

Reverse the decision

I am very disappointed that four members of the City Council, who were elected to uphold the ordinances of the city of Cannon Beach, chose to override the decision of the Planning Commission to deny the application of Jeff Nicholson to amend the city's zone map, to obtain a variance to the slope-density requirement, and to build a planned unit development on his property at 532 N. Laurel St.

Municipal code 17.84.030 clearly states that variances should be granted only if a strict interpretation of the code would be inconsistent with the objectives of the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan calls for controlling development in areas with slopes exceeding 20 percent, and areas subject to potential geologic hazards, so that potential adverse impacts can be minimized. The property in question exceeds the 20 percent criterion, and is composed of the accretion of sand held together with native vegetation.

Since the councilors claim to have visited the site, I wonder why they were so impressed with the model the applicant presented of the proposed development, which portrayed the area as essentially flat. Much of the property is a deep ravine. The applicant's solution of building a wall 120-feet long and up to 10-feet tall would add yet another wall to two others already in the area to support the building of Oak Street.

My hope is that councilors, if given the opportunity, will be willing to listen to arguments opposed to changing city requirements for the benefit of an applicant intending to build four houses and sell them for a profit. If the councilors refuse to reverse their decision, they will in essence have subsidized a commercial venture rather than upholding the codes that were written for the good of the community.

DIANE AMOS
Cannon Beach

Logs mean money

As one who works at the Port of Astoria, and is also on the Port budget committee, let there be no confusion; the Port will make more revenue in this one month from log exports than it has made from the boatyard in its entire existence.

Most years, the boatyard has lost money. That notwithstanding, there is a real need and desire to have a boatyard. This shouldn't be an either/or type of debate. Both should be accommodated to maximize their revenue potentials.

Englund Marine was enticed to the Port, and as a result, has a great location, a beautiful, expansive, newer building and a robust business. The plum was going to be the development of the old 15th Street site with some pricey condos. The economy and viewshed people took care of that.

Bornstein Seafoods moved to the Port because their former facility was dilapidated and outdated. The plum there was they got a new facility, subsidized by the Port, for which they created a bunch of temp-service, minimum-wage jobs, and a former Port commissioner got a lucrative trucking agreement.

Log exports are always characterized as mercurial, but they have been a real boon for many years of the ports of Port Angeles, Everett, Aberdeen, Tacoma, Olympia and Longview, Wash., and Coos Bay and Astoria. These revenues have resurrected the Port of Astoria from the grave. Without these revenues the Port would be less able to subsidize ventures such as the boatyard.

CHRIS CONNWAY
Astoria

Move the logs

How can the Port of Astoria be so short-sighted? Doesn't anyone on the Port of Astoria Commission remember the last log-exporting adventure, from the early 1980s to the late 1990s?

Then the Japanese economy tanked and left the Port without anyone to ship logs to, and in a very short mon-

Alcohol is No. 1 public health problem

This April is Alcohol Awareness Month. Founded and sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Inc. since 1987, this year's theme is: "For the Health of It: Early Education on Alcoholism and Addiction."

No other substance is more widely used and abused by America's youth than alcohol, making alcoholism and alcohol-related problems the No. 1 public health problem in the U.S.

Addressing this issue requires a sustained and cooperative effort between

parents, schools, colleges, community leaders, and our youth. The widespread prevalence of underage drinking and the negative consequences it creates remain a stubborn and destructive problem, despite decades of efforts to combat it.

Yet, there are four areas that have proven to be effective in prevention of this problem: curtailing the availability of alcohol to underage populations; consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations regarding alcohol purchase; changing cultural misconceptions and behaviors about

alcohol use through education; and expanded access to treatment and recovery support for adolescents and their families.

But time is running out. Studies reveal that alcohol consumption by adolescents results in brain damage — possibly permanent — and impairs intellectual development.

So, let's get started. We can't afford to wait any longer.

ROBERT McCLELLAND
Chairman, North Coast Prevention Works
Astoria

ey situation where they were begging for income. Then they came up with a long-term plan and lured Englund Marine and others to the dockside by the shipyard.

Have any of the Port commissioners or managers ever looked online at the "ghost cities of China"? China is hiding the world's largest real estate bubble with millions of apartments built — with no one to occupy them in more than a half dozen cities — built on isolated farm lands with no occupants, and no way of ever populating them. It is an insane situation that will bring its economy to its knees very soon. I wonder why China is buying logs from us, other than they will still be worth something, even if the economy there completely collapses.

My last question is why hasn't the Port moved the log-export operation to the Tongue Point site, since they have control of that site? It makes absolutely no sense to have a log-exporting operation in the city of Astoria when tourism is trying to take hold. Why have all that truck traffic on the Port, when they schedule in luxury cruise ships to visit Astoria? It is a tragic accident looking for a place to happen. I can see "Log truck hits tourist bus on docks, dozen dead" in the headlines.

Why don't they use Tongue Point where they dredged the slips to 80 feet not that long ago, when they were trying to attract another operator? Do not close the shipyard. Move the log exporting to Tongue Point. Do the logical thing for the first time.

JESSE (CHUCK) DAY
Astoria

Logs come and go

I was "shocked, shocked" to learn at the recent meeting of the Port of Astoria Commission that the Port did not require an environmental impact study before allowing log-handling on Pier 3.

As I watched the landscape of Pier 3 deteriorate under the intrusion of the logs, I said to my wife, "I bet they didn't do an environmental impact assessment." At the Port Commission meeting, no commissioner knew anything about an environmental assessment. This failure signals incompetence or worse.

However, I am more interested now in the composition of the ad hoc committee proposed at the meeting to weigh the future of the boatyard, which the Port announced earlier it would close because of environmental issues. If the Port was that concerned about the environment, why did it not consider the environmental impact of the log operation?

A number of citizens who addressed the commission volunteered to serve on the committee, as did at least two of the Port commissioners. Two Port commissioners on the committee is one too many. As a tenant of the West Mooring Basin for most of the last 30 years, and a user of the boatyard, I am a regular Port watcher. The commissioners seem to me uninformed about the economic role of the boatyard. One commissioner on the committee should serve as a liaison. Any more, and they get in the way.

The boatyard is the hub of a diverse and rich waterfront economy. It matters not whether the boatyard operates in the black. As an indispensable component of our waterfront economy, it is the Port's responsibility in these times to provide that service.

Logs will come and go,

but our waterfront economy has endured for the life of our city. Changes at the boatyard are necessary, but its closure would be, well, stupid.

PAUL HAIST
Astoria

Breath of fresh air

Right off the bat Port of Astoria Executive Director Jim Knight took responsibility for the confusion over the possible closure of the boatyard, and illuminated the issues brought up by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. He stated the DEQ would work with the Port on the copper contaminates leaking from the boatyard to establish a stormwater treatment facility.

He reinforced his commitment by pointing out that one of the business goals of the Port is to have a working boatyard, and apologized for his confusing misstatements. His announcement diffused the anxious energy of the standing-room-only crowd.

Many people spoke. It was a parade of the economic drivers of the port. But the real picture came when the money spoke. The accounting practices need to change. Utility bills to tenants will need to reflect a 15 percent administrative fee on top of the water, electricity and gas delivered. No plan existed to deal with replacing or maintaining the utilities, and this fee will bankroll it.

Other issues were high-

lighted. Fixed assets were not recorded with periodic depreciation. There were outstanding bills of \$500,000. An uncashed Oregon Energy Trust Check of 2010 was still in the bank, and need to be placed in an account. The last time Moss Adams accounting firm was used was in 2010. Chairman of the board at the time, Peter Guerin, did not rehire them. The accountants from three firms there suggested they could ignore the past and go forward from 2014 or go back and restate from 2010 to see the whole picture.

The sea lions were addressed on the East Basin docks, both sea lion lovers and the people who own boats on the docks and make their living spoke. Nothing was decided beyond getting people to shoo them away or encouraging killer whales.

Jim Knight asked the board for a web designer and public relations professional for the next nine months. Commissioners voted to budget \$45,000 for this position. Bringing the Port website up to date in this Internet-driven world will assist the accounting firms, willing toilers in the business office, commissioners and the valiant Jim Knight.

A further question I would ask the commissioners is, when a business wants to set up at the Port of Astoria, is an environmental impact statement done, so that concerns of noise, light, air or water pol-

lution are addressed from the beginning?

Ducks are clearly lining up at the Port. Jim Knight and the commissioners were airing all of their concerns in public and practicing transparency. It was the most delightful Port commissioners meeting I've been to in years.

PAMELA MATTSON
MCDONALD
Astoria

No commitment

Port of Astoria Executive Director Jim Knight managed to diffuse the concerns and anger of the overflow crowd attending the recent Port of Astoria meeting. He opened the meeting by saying the closure of the boatyard was being set aside for now, because he had just learned earlier in the day that commitments were made under the Port's 2001 and 2010 Master Plans, and that the Department of Environmental Quality was not immediately going to rain down fines and pestilence upon the Port because of copper pollution in the Port's storm water drains. Instead, an ad hoc committee would be formed to consider the issues and suggest solutions to the Port Commission.

All well and good, but it seems that Knight should have known this much earlier simply by reading the Master Plans, by hearing about them from one of the (too) long-term commissioners, or simply by reading the local

newspaper. By the clever tactic of picking up the phone and calling them several days ago, *The Daily Astorian* managed to learn that DEQ had only asked that the pollution problem be addressed by June 30, 2016, and was not threatening imminent fines.

Knight said during his opening comments that it was vital for citizens to trust the Port and its commission. The Port needs to learn we earn trust not by what we say, but by what we do over time, and that would include keeping our word and delivering on our promises. The Port certainly did not honor its promise to Englund Marine, Bornstein Seafoods and Columbia Pacific Marine Works, which invested millions to locate in the Marine Industrial Cluster, which the Port has now been threatening to abandon in favor of logs.

One commissioner took great pains to point out that there seemed little choice but to close the boatyard because a consultant told the commission there were no technologies to control the copper pollution. That completely defies logic, since it would mean that all boatyards everywhere would have to close. But then why is the boatyard being singled out for copper blame? There are heavy new uses on Pier 3 because of logs, and there have been many uses, structures, activities and pollutants over the years. Of course, blaming the boatyard is a convenient way of getting it out of the way of the log shipping operation.

The citizens who testified about the boatyard at the meeting were polite and patient, far beyond what one would expect. They pointed on the essential importance of the boatyard to numerous local businesses, fishermen and boat owners, and that it drives an infusion of millions of dollars into the local economy.

Despite that, the Port has not committed to keeping the boatyard, only to keeping it for now while the still-to-be-assembled ad hoc committee does its work.

ROGER ROCKA
Astoria



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