

A race in Warrenton, even if by accident

Dennis Warren, Joe Talamantz run for school board post

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Dennis Warren, a former Warrenton-Hammond School Board member, thought he was applying to take over the Position 5 on the board, being vacated this summer by former Major League pitcher Brian Bruney.

But Warren found himself locked into a race for the two remaining years of an unexpired term in Position 7, for which he's challenging appointed incumbent Joe Talamantz Jr. for in the May 19 special district election.

Warren, 64, served on the school board from 2007 to 2011, but didn't file for re-election, citing health issues. After graduating from the University of Oregon, he was a U.S. history and English teacher at Warrenton from 1974 to 2004, along with coaching the wrestling team for more than 26 years. After retirement, he helped run the People's Scholarship, which gave out over \$100,000 in a seven-year time frame, he said. He's married to Jocelyn Warren.

"It looks like an interesting time for the schools right now. I think I could bring some more experience to the board," Warren said, counting among his former students current board members Kelly Simonsen, Bruney, Isaac Anderson and Adam Neahring.

Warren said he'd like to know more about the new Smarter Balanced testing being rolled out along with Common Core State Standards, an effort to nationalize learning standards.

"That's a huge deal; they're putting so much emphasis on that," Warren said, adding that he's been on state-level policy committees to help



Joe Talamantz, Jr.



Dennis Warren

develop history tests. Warren said he's also represented the teacher's union.

The Warrenton-Hammond School District recently ordered new portable classrooms to help house burgeoning elementary classes and has been looking at whether to invest in its existing buildings or build a new campus, likely through a bond measure.

Warren said he might be open to that effort, but wants to scrutinize all the options. "I just don't want us to walk into something that will cost us money for a whole bunch of years," he said, making reference to a bond measure he said invested in the existing buildings 15 to 20 years ago.

"I won't lose sleep at night of he does win," Warren said of Talamantz, adding that the two are friends and have worked together in wrestling.

Talamantz

Talamantz, 48, is the financial manager for Management and Training Corporation, which operates Tongue Point Job Corps Center. He graduated from Astoria High School in 1985 and has a bachelor's degree in accounting

from Linfield College and returned to the region in 2003 with his wife, Kristin. Warren has a fifth-grade son attending Warrenton Grade School.

He was appointed to Position 7 of the Warrenton-Hammond School Board over the summer, after Len Mossman left the school board to be more involved in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"I like being involved in things that impact myself" and my son, Talamantz said. He's involved in Warrenton Kids Inc. Warrenton Kids Football, Lower Columbia Wrestling and a member of the Warrenton Parks Advisory Board. "If it's good for my son, it's going to be good for everyone else."

Talamantz had also applied for the board position vacated by Mark Carlson, the former finance manager from Astoria who left for a similar job in Lake Tahoe, Calif. But Bruney was appointed to the position.

Talamantz said he wants to have input as the Warrenton-Hammond School Board grows and institutes new testing. Before joining the school board, Talamantz said he thought it was about providing day-to-day direction to the principal and staff. But after months of reading up on the school board, he said he learned how the school board focuses on the bigger picture.

"My goal is to make sure that we can get more kids to ... graduation," Talamantz said, adding part of getting kids there is the day-to-day support for things like modern curriculum and facilities.

Asked about his potential support for a bond measure for a new and/or improved campus, Talamantz conceded "I don't want it, but do I support it? Yes."

Besides the race between Talamantz and Warren, Board Chairwoman Debbie Morrow, executive officer of the Clatsop Association of Realtors, is running unopposed for Position 1; Bergerson Construction President Greg Morrill is running unopposed for Position 2, being vacated by Anderson; and Dalan Moss, chief financial officer of Coast Rehabilitation Services, is running unopposed for Position 5.

New library at Heritage Square likely a city goal

Astoria council had been reluctant to identify a site

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council tentatively agreed Monday night to make the study of a new public library with mixed-use development at Heritage Square a city goal for the next fiscal year.

In January, city councilors had been so reluctant to commit to a location that they dropped the word "renovation" from their draft goal on the library, since some thought it implied expanding the existing library and demolishing the old Waldorf Hotel next door.

The City Council has since backed away from that option, which had been approved last year, and has instructed city staff to study a new library at Heritage Square with a housing component.

The council is expected to approve city goals at a meeting later this month.

While there appeared to be consensus around a library at Heritage Square when the council voted unanimously in late April to

direct city staff to look into the idea, some hesitation surfaced Monday night.

City Councilor Cindy Price said she has heard from unhappy residents. "I have gotten an earful from constituents throughout Astoria about our decision to abandon looking at other options and go directly to Heritage Square, particularly without asking questions like how much will it cost to look at that only, where will the money come from?" she said.

Mayor Arline LaMear said the council "needed to have some kind of direction for the staff. I think for the last year, they've been wondering what in the world are we doing?"

"And so this does give staff a direction to look at this site and see what the possibilities might be."

Ted Osborn, the president of the Lower Columbia Preservation Society, had spoken with the city about expanding the library into the Waldorf without tearing down the hotel. That option, like Heritage Square, could also involve housing.

Osborn told the City Council he was disappointed in the shift to Heritage Square without what he considers sufficient information.

"I can't tell you how disappointed I am," he said.



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