



Mayor Kate McBride, center, speaks after the Peace Pole unveiling at Waterfront Park. At left, with folder in hand, is Peace Committee Chair Steve Schmidt. Kirby Neumann-Rea photo

PEACE Ten trees to be planted in honor

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Rotary pole: Gaelic, Somali and Hmong, along with Hindi. Schmidt said this is in honor of Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris, whose mother is a native of India.

Also new this year is the regional indigenous language Kikitscht. Schmidt asked Arlita Rhoan, a Warm Springs tribe member, to translate “as close as possible” to the peace phrase.

English and Spanish figures on every Rotary Peace pole. Also featured are American Sign Language and Braille.

About 20 Rotarians and city officials, including City Manager Rachael Fuller, attended the event. Before McBride pulled away a sash binding the cloth draped on

the pole, Schmidt joked that “we do this unveiling without scissors.”

The local club pays for part of the cost of the poles, but the Jubitz Foundation subsidizes them all around Rotary District 5100, encompassing most of the Northwest. An explanatory plaque will be placed in concrete later.

“Thank you to Rotary. We get a lot of traffic down here, local and tourists,” McBride said. “It reminds everyone that peace is what brings us together.”

Schmidt also presented McBride with a certificate stating that 10 trees will be planted in honor of the new pole, as part of the Rotary Peace Pole Project.

“We thank you for asking us and for getting it installed. It was no work for us, and very much appreciated,” McBride said.

Schmidt added, “I think it’s really going to draw some attention and maybe provoke some thoughts about how people can be part of peace

in their home, maybe their community, eventually their nation, and who knows, peace on earth is eventually the goal.”

The pole joins others at Nichols Basin, Hood River Library (Oak Street stairs), and Nichols Basin. The dedication at last year’s addition, at Children’s Park, featured a short talk by a Brazilian Rotary exchange student, in Portuguese, part of Rotary’s tradition of adding the language of that year’s visiting Rotary student. Due to COVID-19, no exchange student is living in Hood River this year. Schmidt said he is working with Hood River County School District to place the next pole at Hood River Valley High School, after students are back to on-site learning.

(A similar pole exists adjacent to Brick Stratton Park, just above the Overlook Memorial Fountain park on State Street, but it was placed before Rotary started its installations.)

Janeck joins City of Hood River as Public Works Director



Mark Janeck

Following an extensive search process, the City of Hood River has selected Mark Janeck as the City of Hood River’s

new public works director. Janeck’s first day was Sept. 21.

Since 2015, Janeck served as director of public works and engineering in Wheeling, Ill., a city with a population of 40,000. For six years prior, he was director of community development and engineering in Wheeling. Janeck also has 13 years private sector experience in numerous

areas of the Midwest. He has been a land developer and land-use consultant to private companies, municipalities and land owners.

“Becoming public works director for the City of Hood River will be a welcome challenge,” Janeck said.

“Problem solving to obtain positive results has been the most enjoyable part of my recent municipal positions. I strive to develop and maintain solid relationships with residents, colleagues, and contractors.”

Janeck has a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture and Urban Design from Syracuse University, and a Master

of Science in Urban and Regional Planning/Real Estate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

City Manager Rachael Fuller said, “The city has recently initiated a number of operational, maintenance and capital projects and Mark’s skills and background will allow him to hit the ground running. Mark’s experience as both private developer and public works director will be particularly important as the city continues to address barriers to low- and middle-income housing. We are pleased to welcome him to the organization and to the community.”

PRIORITIES City to consider continuing parklets

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argued that ongoing projects will take up much of the city’s resources.

“Council members ... agreed that 2021 should be a year to be conservative in the budgeting process as a number of projects are carrying over into the new year and the economic outlook for 2021 is somewhat uncertain,” Keethler wrote in the memo. “Once the city council establishes the priority policy areas, it will be up to the mayor and staff to develop

implementation measures which may include funding within the 2021 budget or specific actions items at the staff and committee level.”

Councilor Jim Ransier pitched ideas such as beautifying downtown, mitigating fire hazards and adding a position to the Bingen-White Salmon Police Department.

“Finding ways to take some of the social services responsibility that are on the police’s radar and having another person in the police department who can focus more on social service situations ... if there’s ways to essentially let our police not have to be social workers that feels something that would be interesting to do,” Ransier said.

Originally a temporary

fix, the city will also be looking into continuing the practice of allowing parklets to support local restaurant operations as they navigate through the ongoing pandemic.

Regarding street infrastructure, city staff floated different funding strategies to improve streets, including filing a levy for election specifically for street repairs.

Councilors also called for a more aggressive plan to work with Republic Services to expand the services the city residents receive.

City staff from here on out will draw up options for councilors to work with given their expected revenue for next year, and will prepare a budget for council approval.

Man arrested for harassment related to sexual assault charges

By Emily Fitzgerald
Columbia Gorge News



Oscar Jimenez

A local man released from NORCOR while waiting for his case to go through Hood River County Circuit Court now faces additional Harassment and Contempt of Court charges for allegedly violating a no-contact order on his release agreement.

Oscar Jimenez, 32, was first arrested in November 2019 on three charges of Sexual Abuse in the First Degree, a felony, for allegedly groping a child under the age of 10 between June and November 2019.

Hood River County Circuit Court approved Jimenez’ conditional release agreement on Nov. 21, 2019, with special conditions that he have no contact with any child under the age of 18, have no contact with the child associated with the case (name withheld by press), have no contact with specified members of the child’s family, and stay away from the family’s residences in Parkdale and The Dalles.

The case was repeatedly held up in Circuit Court while the parties negotiated, and as of press time, Jimenez’ plea hearing and sentencing was scheduled for Nov. 9, 2020.

Nearly a year later — on Sept. 27, 2020, at around 9:30 p.m. — the Hood River County Sheriff’s Office responded to a 911 call from the family’s residence in Parkdale, where a family member specified in the no-contact order on Jimenez’ release agreement (name withheld by press) reported that Jimenez had been texting her all day and had tried to get into their home earlier that day.

She said Jimenez first tried banging on the door at approximately 7 p.m., and when she locked the doors and said

she would call the police, he told her that he was leaving and asked her not to call the cops, but then returned about 10 minutes later and tried to “slam through” a side window. She then called 911, and Jimenez left.

According to the responding deputy’s incident report, the family member and Jimenez had been romantically involved before his arrest and she said that Jimenez had discovered via social media a couple weeks prior that she was seeing another man “and had ‘lost it’ since then.”

The responding deputy confirmed that she’d been receiving texts and missed calls from Jimenez for about a week, with Jimenez offering to pay for firewood and asking what she’s doing.

She told the deputy that “she’s afraid he’ll kill her

if she doesn’t (respond)” and described instances of Jimenez “trying to influence her by telling her he was going to take her kids, etc.”


A HRCISO deputy located Jimenez’ car and arrested him at approximately 10 p.m. on Sept. 27.

He was lodged at NORCOR on Sept. 27, according to HRCISO records. The District Attorney’s office filed a motion for an arrest motion on Oct. 1 and Jimenez was officially booked into NORCOR on Oct. 2.

A new conditional release agreement — with the same no contact order and an additional \$27,000 bail — was signed by a Hood River judge on Oct. 5, but Jimenez was still in NORCOR custody as of press time.

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