

Man still wants to arrest Astoria mayor, City Council

Disappointed with payment to Friends of the Astoria Column

By **DERRICK DePLEGGE**
The Daily Astorian

Zachary Seidel had a message Monday for Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear and the City Council: he plans to arrest you.

The young man who was tackled at City Hall earlier this month by Police Chief Brad Johnston after trying to perform a citizen's arrest on the mayor said he and others would try again, and this time would go after the entire council.

"We will be putting them in cuffs and taking them to jail," Seidel said during a visit to The Daily Astorian.

Seidel, who describes himself as a prophet, is disappointed with the City Council's approval of a roughly \$70,000 reimbursement payment to the Friends of the Astoria Column to help persuade Verizon Wireless to move a communications tower off Coxcomb Hill. The council also approved a contract with a Portland telecommunications firm that is working with the well-connected nonprofit and the city on the issue.

"These are secret deals made outside of the interests of the public," said Seidel, who believes the mayor and council have engaged in collusion, conspiracy and misappropriation of funds.

Cannon Beach to consider allocation of room tax funds

Earmarked for Visitor Center, room tax funds to be reviewed

By **R.J. MARX**
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — A Cannon Beach City Council meeting meant to handle a housekeeping item opened a discussion on the use of funds to be collected when a 1 percent room tax increase goes into effect Oct. 1.

Councilors were divided on the question of whether the room tax increase is specifically designated for the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center or for other uses.

"My thought is, the information center should really be a separate agreement from this new money," Councilor George Vetter said. "We shouldn't put the two together. They're really two separate entities."

The meeting Thursday was called to approve the agreement between the city and the Chamber of Commerce for the Visitor Information Center from July 1 through Oct. 1, the first fiscal quarter before the increase.

The city's payments to

the chamber for the first quarter will be \$35,000. After the room tax increase goes into effect Oct. 1, quarterly payments to the chamber are expected to be \$100,000 to \$115,000. Thirty percent of the total of the room tax increase, or about \$78,000 annually, would go into the city's general fund.

"It's going to be very significant," City Manager Brant Kucera said.

Councilors asked for further discussion before committing those funds specifically to the center when the increase goes into effect.

"To me there's three funds happening at this point," Vetter said. "There's the information center, which we've had for 20 years, then there's the TAC (Tourism and Arts Commission) money we've had for seven years, and now we have the new money, and to me they're very different."

"I've questioned it to begin with, because it said 'visitor center,' not 'chamber,'" Councilor Wendy Higgins said of the new allocation. "But all of those things are shared. The website is shared. The building is shared. The services are shared. When we first heard it, everyone was saying 'chamber,' nobody

was saying 'visitor center.'"

Since the room tax increase has yet to go into effect, there is time for further discussion, Kucera said.

"I think it's a mistake to try to fold that new money into the information center," Vetter said. "I think that convolutes things. There should be separate measurables."

Mayor Sam Seidel said since the tax goes into effect Oct. 1, the new contract must be accepted at the September council meeting.

Seidel and councilors Vetter and Higgins voted to approve the year's first quarter payment.

Seidel asked the council to take up the matter at the council's next work session, which would provide an opportunity for changes before the room tax increase goes into effect. "In August we can hammer out what we want," he said.



Zachary Seidel, 29, was arrested after disrupting an Astoria City Council meeting in June.

DERRICK DePLEGGE — The Daily Astorian

force if necessary to make arrests.

But Johnston cautioned that since Seidel did not actually witness collusion or conspiracy by the mayor and City Council, attempting to make arrests could be viewed as kidnapping.

Seidel said he and others would attempt to arrest Johnston and other police if they interfere. "I find it very disheartening that they're not doing their jobs and leaving it up to citizens," he said.

Seidel said he hoped to make all of the citizen's arrests on a single day, for safety reasons, but has not yet chosen a day.

"Barring legal authority to make an arrest, what he's talking about doing would be a kidnap, not an arrest," Johnston said.

The police chief urged Seidel to provide any evidence he has against the mayor and council to the Astoria Police Department or the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office.

Seidel, 29, has been charged with criminal trespass, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest for the incident at the City Council meeting this month. As a condition of his release from jail, he is barred from City Hall.

"I'd advise him against it," Johnston said of Seidel's new plans.

The police chief said the young man "needs to exercise a great deal of care, because there are many ways he can go wrong here."

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In May, City Councilor Drew Herzig had asked the city for more information about the reimbursement payment to Friends of the Astoria Column, raising questions about transparency. After receiving a breakdown of the payment this month, Herzig and the council unanimously approved the payment and the contract with Converge Communications, the Portland consulting firm.

'It's a preposterous thing, as far as I'm concerned.'

Russ Warr
Astoria city councilor

"I think that he either has a low-level of understanding about what really has gone on, or he's a little bit touched," City Councilor Russ Warr said of Seidel. "It's a preposterous thing, as far as I'm concerned."

"But if he would like to come and confront me I would be happy to talk with him. And if he wanted to try to arrest me, we would deal with that also."

State to offer free well-water testing

The Daily Astorian

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is offering free well-water testing in Clatsop and Tillamook counties as part of a groundwater study.

Testing of groundwater is being done in the North Coast for nitrate, arsenic, bacteria and pesticides as part of the State-wide Groundwater Monitoring Program.

The state will test 60 to 100 wells and send well owners individualized reports of well-water results. In addition, the agency will collect well-water samples in September and in spring 2016. For a flier outlining the study area and details about the project, visit DEQ groundwater monitoring website at www.deq.state.or.us/lab/wqm/groundwater.htm.

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To be considered for this study, email groundwater.monitoring@deq.state.or.us or call 503-693-5736 by July 12.

National park paving to cause closures

The Daily Astorian

A pavement resurfacing project at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park will cause parking lot closures this week at various points throughout the park.

On Tuesday, the Fort Clatsop Visitor Center parking will be limited due to the pavement resurfacing of

the parking lots. Additional parking will be available Tuesday at the Netul Landing complex, about 1 mile south of the Fort Clatsop turn off sign on Fort Clatsop Road. Visitors may also park at the landing and walk the Netul Trail to the Fort area.

On Wednesday, the Netul Landing, including the picnic area and boat launch,

will be closed as crews resurface the area. The Netul River Trailhead will also be closed Wednesday due to use of heavy machinery.

On Thursday, the Fort to Sea Trail Head off of Fort Clatsop Road will be closed for pavement resurfacing. To hike the Fort to Sea Trail, park at Fort Clatsop Visitor Center.

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Fire destroys Eugene stadium

The Associated Press

EUGENE — A spectacular fire destroyed Eugene's historic Civic Stadium on Monday evening and prompted the temporary evacuation of a two-block area, the fire chief said.

Fire crews found flames shooting twice the height of the structure when they were called to the stadium at about 5:30 p.m., police spokesman John Hankemeier said. Smoke was visible throughout the city, which is about 100 miles south of Portland. The stadium's dry, seasoned lumber caused the blaze to spread quickly, Eugene-Springfield Fire Chief Randy Groves said after the fire was controlled at about 7 p.m.

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Have a safe holiday!
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