

# Warrenton: Land is zoned for marine industrial use

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Last week, Leucadia National Corp., the New York-based holding company behind Oregon LNG, announced it will cease funding the controversial project. The move came less than a month before the City Commission was scheduled to hear Oregon LNG's appeal of a hearings officer's decision to deny the terminal portion of the project. The hearings officer had approved a pipeline segment to serve the terminal.

Balensifer said he wants something positive to come from this contentious saga, and that it can start with the city reviewing and overhauling Warrenton's comprehensive plan and zoning rules.

"There's certain industry that our community doesn't want. We should be planning for what is gonna work — what's gonna work within our culture, our way of life — but also ensure safe and responsible economic development," he said. "Let's plan this out and have public input so that investors can know right up front: Is this going to work out or not?"

## Just the facts

Though Balensifer is proposing that Warrenton consider crafting an economic road map, he said he hadn't decided whether to uphold the denial of Oregon LNG's terminal.

"I know some people just want their elected officials to just say 'yes' or 'no,' but that's not equal treatment under the law," Balensifer said in an email. "I strive to give everyone, from the person trying to start a home occupation to large-scale developments, a fair hearing. People should have confidence that whenever I make a decision it is fair,



Mark Kujala



Rick Newton



Tom Dyer



Pam Ackley

and that I have read and considered all the facts in the record."

He recognized, however, that, for the Oregon LNG project, "there wasn't a lot of public support, and that's always a factor to consider," he said.

Commissioner Rick Newton said the materials for the appeal contained more than 130 letters against the project and less than 40 in favor of it.

"We weren't anxious to vote on it by any means," Newton said, "because, no matter what, you're going to make a bunch of people mad."

Asked which way he was leaning, Newton brought up the hearings officer's decision.

"I don't normally pay people to give me an opinion and then go against

their opinion. I've learned that in business," said Newton, who owns Warrenton NAPA Auto Parts. "I go to them because I don't have the expertise in that area, which we certainly did not."

He said he also had concerns about how the project would change Warrenton.

"Many of the elderly people came to me and said they didn't like the thought of living in a blast zone, and I can't blame them for that," he said. At the same time, he added, "a lot of people came to me and said, 'We'll get a new school out of this, a new fire department, everything.'"

Commissioner Pam Ackley — without saying whether she opposed Oregon LNG or believed the facility met the city's land-use criteria — said, "I think that our community has to look at things that (have) everybody's support, and it was just too widely not supported."

"We need to focus on trying to bring business here that better fits our community, that supports the environment," she added.

Commissioner Tom Dyer said he thought the LNG project was "a good opportunity for the city to have some decent tax revenue coming in that would have helped us do a lot of things we need to do for the city."

But, if the terminal didn't pass muster regulation-wise, "I would've had no problem voting it down," he said. "You don't always have to agree with stuff to have to do your job, you just have to be professional about it."

"It's like me being a police officer: I may not agree with all the laws I have to enforce, but that's what (the job) is," Dyer, a senior trooper for the Oregon State Police, said. "You use the facts to make your decision — at

least you should anyhow."

As for Mayor Mark Kujala, "I was just prepared to listen to both sides," he said. "The process was a fair one, and we remained objective and ready to listen to the appeal next month."

## The land

What of the land itself?

The Port of Astoria leases the property on the Skipanon Peninsula from the state, and Oregon LNG subleases it from the Port. So, at the moment, "that's really an issue to be determined between the Port and the Oregon LNG folks," City Manager Kurt Fritsch said.

Though the City Commission has not officially discussed a future for the site, Dyer said it could work as recreational or industrial land. The land is zoned for marine industrial use.

"But, I think, by and large, the people who are naysayers on this don't want any industry there. They want the wildlife and the more natural setting to remain there," he said. "Personally, I don't think we have the luxury of having all these green spaces without any income coming in from businesses."

In the pre-LNG era, a golf course was proposed for the site. Dyer would like to see something like a motocross arena. "That brings a lot of money in without a lot of cost," he said.

"This chapter — maybe this book — has been closed, and we'll see," Fritsch said. "The peninsula certainly has value, and it's a question on what someone might come up with to put it to the greatest benefit to the community."

The commission's wider focus, however, is on raising the level of economic activity in Warrenton.

"Warrenton is open for business," Kujala said. "But, at the same time, it

has to be consistent with the livability concerns that we have here, too."

## A huge weight lifted

At the time Oregon LNG chose to pull the plug, none of the commissioners had fully digested the 2-foot stack of appeal documents.

When Newton found out he didn't have to finish the reading, "it was like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders," he said. "It was a ridiculous amount of material."

Ackley commended the company's decision to bow out before the now-canceled May appeal hearing.

"For them to have pulled out after that would have been a very inappropriate use of our time, I believe," she said.

Last month, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission denied applications for the Jordan Cove LNG terminal and pipeline in Coos Bay, citing a lack of identified markets and the pipeline's adverse effects on landowners.

Ackley wonders if Oregon LNG, which was awaiting approval from the federal agency, saw the writing on the wall.

"They probably understood that the battle they were fighting may not be won, and I think that they made a good decision in making that call before the hearing," she said.

Balensifer — who was 15 years old when the effort to build the facility began in 2004 — called the Oregon LNG process "one of the most stressful times in my life, and by far the most stressful time in recent memory."

"Someday I might have to write a book about the last 12 years — what it was like to be on the outside, and then later on the inside, of the decision," he said, laughing.

# Pot shop: The word 'Tillamook' is trademarked

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"We had a strain called Tillamook Cheese, and they got their panties in a bunch," he said.

Nelson said the creamery association has also taken issue with the chain's newest location, Sweet Relief Tillamook, which opened earlier this year.

The creamery association has an active trademark on the word "Tillamook" with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Nelson said Sweet Relief proposed adding the word "Oregon" onto the end of its Tilla-

mook location, to make clear it's not tied to the cheese factory.

## That smell

"Have you noticed there may be some emissions coming from that building?," Commissioner Stephen Fulton said Tuesday about the odor pervading the area around 401 Industry St.

Fulton said if the Port finds the use distasteful, it should contact the owner about acquiring the building.

The building is owned by Richard Delphia. He leases it to Chris West and Jason Oei,

who operate a medical marijuana grow site under the business name Astoria Trading Co. Oei and West had the city's first grow site approved unanimously by the Astoria Planning Commission late last year.

West said Astoria Trading Co. grows for medical marijuana patients but is trying to get a commercial growing license, which allows a producer to cultivate plants for recreational use in up to 5,000 square feet of space. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission started accepting applications for the licenses

this year, after recreational marijuana became legal in July and started being sold at medical dispensaries in October.

**Port of Astoria Commissioner James Campbell takes exception to Port Astordam, the nickname of Sweet Relief Natural Medicine's newer location on Portway Street, just outside the agency's boundaries.**

Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian



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## References *Sales, Service and Satisfaction!*

"Rosalie just opened a new boutique real estate company! We are excited that she did because she was our realtor and helped us find the perfect home. Throughout the search process, Rosalie was a calm and steady support to our needs and wants. She also convinced us to buy the property adjoining the house. This was great, strategic advice. We received excellent and expert service and we highly recommend Rosalie as a real estate broker who puts her clients needs first. We believe you'll be happy too! Sincerely, **Dan and Sue Stein, Astoria Oregon**"

### Dr. Durrani, Astoria, OR

I am a local doctor at Astoria and I loved working with Rosalie. She is awesome, easy to work with, responsive and very personable. I would love to have her always for any of my properties.

### Jim and Sharon Richards, Astoria, OR

Rosalie and I are old friends. She was great as a realtor and stayed positive, although we encountered many irritations during the selling process. Rosalie was so helpful she even came over and vacuumed the house before a showing when our vacuum died. She contributed her money for extra photos and she went all out on advertising. When we needed help, Rosalie had good local contacts and was able to get the needed work done quickly. We are super grateful for all her hard work and recommend her highly.

As a first time home buyer, I could not have asked for a better realtor than Rosalie Larsen. She went above and beyond my expectations and was able to find what I consider "the perfect house" for my budget. Having been a part of the Oregon coast community for decades, she is incredibly knowledgeable of the different areas of Clatsop County. She is an extremely hard worker, who always returned my calls promptly throughout the whole buying process. She also took the time to patiently answer all of the questions I had, as a new buyer. She helped with every aspect of the home buying process including all of my inspections. I give Rosalie Larsen my highest recommendation and wouldn't hesitate to recommend her to anyone looking for a highly qualified and extremely motivated realtor on the Oregon Coast. **K. Smitherman, Astoria, OR**



## About Rosalie Dimmick Larsen & LARSEN COAST HOMES

Rosalie Dimmick Larsen is a true blue Oregonian with a passion for selling homes on the North Oregon Coast. Her love of Oregon is boundless and she has spent more than 24 years honing her real estate skills. She knows the niche markets, neighborhoods and communities from Astoria North to Cannon Beach South and all the quaint villages in between. Her local market knowledge, experience and integrity define Rosalie's business model. She has a proven track record of success and is a consistent top producer in the County. This January 2016 Rosalie decided with her internet savvy programs and her business background (Rosalie was formerly the City of Cannon Beach's Finance Director for 17 years prior to becoming a realtor) she would open her own boutique real estate company. She has the systems in place, the commitment, the organizational ability and the knowledge to provide you with personalized real estate services whether selling or buying that will meet and exceed your expectations.

- Graduate Realtor Institute
- Accredited Buyers Agent
- Luxury Home Specialist
- Premier Property Director (past)
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