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Is A.W. SHUCKS A BAR OR A RESTAURANT?

■ Valuable permit could be at stake

By MARY SCHLEY

A COMPLAINT that an Ocean Avenue establishment isn’t operating in accordance with its use permit as one of the city’s three allowed “drinking establishments” led to a protracted debate at last week’s Carmel Planning Commission meeting, when the chair blamed alcohol consumption for being a factor in “any crime that’s ever recorded in this country” and said having a bar permit go essentially unused is better for everyone.

The commission was asked to weigh in on the issue — namely, that A.W. Shucks in the Doud Arcade is functioning more as a restaurant even though its use permit designates it as a drinking establishment — after the city “received correspondence questioning whether or not the operation is legal and whether or not the operation is in violation of the conditions of approval in the use permit resolution,” planning director Anna Ginette said at the Oct. 8 meeting. She did not identify the person who complained.

Limited service

Stripping A.W. Shucks of its bar permit could benefit someone else who wants to open a drinking establishment in the city. For instance, Sade’s — a Lincoln Street bar which is losing its lease and may have to shut down since the bar permit belongs to the landlord — could potentially relocate if another permit becomes available. And, for the record, owner Parker Logan said he is not the person who complained.

Muddying the issue, A.W. Shucks has been counted as one of the 15 restaurants allowed on Ocean Avenue, as well as one of the city’s three bars, and the business license



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

A.W. Shucks is a busy spot on Ocean Avenue for food and drinks, but doubts have been raised whether it has the correct permit.

issued to owner Karen Basi after she and her husband bought it in 2023 lists “full-line restaurant” as the primary use, and “drinking establishment” as the ancillary use.

The license also says the operators must comply with the use permit approved in 1993 which lists it as a drinking place that provides limited food, with hours of 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday. It was issued to Murray Weaver and Paul Elliot, who were planning to buy “Maxwell McFly’s, an existing bar that has been in continuous use for many years,” but wanted to amend the use “to include a seafood menu to be served at an ‘oyster bar.’”

Sloppy permitting?

“The permittee shall not be authorized to establish a full kitchen with stove, grill or oven,” the permit states. “Food service shall be limited to a microwave oven, gas steamer, soup preparation and refrigeration facilities. No takeout food shall be allowed.”

Basi’s business license also states that failure to comply with the permit could result in the revocation of the license, the permit or both.

In mid- and late- 1990s, the planning department approved building permits for more kitchen equipment,

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Porter’s tailspin spices up California race for governor

THE BATTLE to replace Gavin Newsom in the California governor’s mansion was pretty boring until last week, when a video of candidate Katie Porter losing it on a CBS News reporter went viral.

The two-minute clip shows the leading Democratic candidate threatening to walk out on a taped interview after investigative journalist Julie Watts asked her this simple question: “What do you say to the 40 percent of California voters, who you’ll need in order to win, who

Capitol Access

By CAITLIN CONRAD

voted for Trump?”

To which Porter responded, “How would I need them in order to win, ma’am?” — before throwing a temper tantrum.

Porter’s attitude toward Watts in the video is more than a little ironic. The former Orange County congresswoman made a name for herself in Washington as a whiteboard-wielding single mom who asked tough questions during hearings and drove a minivan with a license plate reading OVRSITE.

Trailing on the issues

Watts’ question was not only fair, but entirely relevant. A poll of 1,000 likely California voters released this month by John Zogby Strategies showed Porter leading among Democrats with 24.8 percent of the vote, but she trailed Republican candidate, Steve Hilton, when voters were shown specific campaign messaging. The poll identified cost of living, homelessness and crime as top concerns for voters, who said they preferred Hilton to Porter by 29 to 23 percent when it comes to the issues.

It would be one thing if the CBS video was the only clip

See **RACE** page 20A

Water allocations on hold after plea from resources boss

By MARY SCHLEY

LAST MONTH, the Carmel Planning Commission recommended allocating 14 acre-feet of water the city is getting from the regional wastewater recycling project to various categories so people can start using it. Last week, the city council was asked to approve those allocations but didn’t, making the new water untouchable for at least another month.

With the Pure Water Monterey expansion expected to come online next week (see page 23A), the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District decided to boost the city’s share of the Peninsula’s water supply to 16.661 acre-feet, or 5.4 million gallons, per year, and at the planning commission’s September meeting, commissioner Stephanie Locke — who has been the district’s water demand manager for 37 years — recommended distributing it to various categories, rather than leaving the bulk of it in unallocated reserve. Water permit moratoriums of various kinds have been in effect on the Monterey Peninsula since the late 1980s.

Should new water go to residents and housing, or something else?

Needs of property owners

“I want to encourage the planning commission to recommend a revised proposal that will allow our village to beautify, and meet the various needs of property owners,” she said at the time, and her colleagues agreed, unanimously voting to recommend adding 3 acre-feet to the category for low-income and very-low-income housing, earmarking 6 acre-feet for a new category combining single-family and multifamily housing, allocating 2 acre-feet for commercial uses, and designating the remaining 3 acre-feet for municipal projects.

At the Oct. 7 council meeting, principal planner Marnie Waffle recommended the council follow the commission’s direction, and she posed a few questions, including

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Dem rep. celebrates release of hostages in Gaza

By KELLY NIX

CARMEL VALLEY congressman Jimmy Panetta credited President Donald Trump for his role in an Israel-Hamas peace plan last week that led to the terror group releasing 20 Israelis. He also called for a lot more humanitarian aid in Gaza and efforts to rebuild the area.

On Monday, Hamas freed the remaining living hostages that the group abducted on Oct. 7, 2023, after an attack in which 1,200 Israelis were killed. As part of an Oct. 8 deal brokered by the Trump administration, Israel released about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, some of whom had been convicted of murder, terrorism and other violent crimes.

Panetta, who’s visited Israel seven times since being elected to Congress nine years ago, including three times after Hamas’ 2023 terror attack, celebrated the release of the Israeli captives.

“I hope and pray that as the hostages reunite with their loved ones, they also can begin to heal after the unthinkable torture and misery they have endured at the cruel hands of the Hamas terrorist organization,” Panetta said.

He credited Trump for helping to broker the Gaza peace plan.

‘Grateful for pressure’

“I am grateful for the pressure exerted on Israel and Hamas by President Donald Trump and his administration,” said the congressman, who also recognized “the

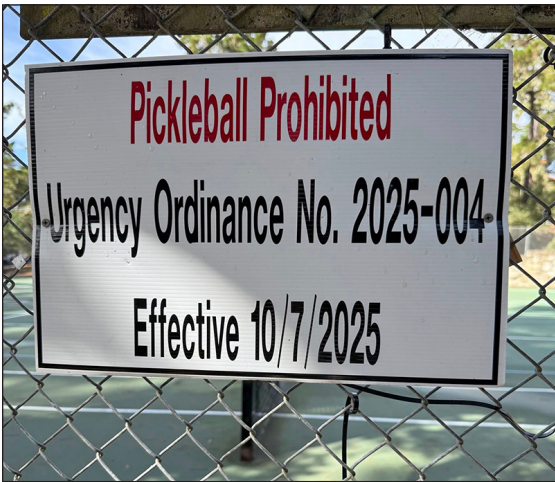
hard work by the Biden administration to reach this pivotal moment.”

The Pine Cone asked Panetta if he believes peace between the two enemies will hold.

“Based on my numerous visits to Israel since being in Congress, and many more times to the Middle East, I realize how complicated the issues are, not just between

See **GAZA** page 18A

Silencing the rackets



PHOTO/CRA VIA FACEBOOK

The ink was barely dry on a Carmel City Council urgency ordinance banning pickleball when this sign was posted at Forest Hill Park. See page 6A.