

# Locals speak in favor of medical marijuana

## Seaside Planning Commission takes testimony on zoning, use restrictions

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — The public gave feedback and shared personal testimonies about medical marijuana dispensaries and the Oregon Health Authority program at a Seaside Planning Commission on Tuesday.

Several people spoke in favor of medical marijuana and its benefits, and they implored the commission to do what it can to get the city to allow the facilities when the moratorium expires in May.

“Open this up please, for the people. There’s a lot of

people who need this,” said Oscar Nelson, the co-owner of Sweet Relief Natural Medicine in Astoria. “I think this could be a great thing for Seaside if it’s done well and done right.”

The Planning Commission is considering potential zoning or use regulations for medical marijuana dispensaries. The code of Seaside currently prohibits the licensing of such facilities, but the public testimony was to help the commission consider various restrictions for the location, time and manner for the facilities to be run should Seaside City Council lift the licensing restrictions, Seaside Planning Director Kevin Cupples said.

As Nelson pointed out, a majority of local voters look favorably on marijuana. In the November General Election, 8,251 people in Clatsop County voted yes on Measure 91, the bill to legalize recreational marijuana, and 6,361 voted no. In Seaside’s precincts, 1,249 people voted yes and 838 voted no.

Steve Geiger, owner of Highway 420, the only facility in Seaside that’s been licensed by the state to operate as a dispensary, talked about the important role dispensaries have in offering a variety of products for patients. With scientific advances, he said, there are 25 to 30 different strains of marijuana available with each one more appropriate for addressing certain ailments. Staff at dispensaries can be trained

to help people find the best product for their condition.

Seaside resident Angela Fairless testified that since she started using medical marijuana, she has been to the emergency room for migraines once in 10 years; that’s compared to the five to 10 times per year she was going from ages 10 to 23. There are nearly 600 medical marijuana cardholders in Clatsop County, she said, and giving them access to their medicine will improve their quality of life.

The speakers also shared with the commission how difficult it is to get a medical marijuana card, and most people won’t put forth the time, effort or money to get a card for fraudulent purposes.

“Some of your best friends are people who use medical

marijuana, and a doctor sent them there,” Geiger said.

Speaking from personal experience, Nelson told the commission there have been no problems in relation to Sweet Relief in the nearly one year it has been operating.

“There has not been one hassle or adverse effect on the city,” he said.

Rather than throwing “the baby out with the bath water,” Nelson said, the city should articulate what its goal is with the restrictions and what it is trying to prevent in terms of public safety, parking, traffic or other issues.

The speakers offered to continue sharing information and other resources as the city considers allowing medical marijuana dispensaries.

“At this point, we’re will-

ing to do whatever we have to do to work with this commission, to work with the council,” Geiger said.

State restrictions already exist that prevent medical marijuana dispensaries from being within 1,000 feet of a school and another dispensary. Taking those restrictions into consideration, as well as the fact dispensaries likely would go in commercial zones, the commissioners asked Cupples to create a visual representation of potential locations or areas where dispensaries could go. From there, they can consider if any of those sites raise red flags or which ones seem appropriate.

The Planning Commission will meet with the City Council at 6:30 March 30 for a work session on marijuana.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

A worker from Legacy Contracting directs the Oscar B ferry to Westport’s temporary dock during a test run along the Columbia River Feb. 27. A Coast Guard inspection showed problems with the ramp on the temporary dock meaning the ferry will be out of service until another inspection can be scheduled. This may take until the end of the week.

## Oscar B delayed by ramp concerns

By KYLE SPURR  
The Daily Astorian

The Oscar B is good to go, but still docked at shore.

Issues with a temporary ramp at the Westport Ferry landing is keeping the new ferry out of service between Puget Island, Wash., and Westport.

A Coast Guard inspection scheduled Monday, was delayed until Tuesday due to the problems with the Westport ramp. The Oscar B passed the inspection, but the Coast Guard is requiring another inspection

for the Westport ramp.

Wahkiakum County Public Works Director Pete Ringen said the problem is the Coast Guard indicated it may be difficult to reschedule for a follow-up inspection, meaning the ferry may be out of service the remainder of the week.

“I’m already testing the Coast Guard’s patience because we had to reschedule yesterday’s inspection until today,” Ringen said. “And then come to find out the ramp was not good to go.”

The temporary ramp in

Westport, being used until a permanent one is built by May, does not fit the Oscar B, which is nearly double the size of the old Wahkiakum Ferry.

The Oscar B has a notch meant to line up with the permanent ramp, but it does not line up with the temporary one, Ringen said. Currently, the Oscar B is not fully supported by the temporary ramp.

Crews plan to weld structural pieces on the ramp to strengthen it for the Oscar B. A timetable for the construction work and follow-up

Coast Guard inspection have not been set.

Having the ferry service shut down for the entire week is unacceptable, Ringen said, but may occur.

“Unfortunately, there were bigger hurdles than we were anticipating,” Ringen said. “None of us feel very good about this.”

The \$5.7 million Oscar B arrived in Puget Island Friday morning after traveling by sea from a boatyard in Whidbey Island, north of Seattle, where it was built.

## It’s the time of year to Savor Cannon Beach

CANNON BEACH — Enjoy four days of wine tastings, culinary events and a wine walk featuring dozens of Pacific Northwest wineries during the Savor Cannon Beach Wine and Culinary Festival, March 12 through 15.

The communitywide event kicks off with the Thursday Night Throwdown, where participants taste 12 select wines including two of each varietal, one from Oregon and one from Washington, then vote on their favorites to determine which state reigns supreme.

Other events include the Battle of the Blends, featuring four red and four white wine blends from the Northwest.

March 14 is the Savor Cannon Beach Wine Walk, featuring approximately 40 Northwest wineries pouring tastings at Cannon Beach art galleries, restaurants and retail shops, all within easy walking distance.

Proceeds will benefit the Cannon Beach Preschool and Children’s Center.

Other festival wine tasting events offer educational opportunities to test participants’ knowledge — and palate — in blind tastings.

Local shops and galleries also host their own events over the weekend.

This year, as in past years, Savor Cannon Beach received a \$32,000 grant from the city’s Tourism and Arts Commission to help organize the event. Non-profit groups receiving the funds must prove that the event will attract participants from at least 50 miles away and that the arts will be involved.

Festival passes, at \$149, are good for all six wine tasting events, including the Wine Walk. Individual event tickets are also available for \$35 each per event.

To purchase event tickets and find more information, visit [www.savorcannonbeach.com](http://www.savorcannonbeach.com).

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If you haven't tried it recently, you will be pleasantly surprised. When traveling, check out the neighborhood of potential hotels you are researching.

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