

# Tour: 'Just a little bit of improvement can really help'

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At a panel discussion that followed, Michelle Lewis, community programs supervisor of Northwest Senior & Disability Services, said many senior citizens are just one fall away from losing their independence, so even small barriers to mobility should be taken seriously.

"Just a little bit of improvement can really help," she said.

## Negative and positive

Even some areas that are ADA-compliant can be improved upon, DeLaTorre said.

For example, the maroon bumps on curb ramps that warn legally blind people when they're about to cross a street would work more effectively painted yellow, he said. Anecdotal evidence suggests guide dogs and the visually impaired discern yellow better than darker colors.

The "roll and stroll" — another name for tours emphasizing the importance of public accessibility for pedestrians and people who use walkers and wheelchairs — didn't dwell on the negative, though. DeLaTorre also drew attention to some of the public areas where planners got it right.

The 13th Street path, a mid-block alley connecting Duane and Commercial streets, has yellow foot prints



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

People walk the streets of Astoria during the Roll and Stroll walkability tour Monday.

indicating a footpath. What's more, it is lit at night to provide rollers and strollers with a sense of security.

## 'Real challenges'

"Astoria has got some challenges," Herzig said, "some small-city challenges, some topographical challenges, and we're just here to call attention to them — not to blame anybody but just to say: These are some of the things we're going to address if we're going to be a walkable city, not just for old people like me, but for anybody."

With Baby Boomers retiring and the senior population

**'Astoria has got some challenges, some small-city challenges, some topographical challenges, and we're just here to call attention to them.'**

— Drew Herzig  
city councilor

increasing each day, cities and businesses have an interest in listening to the stories of older folks and those of the disabled — in gathering feedback to make public spaces as livable as possible.

"Those narratives are really important for understanding the ins and outs of cities," DeLaTorre said.

Planning Commissioner Jan Mitchell, who attended the panel discussion held at



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Councilor Drew Herzig points out a potential problem for people crossing the road during the Roll and Stroll walkability tour Monday.



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

People walk along the sidewalk on 14th Street during the Roll and Stroll walkability tour of Astoria Monday. Drew Herzig pointed out that the sidewalk was sloped downward toward traffic, a potential problem for people in wheelchairs.

the Judge Boyington Building, said she finds Astoria to be "immensely walkable."

"I think this is one of the more livable places in the United States," she said.

"I'm not saying it's terrible," Herzig said, "but I'm saying that there are real challenges here, and we need to be real in addressing them."

# Warrenton: 'I would rather see grants going to economic development'

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proposed \$5,000 to pay for the Warrenton Food Bank Pantry's operating costs, became a donation through Clatsop Community Action to spend on perishable food items for the pantry.

Though the city and churches arranged feasible solutions to the church-state quandary — and though, the commissioners agreed, the association had noble intentions — the incident raised the question: Why should the association undertake charitable giving in the first place?

## 'Heavy lifting'

Some of the association's board members expressed such skepticism at a joint work session last month devoted to clarifying the associ-

ation's mission: "If it doesn't promote economic benefit, it's something we shouldn't even touch," Paul Mitchell, a board member, said.

"I don't think the WBA should be doing charitable grants," Commissioner Henry Balensifer III said Tuesday, "and the reason being: If those businesses want to make those charitable contributions, they can with no restrictions ... They can give to whatever organization they like."

"But, from a city standpoint, I would rather see grants going to economic development activities or things that align with what the city's already planning on doing, like downtown revitalization."

To take additional pressure off of the association, the city may look into hiring a part-

time event planner to help organize some of the events that the association typically organizes, including Christmas activities and the Fourth of July parade.

The association has "done a terrific job in keeping those traditions and celebrations going," Mayor Mark Kujala said. "They certainly have done heavy lifting for us over the years in a number of different roles."

## Regular meeting

At the regular meeting that followed, the commission:

- Considered an ordinance prohibiting licensed medical marijuana dispensaries from selling recreational marijuana,



Henry Balensifer

na, an option left open for municipalities by Senate Bill 460.

- Held a final vote, which was unanimous, on an ordinance prohibiting vehicle parking from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on postal delivery days in front of mailboxes, or

places where mail is delivered, except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic, comply with the law

or follow directions from law enforcement, or momentarily to pick up or drop off passengers.

The amendment to the municipal code grants a 15-foot buffer on both sides of curbside mailboxes, allowing mail carriers a 30-foot comfort zone to access them.

- Unanimously voted to affix the mayor's signature to a letter for Gov. Kate Brown's consideration supporting Oregon Brigadier General Todd Plimpton for adjutant general of the state of Oregon.

The letter details Plimpton's contributions to the North Coast community, especially the help he provided during the Great Coastal Gale of 2007. "Many of my citizens are alive because of the response from Camp Rilea, which Todd commanded at the time," the letter reads.

- Granted Coastline Christian Fellowship a permit for amplified sound that will occur during a large service event scheduled for Aug. 23 at Quincy & Bessie Robinson Community Park.

# Seidel: Man says he hopes to have an attorney by his next court appearance

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Chief Deputy Prosecutor Ron Brown told the court the expanded restrictions were to protect the individual safety of city councilors.

Brown said Seidel had a conviction in San Miguel County, Colo., for obstructing governmental operations last year and a burglary in Woodland, Calif., in 2007.

One of the city councilors — Cindy Price — is married to District Attorney Josh Marquis.

Some at the city are unsure what to make of Seidel — whether he is a misunderstood activist or an unstable threat. He has alleged a conspiracy between the city and the influential Friends of the Astoria

Column to move the communications tower off Coxcomb Hill. As part of the agreement, Verizon Communications would build a new tower the city and the company could use at Reservoir Ridge, east of Coxcomb Hill, and erect a monopole at Shively Park to improve cellphone coverage.

When the City Council approved the deal with Verizon earlier this month, Seidel could be seen across the street from City Hall at the Garden of Surging Waves.

Judge Avera, like judges at Seidel's previous court appearances, strongly recommended Seidel get a lawyer to represent him.

Seidel argued he should have the ability to speak to city councilors. "I believe that

I was a witness to a crime and that I have a right to obtain evidence," he said.

After watching Seidel serve as his own attorney, Avera was blunt.

"I do have some concern about your mental state, quite frankly, given what I've seen here today," the judge said.

Outside the courtroom, Seidel, who said he is from Missouri but had been living in Colorado before coming to Astoria, said he hopes to have an attorney by his next court appearance later this month.

He said he was nervous defending himself in court and described the judge's comments about his mental state as unfortunate. "It was just kind of rude," he said.

# Seaside: Fees have yet to be addressed

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ordinance is written, it could be interpreted to restrict or prevent in-home personal or patient gardens outside industrial zones, which Fairless does not think was the legislation's intended purpose.

If a grow site is run primarily as a hobby, it could be exempt from having to get a business license or from city siting limitations, she said.

For growers interested in larger-scale businesses, she said, they likely would prefer to set up shop in a designated space in an industrial zone anyway. The city might have a hard time getting small-scale, in-home growers to come forward, and their information is

mostly kept confidential by the state, she said. There is no public database for growers, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act guidelines influence some of the privacy around the industry.

Fairless said she would appreciate the council holding a work session to further discuss the topic and flesh out these details.

"Everybody, but especially city councilors and police officers who are going to be creating and enforcing laws, need to educate themselves as much as possible," she said.

## Licensing fees

The city has not discussed the licensing fees that will apply to medical marijuana

grow sites, Cupples said. In general, the cost for a business license varies based on which category the business falls into: general; lodging; food service, restaurant, lounge, tavern, bar; vending and distributing; arcades and sole proprietorship. Fees also depend of factors such as number of employees or occupants.

City Manager Mark Winstanley said fees have not been addressed yet. The city also seeks to clarify whether growers will need a business license only, or an additional license as a medical marijuana production processing site. City staff first was waiting to see if council "would even allow grow sites" in city limits, Winstanley said.




**Denise Gagnon**  
Registration  
4 years at CMH

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