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CITY OF YACHATS

29 January 2016
293 W 3rd St
Yachats, OR

Yachats City Council, Yachats, OR 97498

Dear City Councilors,

I would like to let you know how much I appreciate having our Code Enforcement Officer, Don Niskanen, here in Yachats.

During the second and third weeks of January my neighbors and I realized that there was a car parked on Pontiac Street here in Yachats that had been there a long time. By the time we started talking to each other about it, it had been parked on the west side of Pontiac, just outside the Yachats Ladies' Club and across the street from the Little Log Church, for approximately 2 weeks. It was a late model Mazda SUV and had California license plates. Once parked there, it never moved. It might not have made a particular impression on anyone except for the fact that there was a live dog inside, so we worried about the dog's welfare.

Only occasionally would I see the apparent owner of the car arrive to care for the dog, and once I was able to speak with her. She was a well-dressed young woman who told me her name was Erin, the dog's name was Lizzie. She said that her car had a dead battery and that she was waiting for a friend of hers to meet her here to help her get the car going again. She said she didn't know anyone here, and that she was camping. She was difficult to speak with, since she kept turning away, walking away, and did not seem to want to talk with me. She didn't ask me for help, although if she had been more receptive I could have offered it. None of my neighbors ever found an opportunity to talk with her.

So her car stayed there a couple more weeks, during which time I saw her come and go a few times. Frankie's firemen at the fire station around the corner checked up on the dog, which seemed to be frisky and well-treated. We all worried about this mysterious and evasive young woman and her dog, but didn't want to intrude on her private life since she didn't seem to want our help.

I finally spoke about it with Don Niskanen. He said he would check into it, since there is a city ordinance that states a vehicle can't be parked on a public street in Yachats for longer than 72 hours.

He found the young woman in the car, and spoke with her about the ordinance, and told her it would have to be moved. He said she seemed stressed, and explained to him that it was out of gas and the battery was dead. He went home, got his jumper-cables and a can of gasoline, and worked with the car until he got it started. He then gave her a little money, directed her to the gas station in Waldport, and gave her directions to My Sister's Place Women's Shelter in Newport. She left, expressing her thanks to him.

Don was kind and helpful to this young woman while carrying out his duties as Code Enforcement Officer. He went out of his way to get her car started and told her about a safe destination once she was mobile again. This was perhaps a small problem, but Don handled it well, and my neighbors and I appreciate his intervention and the positive outcome he facilitated.

Sincerely,
Peggy Speer, 293 W 3rd St, Yachats 541.547.4431