

Gearhart: Letters to the commissioners are from both sides

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Proposed rules specify that the use of a home for a vacation rental shall not exceed one rental within seven consecutive calendar days, mandate a 24-hour owner representative and notice to neighbors.

Since last month's hearing, letters to the commissioners range from "leaving regulations as they have been" to "stick to your recommendations."

"We will comply with reasonable new regulations, but request that property owners

be allowed to continue sharing their homes with law-abiding vacations," Walter and Jennifer Baumann wrote.

Bob and Clare Carson of Gearhart said the proposed standards that prevent some owners from renting are a "taking," denying a property right without fair compensation.

David and Susan Kenney, however, said they are concerned about the prospect of homes being owned primarily as rental properties.

The Kennys asked for limits on short-term rentals and limits on the maximum number of rental nights, among other conditions.

Correspondence from renters was entered into the record.

Marla Kennefick of Beaverton asked the commission "not to restrict rentals."

"Please don't take away our tradition of long weekends in Gearhart in our favorite vacation home," Kennefick wrote.

Former Planning Commission Chairman Matt Brown and former commissioner Bill Berg asked for short-term rental properties to be grandfathered, but to limit additional short-term rentals.

"No new STRs will be permitted, and the illegal practice will be reduced to an increasingly manageable number through gradual attrition," Brown and Berg wrote.

George Osgood offered a plea for unity.

"Half of Oregon's small towns are dying," Osgood wrote. "We all are lucky that we as homeowners can enjoy and build Gearhart together and not make this about the Hatfields and McCoys, which was the feeling I had left with from the (April 14) meeting."



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Residents fill the Gearhart firehouse at the end of April to share their thoughts on short-term rentals.

Gap: Oregon spends about \$13 per person per year on public health

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sectors to address social, environmental, or economic determinants of health."

Mahoney said the public health system is not set up to properly treat the rise in chronic diseases. As for the social aspects, he said, public health needs to have the view that it is not just a personal resource but a community-based resource.

Upstream concept

In Clatsop County, the public health self-assessment revealed some chronic disease rates.

- Stroke deaths in the county are 52.8 per 100,000 population, which is higher than the national median of 46 per 100,000.

- The cancer rate in the county is 491.2 per 100,000, which is higher than the national rate of 448.7.

"We are healthier. We are living longer, and yet, we have been developing more chronic diseases," Mahoney said. "We have to set up a health system that prevents chronic diseases in the way that would have a lot of return."

Mahoney said public health departments use a metaphor "upstream, downstream" to describe how preventing illness early, or upstream, can save funding downstream. Every dollar spent on prevention, he says, saves \$5.60 in health care spending.

"Many of our community health problems start further upstream," Mahoney said.

Cost savings is a major goal, especially since funding has been lackluster in the state.

On average, Oregon spends about \$13 per person per year on public health. That equals slightly more than \$1 per person per month. The average for all



Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Brian Mahoney, Director of Public Health in Clatsop County, speaks during an interview at the Clatsop County Public Health Department office.

'We have to set up a health system that prevents chronic diseases in the way that would have a lot of return.'

Brian Mahoney

director of public health in Clatsop County

states is \$27 per person per year.

Washington state spends \$41 per person per year, and Idaho spends \$90.

"Healthy communities and citizens are worth far more than \$1 per person per month," Mahoney said.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners is expected to approve an increase in the public health budget to fund an extra part-time nurse. Three full-time positions are being filled on a rotating basis by six nurses working one to five days a week. Mahoney describes their schedule as playing musical chairs.

The Board of Commissioners has also indicated it will

advocate for more dedicated and adequate state funding.

Mahoney said his staff is capable of serving the community, but the department is lacking certain functions. The self-assessment found the department is missing oral health care, expertise in emergency management and an epidemiologist to study patterns, causes, and effects of health and disease in a population.

Accreditation

Similar to universities and hospitals, public health departments seek accreditation.

The county's public health department began the lengthy

process more than three years ago. Last month, the department hosted a site visit for members of the national Public Health Accreditation Board.

The board will meet in August to review the site visit report. It will then either approve

the county's accreditation or recommend additional steps.

Mahoney said the accreditation process has improved the way the department approaches work each day. The department had to develop a community health improvement plan, a strategic plan and complete a community health assessment.

Once accredited, the work will not stop.

"Already we are working much better with our community partners," he said. "It's making us improve ourselves."



Some of the medications available at the Clatsop County Public Health Department.



Information available at the Clatsop County Public Health Department.



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

A statue of a Native American stands outside of Warrenton High School, fused together with 1,000 smaller metal warriors made by students in the 1970s. The statue will be placed in storage until the district decides what to do with it.

Mascot: District staff will design a new logo with community input

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Smaller changes

Over the past five years, the district has moved away from the more cartoonish depictions of Native Americans. The Midwest-themed Native Americans in head-dress came off of the high school's helmets and merchandise. The district replaced a cartoonish mural of a Native American dribbling a basketball, his feet stuck in gum, with a mural of Clatsop-Nehalem tribal members rowing a canoe with Saddle Mountain in the background.

Jeffery has said the cost is minimal to remove the remaining vestiges of Native American mascots, including some stickers on football helmets, a bench and some old gym pads he added needed replacement anyway. He said the purple Native American statue, comprised of 1,000 miniature Native American caricatures welded together by students in the 1970s, will be taken down and put in storage until the district figures out what to do with it.

The mascot issue in Warrenton has attracted relatively little vocal interest. At a school board meeting

last month, several community members came to testify in support of abandoning Native American imagery, a smaller number asking to move away from the Warrior name altogether. Jeffery said he received some comments from people who did not want to abandon the mascot, but added that keeping the Warrior name was more important than the imagery.

With input from the community, district staff will design a new logo.

"My own personal opinion is a 'W,'" Jeffery said. "I don't think the alphabet police will be after us."



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