

Astor: 'I want this building to offer housing to whoever needs it'

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Caruana said he envisions a mix of hotel rooms and apartments, all with access to the lobby. In New York City, he said, there are lots of coffee shops and bars attached to hotel spaces, a feel he would like to bring to Astoria.

Astoria had a good summer, he said, but he wants to see if the upward trend in tourism has staying power before abandoning the building's current model for something fleeting. He said the process could start in five years and be completed in seven.

Housing

After sitting vacant for about 20 years, the Astor Hotel opened in 1984 with 66 one-bedroom and studio units subsidized by the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority. Seven of the units have become market-rate since Caruana and business partner Brian Faherty bought the building in 2008.

When he was buying out Faherty over the summer, Caruana also approached the Astoria City Council for \$150,000 in urban renewal funds to help restore the facade. The City Council gave him the money, with the caveat that 50 percent of the apartment units remain low-income.

"It doesn't matter to me where the money comes from," Caruana said. "I just want good tenants."



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian
Paul Caruana, who became sole owner of the Astor Hotel over the summer, has been waterproofing and repainting, with the help of Pioneer Waterproofing Co. Inc.

Caruana said the housing authority doesn't have to pay for empty units, adding he has had up to 11 vacant units at a time. Some of the units stayed vacant for up to six months, he added, while he turned away prospective market-rate tenants on a weekly basis.

Caruana and Faherty came before the council in June 2011. They said the low-income housing idea was hemorrhaging money, especially after about \$500,000 in water damage from a resident falling asleep with a lit cigarette, sparking a fire and activating

the sprinkler system. Caruana said he and Faherty paid more than \$100,000 of the damage.

"I want this building to offer housing to whoever needs it," Caruana said of the current use of the building, adding he is still working to improve his residents' quality of life, regardless of how their rent is paid.

Not the first

Caruana isn't the only person to have grand visions for the Astor Hotel building, which opened as the Hotel Astoria Jan. 1, 1924, the tall-

est building in Oregon outside of Portland. The restaurant, 150 guest rooms and 10 apartments on top were initially a big draw. But between the construction of U.S. Highway 26, the stoppage of passenger rail service to Astoria and the rising popularity of motels and other factors all led to the operation becoming a money pit.

The building changed hands several times over, experienced a small revival during World War II and was eventually declared off limits by the military. In 1953, the owners



Artist's rendering
Paul Caruana imagines the dilapidated yet grandiose lobby of the Astor Hotel becoming a public gathering spot with a coffee shop and bar. Caruana hired interior design consultant Gabriela Helesicova to illustrate his vision, down to the furniture he would like.

'This building has been plagued since the beginning. I'm hoping not to be another victim of it.'

Paul Caruana
sole owner of the Astor Hotel

Painted the building pink and renamed it the John Jacob Astor Hotel, honoring the city's namesake. But by 1968, the building was condemned as a

fire and safety hazard.

"This building has been plagued since the beginning," Caruana said. "I'm hoping not to be another victim of it."

Hood to Coast: 'If you don't want us here, just tell us'

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the City Council, petitioning the city to change the date, possibly to June or September.

"Nobody argues the benefits of Hood to Coast, and the amount of money that teams raise for charity. We appreciate that," Seaside City Councilor Randy Frank said. "The only thing we're asking is, instead of creating a hardship during this time year, why not consider June?"

Organizers said they would like to continue partnering with Seaside, Floyd added, but if there are irreconcilable differences over which date is best, it might benefit both Hood to Coast and Seaside to go their separate ways to protect their individual interests.

Floyd asked if councilors had an alternative date in mind.

"That's what we're asking you," Frank said.

Two-year notice

Local business owner Dave Posalski, whose restaurants benefit from the event, said there seems to be "an adversarial relationship" between the city of Seaside and the organizers of Hood to Coast, which is a wasted opportunity for a fruitful partnership.

"You're telling us: either hold it that date or you're going to go somewhere else," Posalski said.

"There's a perfect opportunity to be able to say, 'You know what, we're going to partner with Seaside because they're so important to our event. We know you're having a hardship, we'll help you through that.' I think it's a



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian
Seaside Mayor Don Larson speaks at the Hood to Coast workshop Monday night. Hood to Coast Chief Executive Officer Jude Hubber, far left, and Chief Operating Officer Dan Floyd, seated next to him, heard from some of the 87 community members in attendance.

perfect opportunity to be able to say, 'You know what, you guys are telling me it's the best day for your event, make it the best day for Seaside to have the event, too,'" Posalski said.

The chance of Hood to Coast moving the race date is slim, Floyd said, as the nearly 200-mile relay from Timberline Lodge near Mount Hood to Seaside involves 36 exchange points and multiple jurisdictions. Fifty states, 35 countries and 20,000 people would be affected, Floyd said, including 3,600 volunteers.

"There are a lot of reasons that we chose that date," Floyd said. "There are things

that we can change, but the date needs to be consistent. Led by you, this is the only town that asked for a change."

"The date change waxes and wanes as a topic, so I'm a little surprised you haven't gone back to see how it might affect other jurisdictions," Councilor Tita Montero said.

Seaside is the only town along the race path that has asked for a date change, so the organizers have not researched what dates might work for other groups and communities, Hood to Coast Chief Executive Officer Jude Hubber said.

Councilors and audience members realized the dia-

logue may be at an impasse.

"If we go into discussions for the next two years," Montero said, "we have to go with the expectation the date will not change."

"We're giving you a two-year notice to move the race to somewhere else," Councilor Jay Barber said.

Subcommittee plan

Councilor Jay Barber suggested creating a subcommittee

of representatives from the city of Seaside, civic organizations, Hood to Coast and other communities and organizations affected by or involved with the event. The partners could work together to come up with thoughts about changing the date or addressing other issues.

Since Seaside is the one seeking a change, not Hood to Coast, the city should head up the subcommittee and research what other towns want, Councilors Don Johnson and Montero said.

Some audience members questioned the point of a subcommittee if Hood to Coast organizers aren't willing to change the date.

Montero said the group could improve communication and resolve issues without the expectation Hood to Coast will move the event.

While a date change is highly unlikely, Floyd said event organizers are willing to help address citizens' other concerns — such as trash, noise levels, traffic congestion and others brought to their attention. During the event, organizers provide a hotline people can use if there is a

problem related to the event.

A change of finish?

Where would organizers put the finish line, if Seaside no longer is an option, asked John Chapman of radio station KSWB.

"I'm not sharing that," Floyd said, adding they have an alternative or back-up plan for each exchange point on the route.

Barber suggested an on-going dialogue on the date change. "Why don't we sit down and explore options over a long haul?" he asked.

Frank said the conversation has been going on since 2009. He said the city has met with organizers about a date change, without result.

"It's not been two years, not three years, but 15 years of continuous debate," Chapman added. "I encourage you to listen to our business people."

"The date, most likely, we can't change," Hubber said. "If we can't come to an agreement, I completely understand. Just tell us. We won't be bad people, we're not going to come take this place over. If you don't want us here, just tell us."

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Notice of Availability of the Northwest Training and Testing Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS)

The U.S. Navy, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard and National Marine Fisheries Service, has prepared a Final EIS/OEIS to conclude evaluation of potential environmental impacts from military readiness training and testing activities conducted primarily within existing range complexes, operating areas and testing ranges of the Northwest Training and Testing (NWT) Study Area.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to conduct training and testing activities within the NWT Study Area, to include the use of active sonar, acoustic sources and explosives, as well as pier-side sonar maintenance and testing. While training and testing, the Navy follows strict guidelines and employs measures to reduce effects on marine species.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to ensure that the Navy accomplishes its mission to maintain, train and equip combat-ready naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas. The Final EIS/OEIS also supports the renewal of federal regulatory permits and authorizations for current training and testing activities and future activities requiring environmental analysis.

Public Involvement

The completion of the Final EIS/OEIS follows years of research, analysis and public involvement. The Navy held nine public scoping meetings in March 2012, eight public meetings in February/March 2014 for the Draft EIS/OEIS and four public meetings in January 2015 for the Supplement to the NWT Draft EIS/OEIS. Meetings took place in Washington, Northern California, Oregon and Alaska.

The Final EIS/OEIS includes Navy responses to the public comments received during the Draft and Supplement review periods. Regulations provide for a 30-day wait period after the Final EIS/OEIS is published before the Navy may take action.

The Final EIS/OEIS will be available to the public for 30 days beginning Oct. 2, 2015. Access the Final EIS/OEIS online at www.NWTTEIS.com or view a copy at one of 21 community libraries in the affected coastal counties.

For More Information

Visit the project website at www.NWTTEIS.com or contact:
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