



Jennifer Orozco

From: Lisa Binning <lisa.binning@gmail.com>
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Crook County

APR 26 2024

To: Community Development

Community Development

Attached are a couple of articles written back in 2019 when small-town, Scio, was faced with a similar request. Although zoning was different, the article is relatable to our rural environment and desires to keep this type of store out of our small-town communities and allow local businesses to thrive.

Thank you,
Lisa Binning

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Bucking the trend



A rainbow arches over the storage yard that was proposed to become a Dollar General in Scio.

BILL POEHLER/
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Amid fierce community opposition, Scio turns down Dollar General

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Where derelict buildings once stood on city blocks in small towns across Oregon, dollar stores have rapidly sprung up in the past decade.

Dollar General, a Tennessee-based chain of small retail stores, has aggressively expanded to 60 stores in Oregon, including rural locations like Jefferson, Aumsville and Mill City, but also in distant locales such as Drain, Winston and Shady Cove. Scio, however, will not have one.

After significant opposition by community members and small business owners, the Scio City Council voted unanimously at its Sept. 9 meeting to deny a requested zoning change that would have allowed Dollar General to build a location in Scio.

Developer Hix Snedeker Companies of Daphne, Alabama asked the city to change the zoning on a lot at 38848 Highway 226, which is in the southern-most part of Scio, and amend its comprehensive plan so it could build a 9,000 square foot retail space for a new Dollar General.

Dozens of residents and business owners in Scio voiced strong opposition about the impact such a store could have on its community.

"It was a sort of an awakening of the community," said Roger Gaither, an opponent of the proposal.

Scio likes its independence

Scio exudes small-town charm. The city of 983 has maintained its place in the world along Highway 226, secluded enough to keep its small-town charm, but close enough to Inter-



Several Dollar General stores are opening up throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley.

SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

"It was a sort of an awakening of the community."

Roger Gaither, opponent of Dollar General proposal

state 5 - 15 miles to the east - to be a bedroom community for those who work in Salem, Albany and Stayton.

"Scio also has a geographic situation that it's truly not on the way to anywhere," Gaither said.

"It's sort of stuck in the middle between the two branches of the Santiam River, and you've got to cross bridges to get here."

To the outside world, Scio is known for its covered bridges and its successful high school football team that runs the ball nearly every down.

Less seen is its high rate of volunteers in community groups like the Scio Community Improvement Organization board, the Friends of the Scio Public Library and the Linn County Lamb & Wool Fair Association.

See DOLLAR GENERAL, Page 7A

Scio is well known for its number of surviving bridges. BILL POHLER/STATESMAN JOURNAL



Dollar General

Continued from Page 1A

According to the Oregon Employment Department, 335 residents of Scio were employed, but there were 425 jobs in the Scio city limits.

The Scio School District (159 employees), Scio Mutual Telephone Association and small businesses like Covered Bridge Coffee House, Santiam RV, Ennis Heating and Macro Solutions are among the primary employers in the city.

There are no chain stores or restaurants in town and most of its retail businesses are clustered along the main drag in the north part of town.

Many of its residents drive 10 minutes to Stayton or 30 minutes to Albany or Salem for much of their shopping.

Dollar stores grow in small towns

Dollar General started small as J.L. Turner and Sons in Scottsville, Kentucky, but has become a huge player in the retail marketplace.

The Tennessee-based company was ranked 119 on the Fortune 500 in 2019 with \$25 billion in sales in the 2018 fiscal year, 15,597 retail locations and 135,000 employees.

Most products at the store cost more than \$1, but the chain has large buying power and keeps prices low.

The growth in its segment of the market has been remarkable, propelled by moving into areas where there few retail options exist and residents' other choice is to drive long distances to purchase essentials.

"Dollar stores are a poor substitute for grocery stores. A typical dollar store carries no fresh produce, only a limited selection of processed foods,"

Institute For Local Self Reliance report

"The company looks for places where we can offer customers an easy and convenient shopping choice as we generally serve customers within a three to five mile radius, or 10-minute drive," Ghassemi said.

But the stores coming to town can cause unintended consequences, according to a report by the Institute For Local Self Reliance.

"Dollar stores are a poor substitute for grocery stores. A typical dollar store carries no fresh produce, only a limited selection of processed foods," the report states.

In Dollar General's application to Scio, the company says approximately 500 Oregonians are employed in the company's 60 state stores, slightly over eight per store.

According to research from Kansas State University, small-town grocers lose as much as 30% of sales when dollar stores open nearby.

"And it's very hard for a local business owner to compete because Dollar General has huge buying power," Gaither said. "They import a lot of their products, and the local business owner, they just can't compete."

A handful of small cities like Scio have rejected Dollar General after public outcries, such as Yelva, North Dakota (population 1,000), Fairport Harbor, Ohio (population 3,100), and Mount Ulla, North Carolina (2,500).

In August, Forest Grove (population 24,000) rejected a similar bid.

Dollar General wants to come to Scio

Dollar General has been eyeing Scio for a new store for some time, applying to build a location as far back as 2016.

Eventually, it settled on a 1.34-acre site on the southernmost edge of town along Highway 226, property owned by Oregon State Bridge Construction and used as a storage yard.

To build on that site, however, Hix Snedeker asked the city earlier this year to change zoning of the property to commercial from light industrial.

Opponents of Dollar General's proposed Scio location used every argument they could think of to keep it away.

They cited flooding issues on the proposed site, economic impacts on small businesses, the developer asking for a variance to reduce the number of parking spaces to 28 from 45 and the site being too far from downtown.

But Scio City Attorney Tre Kennedy said those issues weren't germane to the rezoning and comprehensive plan amendments.

"In this case, it's just about the land use designation," Kennedy said.

Scio has limited industrial-zoned land, and rezoning the proposed property could have an adverse impact on the city's ability to grow its industrial development.

And the city's comprehensive plan, which was updated in 2015, encourages businesses in the current downtown area north of the proposed location, and Hix Snedeker applied for a variance to it.

"While Dollar General is a retail establishment and would hire some people, it does not support the small business aspect of the goal, which I believe is the heart of the economic development goal," wrote Melodee Scofield, co-owner of Scio Hardware and Mercantile.

There are no other suitable sites in Scio to build such a store, project engineer Trey Jimright told the city council.

Kennedy said the city council will formally approve its decision Oct. 14 when it approves minutes of the Sept. 9 meeting. The developer will have 30 days to appeal to the state Land Use Board of Appeals.

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Obituaries

Michael Todd Mennis

SALEM - The world lost a wonderful man when Michael Mennis passed away on Thu. Sep. 19, 2019. He was born in Salem Jan. 5th, 1946, graduated from South Salem High School in 1964 and lived in Salem all of his life. Michael had a zest for life and loved to travel and loved animals. He and his wife Nancy traveled to Europe, Africa, and South & Central America and cruised through the South Pacific and French Polynesia. Michael always had a dog, but his most unusual and favorite pet was their resident squirrel Scupper that would sit at their door and come into the house for nuts every day. Michael & Nancy's first date was a hike to Neahkahnie Mountain in May 1982. They married in August that same year. They were a perfect match and had 37 beautiful years together. In 2005 Michael was diagnosed with kidney disease and Nancy was able to donate one of her kidneys to save his life - proving once again they were a perfect match! Michael's ashes will be scattered on Neahkahnie Mountain - a place he loved for its natural beauty and the memories of his first date with Nancy, the love of his life. He is survived by his wife Nancy, daughter Melody Neff, granddaughters Rachael & Myra Neff, stepsons Jim Miraglia, Steve Miraglia (Mary Jo), brothers Bob Petersen (Marilyn), Robin Mennis (Traci), sisters Darlene Mann, Marralene Oullette (Rodney), Joy Aiello (Patrick) as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins. A gathering of family and friends will be held on Oct. 13th, 2019 at Willamette Valley Vineyards from 1:00 to 4:00pm. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Willamette Valley Humane Society or Willamette Valley Hospice. Assisting the family is Virgil T. Golden Funeral Service.



Fred Ehrlich

SALEM - Fred Ehrlich passed away in his home on September 18, 2019 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Fred was born on May 23, 1935 to Harlow and Fern Ehrlich in Newberg, Oregon. He graduated from Redmond High School and went on to Oregon Institute of Technology, graduating in the Automotive Program. Fred met the love of his life, Oleata Davis at the local movie theatre where they both worked in Klamath Falls while he was attending school. Fred and Oleata married and moved to Salem in 1956 where he began his career as an auto mechanic for Loder Brothers, which eventually, through several ownership changes became Delon Auto Center, from where he retired. During his career as an auto mechanic, Fred also moonlighted at the Hollywood Theater, Capital Theater and North Salem drive-in, running the movie projectors. He also ran the spotlights at the Oregon State Fair for the entertainment following the horse races. Fred was an active member of the Salem Elks Lodge 336, serving as their Exalted Ruler in 1984 through 1985. Fred always had a love and a fascination for airplanes, and after retirement enjoyed volunteering at the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum helping restore antique airplanes. Fred and Oleata also enjoyed occasional trips to Reno and all of the Oregon Casinos. They also continued to be active with the Salem Elks Lodge. Surviving are his wife of 63 years, Oleata Ehrlich, daughters Sue Spinney (Ed), Carol Meireis (Dan) of Salem, Oregon, brother Don Ehrlich of Port Angeles, WA, sister Ann Thornton of Milwaukie, Oregon, four grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Preceding him in death were his parents, brother Louis Ehrlich, sister Barbara Gasner, and grandson Aaron Meireis.

The family would like to thank Willamette Valley Hospice for their loving care of Fred and help to the family for the last year.

Donations in Fred's honor can be made to the Oregon Elks Association Betty Hise for Cancer Research, Inc.

A celebration of life will be held 1:00 pm Saturday, September 28, 2019 at the Salem Elks Lodge, 2336 Turner Rd. SE in Salem. Private interment will be at City View Cemetery under the direction of City View Funeral Home.

Obituaries are published seven days a week in the Statesman Journal. Death notices are included at no charge; a fee applies to obituaries that include additional information and/or photos. Obituaries also appear online at www.StatesmanJournal.com

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