

Patriot Hall, tumbling down



Crews with P&C Construction watch as an excavator tears down the walls of Patriot Hall Tuesday. Patriot Hall is the third phase of Clatsop Community College's Jerome Campus Redevelopment Project, and will become a modern gym and academic hall by fall term 2016.

Long Beach: City hopes to have completed plans by spring

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Safe haven

The proposed Long Beach project will be funded largely with money provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and administered by the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division, though the city will need to contribute roughly \$280,000 in money, materials and labor.

The idea is part of the Safe Haven Project, a collaborative effort led by University of Washington graduate students that combines academic study of tsunami refuge options with extensive community involvement. Eventually, the group hopes to establish as many as 20 tsunami refuges in Pacific County.

In all, the city has qualified for about \$2 million in federal grants, though it's hard to say exactly what the term will cost to build, since it hasn't even been designed yet.

Recently, the state Emergency Management Division granted the city \$450,000 to pay for the first phase of the project.

That money will pay for design and part of the permitting process, Borchard said. Though the project is certainly ambitious, and likely to be complicated, it's also an opportunity for collaborators to do unprecedented, potentially life-saving work.

"It's wonderful, because this small place can have a big effect," Borchard said.

Sparked interest

The geotechnical firms

that are likely to design the project certainly seem to think so. The city recently published a request for proposals in the Seattle and Portland Journals of Commerce. The request is open until Sept. 7, and already, about nine firms have expressed interest.

The city hopes to choose a design firm by October, and have completed plans by late spring. FEMA won't pay for it, but the city could potentially add other features, such as a public garden or climbing wall to the facility, to make it more appealing and relevant when it's not being used for evacuation.

"We're only going to use it once. The rest of the time, it could be a community amenity," Borchard said.

While the design work is being done, the city, state and federal government will be working on the separate permitting processes. The swampy field where the berm will be built is regularly mown and maintained as an athletic field, but technically, it's classified as low grade wetland. That means the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will have to sign off on the process. Getting the wetlands permit from the Corps is likely to be a slow, complex process, and Borchard isn't sure yet how long it will take.

Once that is done, the city will begin the ambitious task of actually building the thing — that will likely involve community meetings, a call for bids, and an extensive construction period. There are no estimates yet on how long future phases of the project will take.

'We're only going to use it once. The rest of the time, it could be a community amenity.'

— Gayle Borchard
Long Beach City Planner



The Bridgewater Bistro is one of several businesses at the Red Building in Uniontown, which has a buyer.

Building: Port has a policy of not selling property

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Cary said Union Fish Properties is nine years into a 20-year term, with an option for another 20 years, followed by two 10-year options. The building includes the Bridgewater Bistro, offices and an event space upstairs.

Businesses will stay

Lommasson said he intends to keep all the same businesses.

"If the Loft doesn't work out, I'd turn those into offices," Lommasson said of the event space upstairs, currently booked by Eventscape LLC.

In 2004, partners Ryan Davis and Helligso, working under Union Fish Properties, bought

the Red Building, the last structure from the Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Co., from the Port of Astoria for \$120,000. They planned to spend \$1.7 million fixing it up.

The Conference Center Task Force, an Astoria group assembled to study the feasibility of such a new facility in the city, scrapped the idea in 2006 because of associated costs and instead recommended development of conference facilities in the Red Building.

Davis and Helligso had been taking out walls to open up the second floor and thought that it would be a great space for something other than the offices that were originally planned, Helligso said in 2006.

At an Astoria Development Commission meeting in 2010, city councilors voted to give Union Fish Properties a \$350,000 loan to help with first-floor renovations and a \$325,000 grant to help write down previous loans. Then-Community Development Director Brett Estes said at the time that the urban renewal district had been largely created to establish a conference center.

Earlier this month, the Astoria Development Commission agreed to extend the loan until February. On Friday, in anticipation of a possible sale, the commission agreed to transfer the loan to Cary and Helligso, instead of Union Fish, and further extend the due date.

Option to buy

In most Port leases, the tenant removes the building at the end of their lease, or the building reverts to Port ownership. The Port has a policy of not selling property.

"If we include the option to buy the (property), it opens that option to any of our tenants," said Jim Knight, the Port's executive director.

Commissioners Bill Hunsinger and Stephen Fulton said they wanted to see the lease with Union Fish Properties before agreeing to any assignment. Commissioners at first seemed opposed to any possibility of a land sale, but eventually warmed to having Lommasson bring in a proposal, if the price is right.

Search: Applications will be reviewed Sept. 2

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accepting applications for an interim county manager.

The commissioners at the work session limited the search to candidates who are not interested in the permanent position and who are not current county employees.

Before deciding on seeking only external candidates, the commissioners discussed accepting internal candidates such as department heads.

"I would like someone from outside the county," Lee said.

Applications for the interim position will be reviewed by commissioners Sept. 2.

"What we are looking for is someone to help guide us through that selection process and someone who does not want to apply to the permanent position," Rohne said.

Somers, county manager since July 2012, will become the city manager of College Park, Md., a Washington, D.C., suburb and home to the University of Maryland.

Somers previously served as city manager of Reedsport, as well as with municipalities in Minnesota, before being hired in Clatsop County.

Earlier this year, Somers was a finalist for city manager of Mill Creek, Wash., north of Seattle.



Clatsop County Manager Scott Somers, shown here at a Board of Commissioners meeting this month, is leaving for a post in Maryland. Commissioners have started the process to replace him.