

IN OUR OPINION

No, we don't need permission to report on meetings

Coupeville Mayor Molly Hughes doesn't seem to understand a really basic function of a newspaper, or this thing called the First Amendment.

She also doesn't seem to have a very high opinion of the intelligence of downtown merchants.

During a recent council meeting, she criticized the *Whidbey News-Times* for reporting on what was said during a prior public meeting because she felt it swayed the opinions of some merchants before she had the chance to sway their opinions herself.

Although online, it was a meeting open to the public — by law.

The governor's proclamation regarding public meetings during the pandemic was very specific about remote meetings being open to the public through telephone access at a minimum and that everyone who attends the meeting is supposed to be able to hear each other talk.

The Coupeville meetings have been less public-friendly than many other government meetings on Whidbey Island. It's hard to tell who's speaking and audience comments haven't been allowed during the meetings, though that changed this week.

Newspapers have reported on public meetings since the formation of this nation. It's the job of newspapers to inform the public about what its government representatives are doing. The importance of the public knowing what the government is doing is the reason for the state's comprehensive Sunshine Laws. The media doesn't wait for the "go ahead" from public officials.

During the meeting, Hughes asked the council for permission to temporarily close Front Street to cars to create more space for pedestrians to safely move around. The council told her to move forward with it, which makes sense.

It was a good idea.

But during the following meeting, Hughes claimed some merchants read about her plan in the newspaper before she could get to them, and therefore they came out against it.

Hughes gave up on her proposal. She said the headline caused confusion because it made the decision sound more final than it was, which somehow contributed to people being against the idea.

"Ideally, it would have been nice for all of the businesses to gather in a public meeting and any interested residents that wanted to come and listen and give their two cents," Hughes said.

Gosh. If only something like that existed. People could give their opinions, the council could make decisions and the newspaper could report on what the council does.

Almost like democracy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protests

Need to return to values that made country great

Editor,

I have lived most of my life in the 20th century. I did two combat cruises, one in Vietnam and one in the Gulf. I taught school, coached wrestling and am involved in state and local politics.

These last three months, I have seen things happen I never would have thought possible in the United States of America. We saw the American and world economy nearly destroyed by a virus that, in the USA, has an overall death rate of less than 1%. I saw our governor violate the U.S. Constitution and take away our God given rights. The same governor, and the mayor of Seattle, abdicated their responsibility to the people of the state by allowing the riots to take place in some of the state's largest cities.

This has not happened just here, but across the nation. These riots are because of a police officer who had numerous complaints against him for use of excessive force, once again used excessive force that resulted in the death of a man. This man was not the "saint" portrayed by the media, but was a man with a drug and violence record. He was high on drugs at the time of his death. His death was senseless, and the police officers were arrested and should already be sentenced to prison. Is there any rioting and protesting over the police officers who were killed doing their duty as a result of these demonstrations?

This said, we have demonstrations against the police, nation and a call for "defunding" law enforcement agencies across the nation. We have Black Lives Matter, a movement I think is based on lies, which came to prominence after another incident with a criminal, after committing robbery and attacking an officer. I believe their initial marches resulted in several officers being killed.

In the recent terrorist activities conducted by Antifa, which mirrors the way the German Brown Shirts got control for Hitler.

There is a large portion of the citizens of the United States whose actions mirror what happened in Germany in the 1930s. We have a news media and members of the Democratic party that apparently push violence and lawlessness.

We need to get back to the values that made this country great. Love of God, family, country and holding political leaders accountable for their actions. Not the violence and division pushed by the socialists on the left of the political spectrum.

Joseph Moreland
Oak Harbor

Racists should educate selves before writing

Editor,

An appalling number of people seem to feel that now is the appropriate time to display their various forms of ignorance and racism.

Some recent writers of letters to the editor have produce an award-winning display of nonsensical, racist blather. Their views are undeniably racist. They have chosen this moment to show their true selves to our community.

I urge them to better educate themselves on the subject matter before throwing more of their vile, ill-informed opinions our way.

Troy Chapman
Langley

Trump

Letter writer was right; things can't get much worse

Editor,

I am writing in response to Richard Ays letter to the editor in the Saturday, June 13 *Whidbey News-Times*.



His letter said it all. After almost three and a half years in office to do all the fixing, "things can't get much worse." He was spot on.

Trump has done a terrible job, has squandered the great economy Obama left him, and has, or has tried, to dismantle every good thing Obama did.

Clearly Trump is not the answer.

Cheri L Filion
Clinton

Mutiny Bay

County should act swiftly to keep boat ramp open

Editor,

There has been a lot of community excitement surrounding a proposed five-year sand removal plan for the Mutiny Bay boat ramp on Robinson Road. The ramp is temporarily closed until a solution can be found to clear the sand.

A number of property owners on the beach are concerned

about sand that has been moved to their beachfront as a result of maintenance operations and about erosion of beach to the north of where sand has been relocated.

We are property owners on the south side of the boat ramp. We have also seen erosion to our beaches. I don't know the cause, but it seems unlikely to have anything to do with the boat ramp. Erosion is a fact on the beach. Much of the beach exists now only because actions were taken years ago to trap tidal sands. My family moved to Mutiny Bay in 1916. At that time, there was very little sand. It was mostly rocks.

There was boat access at this site for quite some time, on the order of 50 years. A casual count of buoys in the bay shows that several dozen boats use the ramp for access to moorage in addition to the many watercraft, day sailors, etc. that use the ramp for recreational / fishing access to the bay. Most of these people do not own property on the beach, but they have an interest in access to the water.

The ramp also provides access for rescue craft. Rescue

situations usually occur in the strong currents that run in the bay, making time of the essence in recovery operations.

While there may be better ways to relocate sand from the boat ramp, it would be an unacceptable shame to see the ramp closed entirely. Shoreline management means just that: finding a balance vs taking the extreme action to close the ramp to the community at large. Some possibilities for sand relocation could include placing sand on the upland portion of the park adjacent to the boat ramp.

This would make the park more usable for beach activities, such as volleyball, and not intrude on property rights of owners. Those in the community or Island County administration may have other ideas but simply abandoning the boat ramp is not in the community's interests.

We believe that the county should act swiftly and responsibly to keep the ramp open and to use its authorities to ensure local community and community-at-large needs are addressed.

Mike Christen and Jami
Robinson Christen
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All letters must be signed, include your city of residence and, for verification purposes, a contact telephone number. Mail letters to:

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