

Legal weed in Seaside: Councilors to 'watch what happens' with law

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — The Seaside City Council decided they can't fight the state when it comes to recreational marijuana.

"You passed an ordinance that allows medical marijuana dispensaries," City Manager Mark Winstanley said at Monday night's council meeting. "The state of Oregon has allowed recreational sales to be sold Oct. 1 from medical marijuana dispensaries. Does the city want to take action to stop that, or do you simply want to stand back and let that go into place?"

"We could either stop it right now, or see how it evolves in the next 14, 15, 16 months," City Attorney Dan Van Thiel said.

By the end of the night, councilors chose the latter.

Approval and review

Last week, Seaside Planning Director Kevin Cupples approved the sale of recreational cannabis from licensed medical dispensaries, including Highway 420 and Cannabis Nation.

In granting the licenses, Cupples asked for "any direction from the council" in the

city's regulatory policy.

Councilors, several of whom had recently returned from the League of Oregon Cities in Bend, showed little appetite for revisiting the issue.

"In Bend and other cities they are not doing any other action," City Councilor Randy Frank said. "It would actually take us effort to say 'no.'"

Currently, Seaside prohibits the sale of medical marijuana in the city's downtown core. Cannabis dispensaries are subject to state rules.

City Councilor Dana Phillips, who also attended the League of Oregon Cities event, said she was concerned that the city needed to take action to prohibit dispensary zoning restrictions.

"I want to make sure medical and recreational are not available in the downtown city core," Phillips said. "The medical is but we haven't talked about the recreational part."

City Councilor Tita Montero said she was distressed by the state's rule changes, lack of organization and staff, and the potential for future rule changes that could limit local rule-making. "I want us to enact something that says we will not have recreational cannabis in our

town until everything is pulled together in January 2017," she said.

Facing 'the inevitable'

Councilors Jay Barber, Don Johnson and Seth Morrisey were inclined to let the law take its course.

"It appears to me that we've been preempted by the state in terms of their action," Barber said. "I'm thinking we use the next 15 months as a period of work to determine what we want to do in terms of where we want recreational marijuana to be sold, what we can do to limit that. Until then I wonder if we really have the right or privilege to say 'no.'"

"I look at the inevitable," Johnson said. "It's time for us to let the marijuana issue go and see how it develops. If it becomes an issue, we can look again at it at a later date. The sale of recreational marijuana is coming. It's starting Oct. 1."

While councilors acknowledged they "didn't like the process," they agreed that the law had passed overwhelmingly at the city and state level.

"There's not a consensus, so let's move on to the next item," Mayor Don Larson said.

Warrenton city website hacked

No personal information was compromised, police chief says

The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The city of Warrenton's website was hijacked Saturday morning, but the intrusion did not compromise the personal information of staff, employees, vendors, businesses or customers, according to Police Chief Matt Workman.

When the hack was discovered, the main webpage had been replaced by a single image of what appeared to be graves with wooden crosses and a derogatory message about the United States' presence in Iraq, accompanied by a song that would play in a foreign language.

The city's information

technology provider advised that the website is hosted by a third-party vendor and is not connected to any of the city servers, where customer information is stored. The provider contacted the third-party host and believes the webpage was hijacked through a FTP site where city staff uploads information and news to the website.

All access credentials have been changed to prevent further intrusion.

Wauna Mill, union agree to new contract

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Georgia-Pacific and the United Steelworkers, the union that represents about 700 employees at the company's Wauna Mill, signed a new four-year labor agreement earlier this month.

Kristi Ward, a spokeswoman for Wauna Mill, the largest employer in Clatsop County, said the company and the union had been negotiating for more than a year and a half. She thanked employees for keeping up safety and efficiency during bargaining.

Bill Kerr, president of Local 1097, said the union took negotiations very seriously, with representatives from every mill at national-level negotiations. The local agreement coincided with a national four-year labor deal between the United Steelworkers and Georgia-Pacific. United Steelworkers is the largest industrial union in North America, representing about 10,000 Georgia-Pacific workers at 43 locations, along

with 130,000 paper workers and more than 850,000 workers nationwide.

"When we began meeting with (Georgia-Pacific) more than a year ago we had legitimate concerns that this round of bargaining would not end well," Jon Geenan, vice president of the United Steelworkers' paper sector, said in a release earlier this month.

Georgia-Pacific, Geenan said, had been trying to replace one-third of the workforce with temporary workers with little to no benefits, proposed to reduce the wages of current employees by 20 to 30 percent and sought to cut vacation allotment.

Those proposals "made us all wonder how we would find a path to a fair deal that preserved the very reasons we tolerate shift work, working

weekends and holidays, and the sometimes dangerous conditions that exist in our facilities — and ensuring a shot at future investment at the same time."

The union's release said the new labor agreement avoided the proposed cuts, improved income and benefits, enhanced insurance for death and dismemberment, kept above-average pensions, protected local bargaining rights and formed an agreement to focus on solving longer-term issues with excessive overtime.

Kerr said this is the second time United Steelworkers has negotiated a contract with Georgia-Pacific since the company was purchased for \$21 billion in 2005 by Koch Industries, owned by conservative billionaires Charles and David Koch.

FBI statistics show less crime in Clatsop County

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

The FBI's crime statistics for 2014 show a decrease in most Clatsop County cities.

However, local law enforcement says the numbers do not tell the whole story.

"Certainly it's good for us to take a look at the numbers, but numbers can be misleading," Astoria Police Deputy Chief Eric Halverson said.

The statistics only focus on violent crimes — murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault — and property crimes — burglary, thefts, vehicle theft and arson.

In Astoria, violent crimes decreased from 33 in 2013 to 25 last year. Property crimes in Astoria also dropped from 445 in 2013 to 376 last year.

Warrenton only reported one violent crime in 2012, but none in 2013 or 2014. Property crimes in Warrenton slightly decreased from 167 in 2013 to 166 last year.

"The numbers are down. That is great. Our job is to work ourselves out of a job. We try to control those numbers as much as possible through our efforts," Halverson said. "I don't get too excited. We are not going to be getting complacent. You have to evaluate what the numbers mean."

Halverson said the FBI's statistics do not include behavioral issues such as disorderly conduct arrests, which often occur in Astoria.

The reported numbers also do not provide additional details. For a burglary, the report does not include the type of building, location in the city or how the entry happened.

The figures sent to the FBI are much more detailed than what is presented in the annual reports.

Overall, Astoria Police responded to 15,300 calls for service in 2014. The FBI

report only shows 401 cases.

Within its own monthly reports, Astoria Police are seeing calls for service increase.

Astoria Police Chief Brad Johnston presented a report to the City Council in September that highlighted calls received so far in 2015.

Year to date, Astoria Police responded to 363 disorderly conduct calls, 250 suspicious circumstances, 197 property crimes, 163 motor vehicle accidents, 156 animal complaints and 79 trespass complaints.

"It would be interesting to see what next year's (FBI numbers) look like. It's been one of the busiest years I can recall," Halverson said.

In South County, violent and property crimes increased mostly due to a busy year in Cannon Beach.

Cannon Beach recorded six violent crimes in 2014 — a murder, rape, robbery and three aggravated assaults. The city of

about 1,700 people had one violent crime last year.

The murder relates to Jessica Smith, the mother accused of killing one daughter and injuring another in July 2014.

Property crimes in Cannon Beach shot up to 55 last year from 38 in 2013.

Seaside did not submit statistics for the report in 2014. The city had a total of eight violent crimes and 554 property crimes in 2013.

Gearhart had one violent crime and 14 property crimes in 2014, an increase in both categories.

The annual Crime in the United States report is compiled by voluntary information from law enforcement agencies across the country. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program collects the data from more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies for the report, which has been produced since 1930.

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