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Voters douse Cannon Beach recall effort



Election workers count ballots in the Judge Guy Boyington Building on Tuesday regarding the recall of three members of the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors, Sharon Clyde, Garry Smith and Linda Beck-Sweeney.

Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach fire directors will stay on board

By LYRA FONTAINE and R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Three directors of the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District targeted for recall for firing Mike Balzer as fire chief prevailed in Tuesday night's election.

Sharon Clyde, Garry Smith and Linda Beck-Sweeney will remain in office. Two other directors, Mark Mekenas and Bob Cerelli, were not subject to the recall.

Clyde said she was "extremely happy" with the vote. "I would like to thank all the members of our district that supported all three of us that were subject to this recall attempt," she said in a statement. "We won't let you down."

Interim Fire Chief Jim Stearns congratulated the directors. "I am happy that folks who are willing to give up their time and serve on a volunteer basis can continue doing that," he said.

The vote was a strong validation of the board's decision to fire Balzer in October.

Voters opposed recalling Clyde



Interim Fire Chief Jim Stearns, right, at a January meeting of the Cannon Beach Rural Fire District Board of Directors. Three directors, Linda Beck-Sweeney, Sharon Clyde, Garry Smith are the subject of a recall drive.

Submitted Photo

by a 55 percent to 45 percent margin, according to the Clatsop County Clerk's Office, while voters were behind Smith and Beck-Sweeney 57 percent to 43 percent.

The history

Cannon Beach resident Susan Neuwirth organized the recall drive after Neuwirth and others criticized the board's handling of Balzer's firing.

The three fire board directors chose to fight the recall by submitting a statement of justification and facing voters instead of resigning.

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Sharon Clyde



Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Director Garry Smith, left, and interim Chief Jim Stearns.

Submitted Photo

Council says no need to ban weed

Pot shops get green light in Cannon Beach

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The path was cleared for licensing the sale of cannabis in Cannon Beach, one of the last cities in the South County to do so.

By voting down a ban, the city opened the door to dispensaries and recreational sales.

Despite the success of state Measure 91 allowing recreational sale and possession of small amounts of marijuana — approved by 63 percent of Cannon Beach voters in November 2014 — the city only licenses businesses which abide by local, state and federal law, which excludes pot. After hearing opinions from both sides of the issue, councilors considered an array of options, including to opt out of state law and maintain a ban on marijuana sales.

Voters "can override our proposed ban, or they can override our acceptance," Councilor Mike Benefield said before joining Mayor Sam Steidel and councilors George Vetter, Mike Benefield and Melissa Cadwallader in voting to overturn the prohibition.

Wendy Higgins was the sole councilor to vote to renew the ban.

Limitations, tax ahead

In coming months, the council will consider time, place and manner rules regarding where marijuana may be sold within the city.

Benefield indicated he opposed its sale in the downtown commercial area.

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Delay may put brakes on road repairs

Lawmakers hesitant to raise taxes, fees without ODOT review

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — State officials have yet to launch a performance review of the Oregon Department of Transportation, nearly five months after Gov. Kate Brown called for the inquiry.

The delay could hamper efforts in the Legislature to pass a major transportation funding package in 2017, because some lawmakers are only willing to approve higher taxes and fees on drivers if the Department of Transportation can demonstrate it is operating efficiently.

Tammy Baney, chair of the Oregon Transportation Commission, said during a meeting in Salem on Tuesday that the state could begin soliciting contractors to conduct the review in the next few weeks.

"The oversight committee has met," said Baney, who is also a Deschutes County commissioner. "They have looked at and refined the scope of work. And they are currently looking to draft to send out."

It was unclear what oversight committee Baney was referring to, and staff at the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Governor's Office were unable to identify

Man who tried to arrest mayor convicted

Must have mental exam, stay away from City Council

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Zachary Seidel, who tried to make citizen's arrests on Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear and Police Chief Brad Johnston at a City Council meeting last June, was convicted Tuesday of interfering with a police officer.

A jury found that Seidel, 30, refused to obey Johnston's order to leave City Hall. But the jury acquitted Seidel of disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Clatsop County Circuit Court



Zachary Seidel looks on during his trial at the Clatsop County Courthouse Tuesday.

Joshua Bessex
The Daily Astorian

Judge Cindee Matyas sentenced Seidel to five days in jail, with credit for time served, and 18 months probation. The judge also ordered Seidel to have a mental health evaluation at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare and to stay away from the mayor and

city councilors while on probation.

Seidel will be allowed to write correspondence to the City Council on political or public-policy issues, Matyas ruled, "because I

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