

Cannon Beach dune grading denied

Planning Commission votes down two proposals

By ERICK BENGEL
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — The Cannon Beach Planning Commission denied two controversial proposals Thursday night that carried over from December's meeting.

First, the commission denied, by a 4-2 vote, a proposal by the Breakers Point Homeowners Association to grade the sand dunes west and south of its condominium complex. The dune grading project would have involved shifting almost 74,000 cubic yards of sand onto the beach during the next couple of years.

In response to negative feedback at last month's meeting, Breakers Point modified its proposal, agreeing to deposit the sand above the intertidal zone (and thereby reduce the threat to clams on the shoreline), keep sand out of the Ecola Creek Estuary, stretch out the project to 2017 and provide monitoring reports on the dune grading's environmental impact.

But some members of the commission, including Vice Chairman Hank Johnson and Lisa Kerr, felt that Breakers Point had made so many changes that they were essentially voting on a different proposal

altogether. They also argued, since the public hadn't prepared to weigh in on the new version of the proposal, that it would be unfair to approve it.

Opponents of the dune grading project further objected, as they did in December, that Breakers Point was proposing to remove an amount of sand far greater than is necessary, and that the homeowners association should scale down the scope of the project.

A motion to deny the project passed, with Johnson, Charles Bennett, Joe Bernt and Lisa Kerr voting yes, and members Ryan Dewey and

Chairman Bob Lundy voting no. Member Janet Patrick recused herself.

Second, the commission denied, by a 6-1 vote, a three-part proposal that would have recognized four buildable lots on a North Laurel Street property.

Because it is steeply sloped, the city had consolidated the 0.57-acre parcel into one large buildable lot for development purposes. The property owner, Jeff Nicholson, of Portland, challenged the consolidation in hopes of building three additional family-sized cottages on the acreage, which, he said, would pay for an additional project: tearing down an existing historic cottage and reconstructing it with the original materials.

After the Planning Commission originally denied his proposal and the City Council upheld the decision last fall, Nicholson appealed to the State Land Use Board of Appeals. He chose to put that appeal on hold, however, while he tried again at the local level, seeking a variance and a planned unit development. He has said that the LUBA appeal would be a last resort if he doesn't prevail with the city.

Nicholson fears that, without the three new dwellings bringing in income, he will be unable to pay to rebuild the 99-year-old cottage and, instead, be forced to sell the entire property to someone who will demolish the cottage and erect a "McMansion" in its place.

Port asks tenants to call before they dig

By EDWARD STRATTON

The Daily Astorian

"We're a very old Port, and we have a lot of old infrastructure," said Rob Evert, the Port of Astoria's permit and project manager.

While the Port's all right with tenants making improvements to their property outside the original lease agreement, it unveiled Tuesday a new tenant improvement permit to have tenants report to the agency beforehand.

The permit asks for information about the project, the contractor, the location, the zoning, all the needed permits and the insurance.

"Ultimately, we're the property owner," said Evert. "We're liable for that."

The commitment to the tenant, he said, is that the Port will turn around the permit within 10 days.

In other news:

- Mike Weston, the director of business development and operations, said the Port is revamping its utility invoices, which it is about three months behind on. It's sending the redesigned invoices to the largest utility users first. The Port sent out a letter Jan. 14 apologizing to tenants.

- The Port hired Jim Grey as its permanent Finance Manager. Grey has been the pro-tem manager since November. He replaces Colleen Browne, who was fired the same month. Grey has been helping the Port comb through its finances back to July 2013 to ensure their accuracy. He added that the Port's new staff accountant, Will Isom, will start by the end of the month. Weston said he'd be helping with the utility invoice issue.

- The Port was approached by students from Knappa High School asking it to bid on some met-

al salmon sculptures. Port staff and the commission discussed whether it should make donations as a public agency. Knight said they would need to budget money for donations, then figure out how to decide who gets them. Commissioners commented that it's probably too late for this year's auction, although Knappa resident and Port Commissioner Bill Hunsinger said he often bids.

- Commissioners Stephen Fulton asked for discussion on the activity at Pier 3, where Astoria Forest Products has been storing logs near Lincoln Inn Best Western at the foot of Pier 3. Knight said the storage area is temporary, as the company prepares to load back-to-back ships. Commissioners discussed the increasing lack of room on the central waterfront, and Hunsinger recommended putting up construction signs to cut off access on Gateway Avenue to the Astoria Riverwalk parking lot on Pier 3

- Commissioner John Raichl began discussion of a possible confidentiality agreement, which he said would be to keep proprietary information private during the business development phase. The Port's attorney Ronald Guerra said there's such an exemption in Oregon's public records law, considered a mandatory exemption not affected by how the information might advance the public interest.

- Knight and Weston will be on KMUN Coast Community Radio at 9:30 a.m. Friday on the program "Fridays with Jim." Knight said that host Jim Wilkins wanted to ask him and Weston about their opinions of an appointed versus elected Port Commission. Knight said staff wouldn't be responding to those questions.

Local WDFW police featured on Animal Planet's 'Rugged Justice'

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Animal Planet's new documentary series "Rugged Justice" follows coastal Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife police as they patrol mountains, coasts and city streets, protecting natural resources and serving the people of Washington. Filming included places in Pacific County.

The six-episode series premiered Sunday on Animal Planet and continues on forthcoming Sundays.

"Our participation in the series provides an opportunity for WDFW's Law Enforcement Program to promote the department and the dedicated professionals that carry out our mission of protecting our natural resources and the public we serve," said WDFW deputy chief Mike Hobbs. "Policing the outdoors presents unique challenges, and this show helps to inform the public about our critical role in preserving, protecting and perpetuating fish, wildlife and ecosystems in Washington."

WDFW officers enforce all



Chinook Observer File

WDFW officers will be featured in a TV program that airs Sunday.

state laws, including those related to fishing and hunting, licensing and protecting natural habitat. Officers also provide first response to incidents involving potentially dangerous wildlife, including bear and cougar, and other public safety issues.

"'Rugged Justice' provides a window into the vital, varied and sometimes harrowing work of officers as they protect nature and people in Washington," said Steve Crown, WDFW enforcement chief.

The WDFW enforcement program has 144

officers deployed statewide.

Officers appearing in "Rugged Justice" were not paid by the show's producers or Animal Planet for their participation.

For broadcast schedules, interested viewers should visit <http://bit.ly/1Eax4La>

Boat registration moves online

SALEM — After 25 years of service, the Oregon State Board's titling and registration system reached the end of its useful life and was retired.

The Marine Board made the transition to a web-based titling and registration system that has more functionality, more security and brings more online options for boaters. The new registration system combines the old mainframe data with boater education, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) permits and the outfitter/guide/charter databases into one integrated system.

The customer interface, "RegLine," allows boaters to login and manage their contact information, as well as apply for boat title and registration and renew or order replacement documents at any

time. The new system allows boaters to order replacement boater education cards, purchase AIS permits for paddlecraft. Coming next year, outfitters, guides and charters will be able to apply online.

The transition to the new system last summer created backlogs for boaters who were transferring titles and registering during the already busy summer months. As a result of extensive transactions sent through the mail, particularly boats that have not been registered recently or those coming from out of state, staff are entering the data into the new system manually. Staff and boaters have also had to work through the technical difficulties of a new system. This led to an increased backlog of boat transactions, which most boaters are not accus-

tomed to experiencing from the agency, which has the reputation of having a fast turnaround time.

For quick turnaround on boat registration renewals, boaters are encouraged to renew online. Online boat registration renewals are immediately processed when payment is approved and printed the same or next day for mailing. Boaters should be aware that the new online interface has additional safety measures built in that can be confusing, so it is important to read and follow the directions closely.

The Marine Board, working with marine law enforcement, will honor any temporary permits that expired until the agency is caught up with transaction backlog.

The Regatta sets sail for 2015 festival

The Astoria Regatta Association's kickoff meeting for the 2015 Astoria Regatta Festival takes place at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Clatsop Community College, 1651 Lexington Ave., in Columbia Hall, Room 219. All are welcome.

The meeting includes updating the membership on what the board has been working on, reviewing the

minutes from the December general meeting, volunteer and committee chairman sign-ups and assignments, and selecting the 2015 theme from the 10 that have been proposed.

Regatta Association general meetings are always held at 6 p.m. the fourth Wednesday of each month at CCC. The dates for the next meetings are Feb. 25, March

25, April 22, May 27, June 24 and July 22. The 121st Astoria Regatta Festival is held Aug. 5 to 9.

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