

Council gets earful on tree-cutting

Cannon Beach residents object

By ERICK BENDEL
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — Tuesday's City Council meeting was the first since the Oregon Department of Transportation cut down about 55 trees from U.S. Highway 101 between Cannon Beach's north entrance and Sunset Boulevard on March 9, and the councilors got an earful during the public comment period.

The lack of notification that the trees would be removed and when they would be removed upset some residents whose properties border the affected area.

"It seems like you — the people here representing 'We the People' — have not followed through very well with being diligent in your responsibility to inform us (about) what's going on in a timely fashion," said Ed Johnson, a Cannon Beach resident.

Johnson lives directly east of the highway corridor where ODOT employees and contractors with Trails End Recovery, a Warrenton-based timber recycling company, felled about 30 trees 8 inches or more in diameter and 20 to

25 smaller "brush trees." Last spring, ODOT officials determined that about 200 dead or dying alder trees hanging over the road may pose a hazard to drivers and needed to be eliminated. About 5,000 trees stand along that stretch of road, according to Bill Jablonski, manager of ODOT District 1.

Phil Massebeau, Johnson's neighbor and son-in-law, said the city should have "let us know what's going on."

His wife, Kirsten Massebeau (Johnson's daughter), said she wishes the city had asked its arborist, Will Capliger, to conduct an independent review of the targeted trees.

"I'm not happy with the result. I'm not happy with the way the city handled it. I'm not happy with the way the state handled it," Johnson said.

No negotiations

Toward the end of the meeting, Councilor Mike Benefield told the audience he felt the council was "being lectured to, and the ones who should've been lectured to was ODOT."

On March 9, Benefield was "as surprised as anybody" to learn that ODOT and its crew were down on



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In this photo, the trees east of the highway, right, have been thinned, and the ODOT and Trails End Recovery team goes to work on the west side in March. The team was chided by neighbors for "destroying" Cannon Beach's scenic byways.

the highway, he said; the department had been postponing the tree-removal project for almost a year.

City Manager Brant Kucera said that, before the thinning occurred, he met with Jablonski and asked him to hold off on the project. Jablonski indicated that ODOT was unwilling to wait any longer and cited Oregon law 366.366, which clearly states the department can remove trees from a state right of way without first obtaining a permit.

"That was the end of the discussion, as far as I was concerned," Kucera said.

"No one supersedes their authority in that right of way."

Benefield said there was almost no way the city could have stopped ODOT, except "take our heavy equipment out there, and block them, and then get sued for it."

"How would we feel if someone tried to supersede our right of ways in our own city, you know? It makes it impossible to do business that way," Kucera said. "(ODOT is) a transportation department. Whether we like it or not, their job is to move things along highways ... in the most efficient means possible and the safe-

'There is no choice in the matter. That was made very clear to me.'

— Brant Kucera
Cannon Beach city manager

Kucera said, "The man is a landscape architect. He has professional training on how to handle vegetation. The man is not just an engineer who wants to pave and concrete over everything."

Jablonski also "works very well with the city" and has shown interest in getting input from the community in the future, Kucera said.

'We do hear you'

ODOT will not return to cut more trees until next year, Kevin Werst, the department's transportation maintenance manager for the Warrenton Section of District 1, said March 9.

"I don't want them to come back and cut more trees, is basically the bottom line," Phil Massebeau said at the meeting.

"We feel they've done enough," Kirsten Massebeau said.

Benefield thanked the speakers for their comments, telling them that "We do hear you," and that the council will "work on these things as best we can."

Meanwhile, the city staff has "spent a lot of time with the ODOT personnel and been working to develop a relationship there that I think is going to improve the situation," he said.

est means possible. And, in their minds, this is safety."

In addition, once ODOT marked certain trees as "hazard trees," the department became legally liable for what would happen if any collapsed onto the highway.

"You can question their arborist in his choice of trees, but ODOT is not going to question the fact that, once they're marked ... they are essentially cut at that point," Kucera said. "There is no choice in the matter. That was made very clear to me."

ODOT told Kucera that the department is willing to negotiate on whether to replant the trees, what species to replant with, and how to handle the understory, "but there was no negotiation on the trees that were coming down," he said.

Defending Jablonski,

Learn to clean without chemicals

A new Clatsop Community College workshop teaches about natural cleaners and how to avoid chemical products.

"Green Spring Cleaning with Essential Oils" explores practical applications, essential oils and

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This three-hour workshop is from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday in Towler Hall 307 on the CCC main

campus in Astoria. Registration is \$15, plus \$15 to the instructor at class for supplies. Preregister to ensure adequate supplies.

Register at www.clatsopcc.edu/schedule and search under Green Cleaning, or call 503-338-2402.

OSP recruiting troopers

The Oregon State Police (OSP) seeks troopers.

"A career as an Oregon State Police Trooper is challenging and rewarding," Lt. Craig Flierl wrote in a release. "OSP Troopers provide Premier Public Safety Services to the citizenry of Oregon and we hire the best people to do it."

Lateral and Entry level recruit trooper applications are now being accepted through 11:59 p.m. May 17.

Those interested in applying should start the process now by going to the OSP recruiting website at www.osptrooper.com. The website helps interested applicants:

- Learn the application process.
- Understand qualifications.
- Get a jump on the required entry-level testing.

Entry-level testing dates and locations will be provided to each applicant via email.

Applicants should prepare beforehand for entry-level testing. Candidates can create an account now by building a profile following the instructions detailed on the www.osptrooper.com website. The complete application for employment is comprised of the E-Recruit profile, the supplemental questionnaire and any

required attachments.

OSP is an equal opportunity employer. It strongly encourages women and candidates of color to apply. Information about the agency, the different opportunities that are available, the hiring process and updates to it can be found at www.osptrooper.com

Questions about the application process can be directed to the OSP Recruitment Unit at 503-378-4175.

Volunteer to drive, conduct the trolley

The Astoria Riverfront Trolley Association needs volunteers to be conductors and/or motormen to work one or more three-hour shifts per month. All volunteers learn the conductor's duties, but those who wish to operate the trolley undergo additional training and certification.

The trolley schedule is as follows:

- Noon to 6 p.m. daily through Sunday

- Noon to 6 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday only, April 17 through May 24

- Noon to 6 p.m. daily, May 25 through Sept. 7

- Noon to 6 p.m. Friday, Saturday, Sunday only, Sept. 11 through winter closure

Conductors get a chance to tell visitors Astoria's history, what places to visit, where to eat and what things to do, and have an opportunity to talk to people about

what makes Astoria a great place to visit and live. Those who wish to be a motorman, and only want to operate Old 300 and never use the microphone, are encouraged to find a full-time conductor to team up with.

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DR. EDWARD HARVEY HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD
The City of Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission is seeking nominations for the Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Award. The award is presented each year to recognize a property owner who has completed exterior restoration or beautification of a building which exemplifies the historical attributes of the building or the architectural heritage of Astoria. The work must have been completed within the last two years. Nominations may include residential, commercial, public, and other types of buildings.
The awards will be presented by the Mayor to celebrate National Historic Preservation Week in May.
Anyone wishing to submit a nomination should contact Sherri Williams at the City of Astoria
mail to: swilliams@astoria.or.us / 338-5183, or send a nomination (no form required) to the Community Development Department, City of Astoria, 1095 Duane Street, Astoria OR 97103. Nominations must be received no later than 5:00 pm on April 30, 2015.