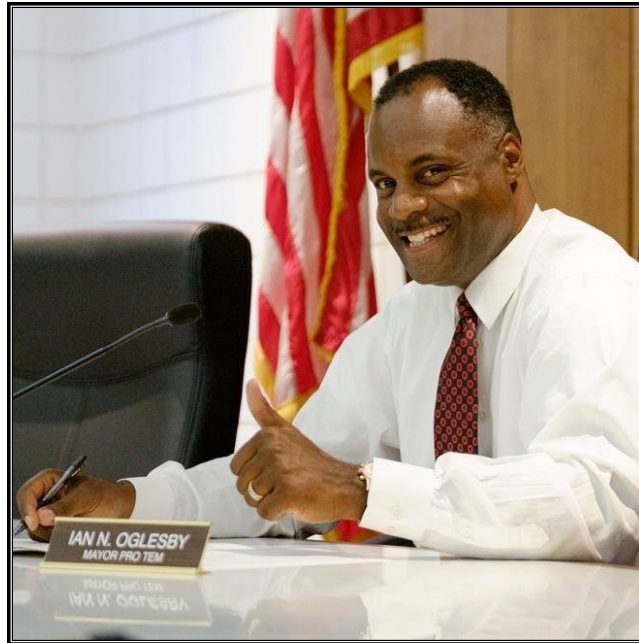


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

February 1-7, 2019

PENINSULA PLCHRITUDE - Part 5



SEASIDE'S BOONDOGGLE BUSTERS TACKLE HOMELESSNESS ON THE BAY

By Wanda Sue Parrott

ATTENDING a Seaside City Council meeting is, to me, like participating in a combination old-time tent revival and sports rally.

If the rapidly flagging state of our national political scene is causing a deflatus of your Great American Spirit, a Seaside City Council meeting will give you a boost of democratic derring-do / do-gooding that's vocal, visible, and viable.

Visit a meeting in person or watch it on Channel 25. Why?

For example, consider the promise Seaside's new mayor made while on the political stump a few weeks ago. Paraphrasing Ian N. Oglesby's campaign rhetoric, here's what I heard him say: "During my first 30 days in office, homelessness will be tackled."

Well, month number one just ended--and guess what? The politician with the twinkle that lights up his brown eyes, like the fabled green flashes across the sky when the sun is setting on the Monterey Bay, wasn't booming out false thunder.

Homelessness Is On Seaside's Agenda

By mid-January, Mayor Oglesby had announced the possibility of converting the old, now vacant mobile Social Security office on county land at Noche Buena and Broadway into the warming shelter that's been kicked like a boondogglers' can all around the peninsula for years.

The last two weeks of the new council's honeymoon month produced a major announcement that a Town Hall Meeting about homelessness would be co-hosted by new Seaside City Councilman Jon Wizard and Dave Pacheco, veteran councilmember and current mayor pro tempore.

“Homelessness on the Bay” should prove as important to the second wave of homeless women now in the spotlight as the 2013 “Homeless and Hungry in Paradise” Symposium, produced by Timothy Barrett, was to the first wave of local women without housing.

“Homeless On The Bay” Town Hall Invites You

The Homeless on the Bay Town Hall Meeting will be Wednesday, February 13, 2019, 6 p.m., at Oldemeyer Center, 986 Hilby Avenue, Seaside. For information, call 831-521-0577.

It is open to the entire peninsula-wide public, not only Seaside residents.

Along with elected officials and representatives of public and private agencies and non-profits that help the homeless, homeless men and women are urged to attend and speak for themselves.

For instance, Leah Thomson, 57, stroke survivor featured in this series a few weeks ago, was in need of a trailer; she apparently got her 30-foot vehicle, along with a volunteer who towed it for her, according to posts on Nextdoor.

Thanks to the unknown benefactor(s) who helped Leah triumph over crisis.

Leah, if you’re reading this column, please let us know how you did it! Your testimony could help others understand better how to succeed in staving off the terrifying prospect of homelessness that drove 69-year-old CeliaSue Hecht to the brink of suicide last week.

Update On CeliaSue And Cici

Although she reached the edge, I am happy to report that CeliaSue didn’t go over it.

She has been in Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula (CHOMP) recovering from a procedure for congestive heart failure, a painful, life-threatening condition exacerbated by having to sit in her van while nearly freezing. She is awaiting possible surgery for breast cancer that recurred after three years of being cancer free.

CeliaSue’s beloved dog Cici is being cared for by a dog boarding facility.

Where will they go after CeliaSue’s surgery?

CeliaSue told me, “I cannot, will not, must not live in my van again.”

Any suggestions or help you can offer, be it an enclosed porch, extra room, shed, small trailer or garage in which CeliaSue and Cici can stay, is welcome. Email CeliaSue at cshechtwriter@gmail.com.

How Can You Help?

Attend the Homelessness on the Bay event, purpose of which is to discuss the proposed homeless shelter in Seaside, outline challenges faced on the Monterey Peninsula, and share ideas about positive actions.

Consider joining the Homeless Committee established in 2018 by former Seaside City Councilmember Kayla Jones, who resigned effective December 1. For details, contact Homeless Commissioner Kenneth Raye Murray, Pastor of Ocean View Baptist Church, 1200 Amador Ave., Seaside, at 831-394-2102 or email pastormurray@icloud.com. Until about a year ago, he was homeless.

If you’d like to catch a flash of the twinkle in Mayor Oglesby’s eyes, attend City Council meetings at Seaside City Hall, 440 Harcourt Ave., Seaside, 7 p.m., the first and third Thursdays each month, unless a special 5:30 p.m. meeting is scheduled.

Meetings and agendas are posted at <https://www.ci.seaside.ca.us>.

Why did I compare a Seaside City Council meeting to a tent revival? Because, being a city with 35,000 residents and 30 churches, Seaside's like each council meeting to open with a prayer. If, as happened recently, a prayer doesn't precede the Pledge of Allegiance, someone from the audience will provide an ad-libbed invocation during Public Comments that will be answered by "amens" and even "hallelujahs" from all around the council chamber.

You'll also hear outbursts that include hoots, boos, shouts, laughter, clapping and cheers. That's why I nicknamed Seaside's new homeless-tackling city council the "Boondoggle Busters."

Go, team, go!!

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CREDITS: This photo of Seaside's new mayor Ian N. Oglesby, taken a few years ago when he was mayor pro tempore on Mayor Ralph Rubio's city council team, captures the twinkle that flashes into his eyes the way legendary green light is rumored to highlight the Monterey Bay horizon at the moment of sunset.

Photo courtesy City of Seaside

This column appears weekly in Cedar Street Times, Pacific Grove, California's Hometown Newspaper, online at www.cedarstreettimes.com. Contact Wanda Sue Parrott, 831-899-5887, amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com

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