

# Charter school wins approval in Cannon Beach

## First year limited to kindergarten and first grade

By **DANI PALMER**  
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — Cannon Beach will once again have an elementary school next fall.

The Seaside School District 10 Board of Directors unanimously approved a three-year contract with Cannon Beach Academy on Wednesday evening in front of a packed room.

Under the district's conditions, the new charter school will serve a minimum of 44 kindergarten and first-grade



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

**Audience members at an August meeting hear a presentation by Ryan Hull, president of the Cannon Beach Academy Board of Directors.**

students its first year, with the ability to add grades over time. The charter eventually

wants to host kindergarten through fifth-grade students.

"We're very willing to work together to compromise," said Ryan Hull, president of the academy's board of directors.

Hull noted he will have to "chew on" the first year grade limit to analyze how it will impact the school, but added he understands the decision from the district's point of view.

Board Chairman Steve Phillips said the limited number of students that first year will make the charter "economically more viable" for the district.

### Charter had planned higher capacity

Cannon Beach Academy had planned on a student ca-

capacity of 85 for the first year. Superintendent Doug Dougherty noted the loss of a little more than half that number of students will drain roughly \$255,900 from the district.

Board member Hugh Stelson said Seaside will not only see a small reduction in staff, but likely cuts in programs.

"This district seems to piece little pieces together and run on duct tape sometimes," he said. "There's not a lot of extra money around."

Phillips said Seaside School District 10 will adjust. Cuts have been made in the past and "we still have a great school district," he said.

Other conditions include the academy's ability to secure proof of its English Language Learners program by March 1, building safety permits by

Aug. 15, proof of insurance by Aug. 30, documents showcasing financial stability and an ability to comply with any tsunami inundation zone line changes.

Stelson said the academy should have an accountability metric to prove it is "just as good as the district."

Vice Chairman Mark Truax said the school will be a part of the district and under its responsibility.

While negotiations remain, Hull said none of the conditions seem unreasonable. "I think we can achieve every condition imposed," he added.

### Building requirements top priority

Top priority for the academy is meeting physical build-

ing requirements at its temporary location at 171 Sunset Blvd. The vacated space, which takes up 3,500 square feet of the 6,000-square-foot building, once housed the Cannon Beach Athletic Club. The charter school plans to open next fall if it can meet all conditions.

Cannon Beach Elementary closed in 2013 for financial reasons and fears for student safety. The building, now shuttered, lies in the tsunami inundation zone.

The school district had issued two previous denials to the academy last year, citing lack of an adequate location and secure start-up funds.

The school plans to eventually settle into a permanent site south of town and east of U.S. Highway 101.

# Southeast Hills site remains leading candidate for Seaside expansion

## Some residents question need, wisdom of growth

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**  
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — As Seaside planning commissioners wade through consideration of an urban growth boundary expansion, some residents are wondering if the process is even necessary.

Buz Ottem, a landowner, said Seaside does not have adequate infrastructure to support its current population in case of an earthquake or tsunami, so it does not make sense to accommodate population growth. "We have the cart in front of the horse, and we shouldn't even be discussing it," he said. "We can't provide for the safety of the residents we have here."

For a fourth month, the commission listened to public comments last week on amending Seaside's comprehensive plan to incorporate about 200 acres of new land into the urban growth boundary. The Southeast Hills site under consideration is located to the south and east of Seaside city limits near South Wahanna Road. A new potential site on the northern boundary of Seaside was also thrown into the mix.

"What do we want the community to be?" asked Planning Commission Chairman Ray Romine. "What do we want the community to have available for residents going into the future? The land we choose will significantly impact the future of who we bring to the community and who can afford to stay."

### Considering the North Hills

In response to requests to review alternatives to Southeast Hills, the commissioners considered the North Hills site, east of North Wahanna Road. Currently, the site is accessed from Shore Terrace and Forest Drive.

Vernonia resident Mike Pihl owns about 40 acres on the North Hills site and proposed the area be incorporated into the urban growth boundary. The area is easily accessible and outside the tsunami inundation zone, he said, two factors commissioners are considering throughout the process.

Commissioner Tom Homing, a geologist, said he is concerned about heavily developing the property, which has "large blocks of landslide material that have moved down the hill and are still probably moving, to some degree."

"It's not a great place to put a neighborhood," he said, adding he thinks it would be appropriate for an unapproved campground or tsunami evacuation site instead. "Our planning process is not designed around landslides, but one cannot disregard that when making considerations between property A and property B."

He and other commissioners favor the Southeast Hills site as the better option, citing concerns that only a third of the 60-acre North Hills site would likely be suitable for development.

The city is mandated to use land in the urban growth boundary efficiently, so it is not wise to include property that can't be developed, City Plan-

ner Kevin Cupples said.

If the city cherry-picked land from the North Hills site that reasonably could be developed, the next issue would be drawing a map "that's a realistic configuration" for the boundary, said consultant Don Hanson, of Otak Inc.

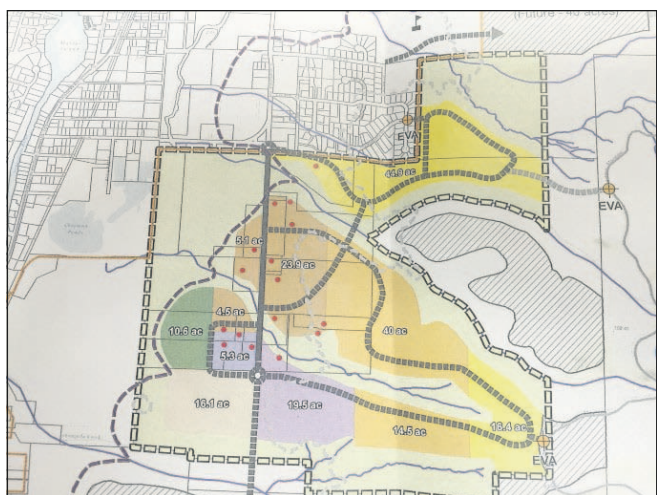
"There are benefits to a compact city limit and a compact UGB," he said.

Even if the city took some land from the North Hills site, a portion of the Southeast Hills likely would be incorporated, since a lands-need analysis completed at the start of the project called for about 200 acres to satisfy Seaside's estimated population growth during the next two decades. "I like to call it a 'balance sheet,' because that's basically what it is," Cupples said.

### What's best for Seaside

Residents, primarily landowners in the Southeast Hills area, have attended the past several meetings to get more information and question why Seaside needs to expand its developable land at all. Many remain unconvinced the city needs that much land in the boundary and worry the rural characteristics of the South Wahanna Road area are at stake.

Southeast Hills residents Mary Kemhus and Maria Pincetich said they feel the growth indicators used for calculating how much land Seaside needs are not accurate. The city's population is not growing as much as estimated several years ago using 2000 census data. Seaside's recent annual growth rate



Submitted Photo

**The Southeast Hills area considered for a potential urban growth boundary expansion.**

has been closer to 0.7 percent rather than 1 percent, as forecast.

Taking into consideration the July New Yorker article "The Really Big One" and the recent Oregon Public Broadcasting series "Unprepared," Kemhus expects fewer people will want to live in Seaside because of the earthquake risk.

She said she prefers the city develop the land currently in the urban growth boundary.

Pincetich referenced a letter

from Mia Nelson, an urban specialist with 1000 Friends of Oregon, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building livable urban and rural communities throughout the state. The organization received many calls and emails from concerned citizens regarding Seaside's proposed expansion and Nelson wrote a reply to several questions that arose.

The organization said the city should calculate its land

using updated demographics, excluding "seasonal, recreational or occasional use" visitors. If those numbers were considered, "The combined effect of these choices would substantially reduce the need for a UGB expansion," Nelson said.

### Action required by state

Pincetich said she is concerned the city is using outdated and questionable data in determining Seaside's future growth.

"It would be best to have confidence in the numbers before we move forward, or as we move forward," she said. "The math does not support it to me. We have other options."

Pincetich said the city should wait at least until June 2017 when Portland State University's Population Research Center is scheduled to issue a new population forecast for Seaside.

Patrick Wingard, the North Coast regional representative for the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, agreed the city is not legally obligated to expand its urban growth boundary, since its population is less than 25,000.

However, he said state planning goals state that municipalities should establish and change urban growth boundaries based on long-range planning, population forecasts and future housing needs.

While Seaside may not be legally required to expand the boundary, Wingard advised the city to pursue expansion.

Failing to maintain a 20-year land supply, important for avoiding population intensification within city limits and providing workforce housing, "does not seem like an appropriate civic direction," he said.

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