

Helping Hands seeks south-side property

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — A plan to use the Hyak Building for rehabilitating the homeless is no longer an option in Seaside. But representatives of Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Centers see a new prospective site for its re-entry program.

The Northwest Oregon Housing Authority gave Helping Hands permission to build a relief facility on a piece of its property off U.S. Highway 101 north of Avamere at Seaside, formerly Necanicum Village Senior Living.

The property south of Seaside off U.S. Highway 101 “seemed like a much better fit than that location we were trying for,” Helping Hands Executive Director Alan Evans said.

Originally Helping Hands hoped to use the Hyak Building, a multi-unit dwelling on the corner of Edgewood Street and Avenue S owned by the Clatsop County Housing Authority. The social-service group planned to use part of the building to house men in the last phase of their re-entry program.

Multiple obstacles

During the past couple of years, that plan ran into multiple obstacles: a lack of funding, resistance from some neighbors and, most recently, a potential zoning issue. Use of the Hyak Building as a multifamily dwelling in the residential medium-density zone had lapsed, and would no longer be allowed.

While the group could have legally fought the zoning interpretation, the cost to do so would have been prohibitive for either organization, according to Todd Johnston, executive director of Northwest Oregon Housing Authority.

Helping Hands determined it wasn't worth the time or cost to go through a strenuous legal process, especially since there was another option, the new location off Highway 101.

Johnston agreed, adding even if Helping Hands scaled down the scope of the project so it wouldn't violate the Hyak Building's zone designation, “there was a feeling the neighbors still were giving a lot of resistance.”

In response, Helping Hands changed its focus. Rosemary Baker-Monaghan, a former Seaside mayor who lives in the neighborhood near the Hyak Building, initially suggested the new location at an April meeting of the housing authority.

Federal block grant

To proceed with building a facility at the new location, the city of Seaside will need to pursue a community development block grant for Helping Hands. The program is run through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and grants are awarded to communities, not organizations.

Helping Hands has approached the city about hosting the grant and will formally make a request at an upcoming council meeting.

“We're not going to sit down for a planning session without knowing the



Katherine Lacaze/EO Media Group

Helping Hands will no longer pursue the Hyak Building on the corner of Edgewood Street and Avenue S. The social-service group is considering a new location off Highway 101.

city will host the grant,” Evans said.

Once the organization gets a commitment from the city, the partners can begin to draw up a budget. The housing authority's property would either be transferred to Helping Hands or purchased by the organization through the grant program, Johnston said.

“Our involvement mostly would be providing the property,” he said. “I think the main partnership would be through Helping Hands and the city of Seaside.”

Evans believes this is a good solution, since it means Helping Hands likely “won't get resistance

from neighbors and other things we have dealt with.”

Helping Hands also plans to extend its reach into Tillamook County. Last year, a group of citizens, community leaders and professionals approached Helping Hands about the homeless problem in Tillamook.

Helping Hands challenged Tillamook County civic leaders to raise \$50,000 as startup money. In late July, the organization made an offer on a 21,000-square-foot former naval command center with the goal of transforming it into the state's first, fully functional homeless relief center.

Child advocates get grant

The Daily Astorian

Clatsop Court Appointed Special Advocates received a \$15,000 Grassroots Grant Program award from the Meyer Memorial Trust.

“Our services on behalf of abused and neglected children would not be possible without the support of compassionate donors like the Meyer Memorial Trust,” said Christine Lolich, the group's board president, in a news release. “This award brings us closer to fulfilling our goal of providing a trained, dedicated advocate to protect the rights of the more than 100 children in our county who need a CASA.”

Clatsop CASA trains and supports community volunteers who advocate for children in foster care, guiding children toward a safe, permanent home. The group has 40 active volunteers who serve around 60 percent of the children in need in the community. For more information about Clatsop CASA and fall training opportunities, visit www.clatsop-casa.org or call 503-338-6063.

Destination for room tax increase still uncertain

Additional revenue to have ‘huge impact’ on Cannon Beach

By DANI PALMER
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — Visitors will be contributing a little bit more to the Cannon Beach experience. Cannon Beach's City Council unanimously approved an ordinance raising the city's transient lodging tax from 7 to 8 percent Aug. 4. City Manager Brant Kucera said the city anticipates about \$360,000 more in revenue from Oct. 1 to June 30. The ordinance will apply to all reservations made after Oct. 1.

Reservations made prior to the passage of the ordinance are not subject to the tax.

The city's room tax was last increased in 2010 and with the state's 1 percent tax, will bring Cannon Beach's lodging tax to 9 percent.

Seventy percent of the 1 percent increase will go toward tourism, likely the Visitor Center, while 30 percent will go into the city's general fund, divided in accordance with state statutes.

The room tax allocation was

designated to the center during the city's budgeting process, but City Council talks focused on whether the money would also benefit the Chamber of Commerce, which runs the center and recently received \$81,428 from the Tourism and Arts Commission. At one point, two different contracts, one for the center and one for the chamber, were suggested.

A final decision on the allocation will be made next month.

The additional revenue will have a “huge impact on Cannon Beach” and planning for the future, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Court Carrier said after the decision.

A whopper of a bill

While future visitors of Cannon Beach will see a slight increase in their lodging bill, residents Cindy Bryden and

Ernest Goff saw a massive increase in their water bill — from a monthly average of \$42 to \$520 — over the March 20 to April 20 service period.

A member of the city's water crew met with Bryden to discuss potential plumbing problems, but none were found, leaving the high water usage a mystery. Public Works Director Dan Grassick said the city's electronic reading meters have a low failure rate and when they do fail, it's in the customer's favor as the volume measuring mechanism slows down. No exterior leaks were discovered, either.

A plumber Bryden hired gave her a list of possible issues. Since Bryden is an “end of line,” the residence could be impacted by neighboring water usage.

The Public Works Committee rejected her request for

utility relief twice because she could not prove that her household had not consumed the water as billed.

Councilor Mike Benefield said it seemed plausible the problem was a running toilet, or perhaps a friend who was watching the house may have had a role in the water consumption.

With no definitive answer, there were talks of delaying a decision, but Councilor Melissa Cadwallader suggested cutting \$100 from the bill to assist the pair and avoid further public works costs. The City Council

endorsed that decision and voted for the reduction.

Dry weather leads to dusty road

Resident Mike Dwyer said the heat and lack of rain have exacerbated the dirt being kicked up by vehicles in the area, causing potential health issues.

“I reiterate we have to do something about the dust,” Dwyer, a Coos Street resident, said.

He suggested the council consider implementing a previous paving policy, where the city and residents split costs to pave Coos Street.

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