



## Builder's fees to help meet housing need

### Tax on building permits would fund affordable housing

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

City councilors approved an excise tax Tuesday, June 6, designed to fund affordable housing projects. In a 4-1 vote, councilors approved

a 1 percent tax that would be applied to building permits — so if someone applied for a permit to build \$200,000 home, \$2,000 would go into the fund.

If the surcharge was applied to commercial and residential permits in 2016, the tax would have yielded about \$96,000, City Planner Mark Barnes said.

Councilors who voted for the tax supported any way for the city to raise money for affordable housing projects, as well as the builder incen-

**Councilors approved a 1 percent tax that would be applied to building permits.**

tives that would waive the tax if the proposed units were affordable.

What projects are chosen and assessed to be affordable — which means households intended for people with incomes 80 percent of the

median county income — would be decided by the City Council.

But Councilor George Vetter, the one dissenting vote, took issue with the principle of taxing a small group of people to solve what he calls “a community problem” in Cannon Beach.

“I would much prefer to see this issue solved with a general obligation bond,” Vetter said. “In a citizen survey, the people identified this as a community problem. I’d like to see the solution come from their pocketbooks.”

Vetter also said that he doesn’t think the waiver will be enough to entice developers.

“We’re talking about market value,” he said. “To get the best return, we would need to make up with some kind of subsidy.”

Other cities like Salem and Portland have passed similar taxes, while Astoria is still considering the option.

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### Council votes to negotiate lease at center

## Cannon Beach Academy finds a home



BRENNNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Cannon Beach Academy board member Phil Simmons, Lisa Nofield and academy board President Kellye Dewey all celebrate after the City Council vote to negotiate a lease for the former Children's Center.

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

When the City Council voted unanimously to begin lease negotiations with Cannon Beach Academy, a feeling of elation and relief enveloped the council chambers.

“We did it,” Amy Moore, the newly hired executive director of Cannon Beach Academy, said fighting back tears. “It’s a small battle that we won, but it’s progress. We’re doing this for future generations, for the kids in this town.”

The council’s vote Tuesday confirmed the academy can move forward in negotiating a lease for the city-owned, former Preschool and Children’s Center at 3781 S. Hemlock, which

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BRENNNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Cannon Beach Academy Executive Director Amy Moore tears up as Cannon Beach city councilors vote to pursue lease negotiations with the school.

## City fills interim manager post

### Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn to replace Brant Kucera

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn will serve as interim city manager starting in July.

After 2½ years in Cannon Beach, City Manager Brant Kucera is leaving at the end of the month to become the city manager of Sisters, citing the need for “a change of pace.”

“Sisters is a small city but it’s growing fast and I find that opportunity really appealing to me,” Kucera said at the end of May.

Schermerhorn was suggested as a candidate because he had served as an interim city manager briefly between former city manager Rich Mays’ retirement and interim city manager Jennie Messer in 2014, Kucera said, and is familiar with the duties.

“He is well-liked and well-known throughout the community,” Kucera said.

The City Council voted unanimously for Schermerhorn.

Selecting the police chief also means the city does not have to spend time or resources finding, hiring and training an interim pick from outside City Hall.

Schermerhorn has been the police chief of Cannon Beach since 2012, and before then was a sergeant for Seaside Police from 2005 to 2012. He received a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Western Oregon University.

He will be receiving Kucera’s salary during the interim.

City councilors chose Jensen Strategies based out of Portland to lead the nationwide search to fill Kucera’s position by November. During a work session Tuesday, councilors chose Jensen Strategies because they exclusively recruit for Oregon cities, and coincidentally was the firm that selected Kucera to be city manager in Sisters. The process will cost \$24,000, plus additional expenses.

A meeting with the firm is scheduled Monday, June 26.

While summer is generally the busiest time for law enforcement in Cannon Beach, Schermerhorn said he was not concerned with an overwhelming workload. With how the hierarchy of the department works, Lt. Chris

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## Artists find canvas in the sand

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

The Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest has seen many changes in its 53 years.

Some of these changes are seen in the number of people, the competitors, and, of course, the sandcastles themselves.

But this tradition has one element that no tide can wash away: Debbie Nelson, the chairwoman of the Sandcastle planning committee.

Nelson has been the chairwoman for the past seven years, as well as a participant, judge or event organizer every year since the contest began in 1964.

“I have decades’ worth of Sandcastle shirts at my house,” Nelson said, laughing.

About 15,000 master artists, amateurs and spectators are ex-

pected to come to this year’s Sandcastle celebrations Friday through Sunday, June 16 through 18. Regular festivities, like the sandcastle building contest, parade and 5K fun run and walk, are all returning.

This time it will all happen in a special context: the 50th anniversary of the Oregon Beach Bill. There will be information at the event this year for visitors interested in learning more about the bill that passed in 1967 and declared the Oregon Coast open to the public.

“It’s because of this bill that we can continue to do this,” Nelson said.

Shortly after the bill’s passage, Nelson remembers going to the first Sandcastle Contest when she was 4 — the year after a tsunami hit the North Coast.

She remembers first festivities

being small and mostly local.

“The town didn’t really advertise,” she said. “It was to help quell fears after the tidal wave.”

Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel also remembers participating in the early days of the festival, when most contestants were kids and families rather than world-class artists.

“Families would get plots next to each other, and then help each other out with each other’s creations,” he said.

### Ebbing and flowing

Now, the contest has become the oldest west of the Mississippi River, attracting up to 30,000 people and some of the world’s most competitive sandcastle makers.

Steidel — who, like Nelson, is a lifelong Cannon Beach resident

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