affect "downtown livability" — an apparent reference to current homes on Main Street as well as future ones, such as Independence Landing, which is slated to have a hotel, apartments and townhouses.

Law enforcement is authorized to monitor boat noise on the Willamette River near Independence, including checks on proper muffling of engines, said Shawn Irvine, city economic development director. The State Marine Board oversees such sound-related issues, he noted.

ADDED FEE: City Approves 7% Franchise Fee For Internet Carriers

A 7% charge imposed by the Independence City Council on all qualifying internet carriers will have to be passed on to MINET customers as soon as it takes effect, according to Don Patten, general manager of MINET. "We don't have a choice and we won't keep one nickel of it," said Mr. Patten, explaining that the charge will pass to the city through MINET and appear on billing as a franchise fee.

The provision for the fee actually was adopted by the city years ago, but last Tuesday the City Council opted to officially implement it — in light of a lawsuit in which the city of Eugene prevailed in its fight to require cable companies to pay right-of-way fees. The precedent-setting court decision was seen as a reason for Independence to collect this revenue source, too (*City of Eugene v. Comcast of Oregon II*). The court ruling has no effect on satellite-dish companies.

In urging council to move forward on this fee, City Manager David Clyne observed that MINET continues to be highly subsidized by the city, notably by relying on money from the water fund. The franchise fee, in contrast, “means that (only) users of the system would be paying” since this charge applies solely to internet subscribers, he pointed out. (However, water rates, which continued their uptick last year, aren’t expected to be reduced by the franchise fee.)

Councilor Ken Day voted against the fee. Two other “no” votes were recorded as a result of the absences of Councilors Marilyn Morton and Michael Hicks. However, the other three councilors present — Tom Takacs, Kathy Martin-Willis and Diana Lindskog — voted yes, rendering the vote a tie. Mayor John McArdle then voted in favor of the resolution, breaking the tie and allowing it to pass.

PIN REPORT: AG FEST

Public Interest News

Where can you find equal parts fun and knowledge? Learn the secrets of a “lazy urban chicken keeper”? Watch historically accurate cooking practices from yesteryear? At the mid-Valley Winter Ag Fest, Feb. 25 & 26. “Agriculture is the lifeblood of Polk County and the Polk County Fairgrounds is its heart,” said coordinator Deb Thomas of the annual event and its familiar location.

It’s family friendly, with a petting zoo (10-2pm both days), free face painting, animal balloons and a sawmill display by NW “G” Railroad. “Pioneers” will be on hand, too: The Yamhill Historical Society will demonstrate cooking and farming of the 1800s — dressed in garments of that era.

Also: The Polk County Livestock Association is hosting a free kick-off for Winter Ag Fest event on Thursday **February 23rd** with an afternoon of seminars, from 2 to 7 pm. For a full line-up, check out this link: mvwagfest.com or contact Deb at mvwagfest@gmail.com. Adult Admission is \$5 with a \$10 per-car max. Parking is free, and so are children and teens under the age of 18.

DATE-TO-NOTE: On **February 25** at The Ovenbird Bakery **from 8:30 to 9:30**, Rep. Paul Evans will hold a get-together for “coffee and community.” Got questions? Comments? He’ll be there.