



LOUIE OPATZ — EO Media Group File

The Necanicum Estuary creeps toward Seaside's wastewater treatment plant as the land has eroded over time. This photo was taken in 2013.

Seaside: 'The city is spending money like crazy and they don't have any'

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Work on the project began a few weeks ago after BioEngineering subcontracted with Big River Construction, of Astoria, for construction services and materials. Because of the nice weather, Public Works Director Neal Wallace said he anticipates the project will take about five weeks, instead of the originally estimated six to seven weeks.

Dale McDowell, of TFT Construction and a member of the city's Transportation Advisory Commission and Budget Committee, and Keith Keranen, of Keith Keranen Excavating, said both of their companies, and likely other local contractors, could have done the overall project for cheaper, including obtaining rock, with a plan from a local engineer.

No other offers were accepted for the project, though, as the city never put the project up for bid, as required by the Oregon Revised Statutes.

Winstanley and Wallace said the statutes allow for an exemption when it comes to "the cost and availability of specialized expertise that is necessary for the public improvement," which they believe applied in this case and justified the decision to single-source the project.

"Regardless of what some of the local contractors claim of their ability to do this work, the truth is this was an extremely difficult project to get permitted," Wallace said. "For various environmental reasons, it's very difficult to get a rock project

approved these days. BioEngineering, the company we're working with, it's not just that they've developed a niche. These guys are leaders in a new field. They're at the forefront of bioengineering."

"There's no one else around here that has the ability to get this project put together and to get it permitted," he said, adding the city's engineering department doesn't have the capability to design this sort of project.

Winstanley agreed. "We needed the expertise as far as a permitting, as well as working in working in environmental areas," he said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorized a general permit for bank stabilization for the city's project Jan. 16. The removal/fill permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands also was authorized Jan. 16.

McDowell didn't agree with Wallace and Winstanley's assessment.

"It's not hard to get permits, it takes time to get permits," he said.

He believes there are several local engineers and design companies that could have drawn a design and gone through the permitting process and then put the project up for bid.

"For them to say no local contractor could handle it is hogwash," he said. "We've worked on the jetty before. And



Neal Wallace

a local contractor is handling it. They're doing the work out there."

Not only have McDowell and Keranen raised concerns about the project not going out for bid, but also the overall cost, which McDowell said go hand in hand.

"Just follow the law and you'll save money," he said. How so? "You get competitive bids. That's the key word — 'competitive.'"

When BioEngineering emailed several construction companies in mid-January about providing a few laborers and operators, along with equipment, to work alongside the BioEngineering crew to build the wall, McDowell's company put in a bid of \$20,536 per week, or \$123,216 for six weeks. BioEngineering instead subcontracted with Big River, which provided a lower weekly quote.

"The thing is it should have come out to bid as the whole project and not just a piece of it," McDowell said.

He posed the question — if the raw materials cost an estimated \$36,000 and construction costs about \$123,216, why did the city sign a contract with BioEngineering for nearly \$800,000 that now has induced the need for the city to get a loan from the state?

"The city is spending money like crazy and they don't have

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The public is invited to meet with Drew Herzig, Astoria City Councilor for Ward 2, from noon to 1:30 p.m. Saturday in the Flag Room at the Astoria Public Library, 450 10th St. All are welcome to come and share their thoughts, suggestions, questions, and concerns about Astoria.

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Cannon Beach to be annexed into OSU Extension Service

By KYLE SPURR
 The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach, the only entity in Clatsop County not a part of the Oregon State University Extension Service District, will soon be added to the service district.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners — acting as the 4-H and Extension Service District Board — met for a special meeting Monday to approve the annexation of Cannon Beach into the 4-H and Extension Service District.

The Board of Commissioners then set a public hearing on the annexation for March 25, during its regular board meeting. After the public hearing, the board can officially approve the annexation.

Patrick Corcoran, the county leader of Clatsop County OSU Extension, said the addition of Cannon Beach will allow South County residents direct opportunities with the extension service, including participation in 4-H and Master Gardener programs.

Clatsop County's extension service, with an office in Astoria, is a partnership between the county and Oregon State University. The service offers research-based programs to residents of the extension service district, which will include Cannon Beach.

The funding for OSU county extension offices come from federal, state and local partnerships.

"This will be terrific to have consistency throughout the county," Corcoran said. "For Cannon Beach residents, primarily for families wanting local 4-H programs, they can have those in the city without having to go to Seaside."

Corcoran approached the Cannon Beach City Council last year, and asked the council to consider joining the district. The council left it up to local voters in November, who passed the ballot measure 384-307.

The Board of Commissioners needed to take action Monday, so the extension service could meet a state Department of Revenue deadline of March 31 to allow the extension service to collect from the Cannon Beach tax base by November.

The 4-H and Extension Service District will have an increased tax base of about \$44,000 based on 2014 assessments.

With the annexation, Cannon Beach property owners will pay property taxes of 5.34 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. For a Cannon Beach home assessed at \$250,000, the total annual tax would be \$13.35 to become part of the service district.

From the 1930s until 1986, the Clatsop County extension office was funded through a line item in the county general fund. But in 1986, the 4-H and Extension Service District was formed as an alternative source of funding. The measure passed in all voting districts — except Cannon Beach.

Cannon Beach residents were able to participate in extension service programs, but they needed to travel to Seaside and elsewhere to do so. Once the annexation is likely approved March 25, the clubs and programs can be held in Cannon Beach.

EO Media Group reporter Erick Bengel contributed to this report.

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