

LaMear: Council voted to select Russ Warr as president

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first hiccup happened Monday night. Nemlowill nominated Councilor Russ Warr as council president, who presides when the mayor is absent. But her motion did not receive a second and died. Price then nominated Councilor Drew Herzig, but her motion also died for lack of a second.

Zemlowill nominated Warr again, and, this time, LaMear seconded the motion. The council voted unanimously to select Warr as president. Warr had been excused from the meeting and was not in attendance.

On a night that consisted mostly of ceremony — LaMear also administered the oath of office to Brad Johnston, the police chief and assistant city manager — the council took care of several items.

The City Council authorized bids for the renovation of the Astoria Senior Center. The city had received a \$1.5 million community development block grant and the senior center's patrons pledged another \$95,000 for the work, but the council decided last June to delay bidding, hoping to attract lower bids during the slower construction months during the winter.

City Manager Brett Estes told the council that bids would likely be due in late February and that a construction contract could come back before the council in March. Construction could start in March and the renovation could be completed by August.

The council also agreed to award a \$9,230 contract to Weatherguard Inc. for a new roof on Shively Hall, the event facility overseen by the parks and recreation department. The existing roof is leaking and causing damage to the hall.

And the council adopted a resolution establishing a library renovation fund for im-



Former Mayor Willis Van Dusen swears in Mayor Arline LaMear during the City Council meeting Monday.

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provements to the library. The council accepted a \$7,400 donation from the estate of Ruth Jensen, the late teacher and librarian, to furnish the children's room in a renovated library and to act as possible seed money for other private contributions.

Herzig sought assurances from Estes that the new library renovation fund would not commit the city to renovating the library at a specific location. Some have questioned, for example, whether the library should be expanded into the decaying Waldorf Hotel.

"So the word 'renovation' does not commit us to any plan or any location?" Herzig asked.



Councilor Cindy Price speaks with City Manager Brett Estes during the City Council meeting Monday.

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Estes explained that it was purely a term given to the



Gretchen Easton, right, pins a badge to Sgt. Chris McNeary after he was sworn in during the City Council meeting Monday. The Astoria Police Department announced McNeary's promotion to sergeant Dec. 31.

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fund for the collection of donations.

Housing: There are no quick fixes to Cannon Beach's housing hurdle

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areas of expertise, will begin meeting in January and spend the next nine to 12 months developing recommendations for the City Council to address the problem.

This "think tank" is "the first step" toward making Cannon Beach more inclusive, Morrow said. The city's residents "can't be only seniors who can afford \$3 million homes."

What's available

So what are the most "affordable" homes in Cannon Beach right now?

In the second week of December, the cheapest house for sale was a one-story, 832-square-foot two-bedroom, two-bathroom house built in 1977 at 248 Elliott Way. Its listing price was \$249,900.

The property is a short walking distance from town, which is often a selling point, Risley said. But it's also about 2 1/2 blocks from U.S. Highway 101, so noise pollution may turn off a prospective buyer.

The roof is in good shape, but the gutter needs to be cleaned. Painted Looney Tunes characters adorn the walls of a bedroom (which, to some minds, may be an asset). The garage cannot fit a regular-sized car and would probably make more sense as a workshop, she said.

"I think (the house is) pretty well priced," she said. "I don't see a lot of work that needs to be done to it right away."

The second cheapest was a cabin-style duplex at 136 and 138 E. Jefferson St., built in 1946 and selling for \$264,000. Each 522-square-foot dwelling boasts one bedroom, one



The cheapest house in Cannon Beach during the second week of December is this one at 248 Elliott Way. It is listed at \$249,900.

ERICK BENGEL — EO Media Group

bathroom, a loft area and a front deck. Whoever buys the property could live in one side and rent out the other to help pay for the investment.

The home, cozy as it is, would probably not work for a couple with one or more children, but it might work for a single parent, Risley said. Though the loft could use a guardrail and the lack of privacy might be a problem, the cabin is a short walk from the beach — something the current renter, Eric Kliewer, and his son make the most of, he said.

"It would take the right person" to live there, one who "could be flexible," Risley said.



Eric Kliewer, who rents half of a house on East Jefferson Street, explains how he gets the most use out of the cozy space, which includes a loft. The building is listed at \$264,000.

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The third one down the list was a three-bedroom, three-bathroom, one-story house at 3648 W. Chi-

nook Ave., in the Haystack Heights neighborhood, east of Highway 101, priced at \$285,000.

The 1,582-square foot home, built in 1975, has a double garage, freshly painted white walls and new laminate hardwood flooring. The neighbors in Haystack Heights tend to be permanent residents rather than vacationers. And, with a partial view of the ocean and (on a clear day) the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse, it is "remarkable" that the home is listed under \$300,000, said Tommy Huntington, another real estate agent with Kamali Sotheby's.

But do any of these three

places really qualify as "affordable housing"?

"Not really. That's the best we have in Cannon Beach right now," Risley said. "In this price range, there just isn't much to choose from."

Obstacles

If the city wants to create more affordable housing, there are only so many tools it can work with, Cannon Beach City Manager Brant Kucera said.

One is to zone more densely to allow more multifamily housing units to be built per acre of land. "That's one of the main ways of doing it," he said. However, "that's not this community at all. This community is very much single-family homes."

More housing units could also clash with Cannon Beach's design tastes.

"There's no desire to see high-rises," he said. "The reason this town is really attractive to visitors is because of the way it looks, and if you start messing with the aesthetic, you might not have people visiting anymore at some point."

Yet another obstacle is that there's little inexpensive land to build on, and "the closer you are to the ocean, the more expensive it is," Risley said.

Finally, "we're very limited by our geography," Kucera said. "We're essentially built out at this point. There's nothing to build on. And expanding the urban growth boundary is not necessarily a viable option because the terrain doesn't allow you to build any more."

So, unlike communities with fewer restrictions, there are no quick fixes to Cannon Beach's housing problem.

"We have to find alternatives," he said.

Park: 'It was a labor of love, just like all these kinds of projects'

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Co., the sign is meant to bring the Clatsop-Nehalem "brand" back to the area, she said.

Walsh carved the letters herself in her studio with a chisel and mallet. Both the

10-foot-long sign and its base were milled from a cedar log from Tillamook.

Though the physical labor involved in shaping the wood took Walsh about a month to complete, the signage project began at the end of June,

involving the parks and community services committee and the design review board. Walsh collaborated with Tracy Sund, a street specialist with public works, and Basch, who sent her photos for inspiration.

The whole project cost

\$4,800, according to Jean Rice, the city's finance office manager.

"It was a labor of love, just like all these kinds of projects," said Sund, who supervised the installation.

Once the sign had been

mounted, Roberta Basch, Dick Basch's wife and culture adviser to the tribe, uttered a ceremonial prayer, blessing the city's relationship with the tribe, the ancestors who lived at the site long ago and, of course, the site itself — what it was, what it is

and what it will become.

"This is a new time for all of us," she said. The formal christening of the site, she added, represents a first step toward restoring the Clatsop-Nehalem presence in Cannon Beach. "This is only the beginning."