

Drill: Camp Rilea is holding its own series of exercises this week

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“The reason we do exercises is to learn, and we can’t learn if everything is run perfectly,” Swanson said. “Our learning opportunities happen when we see things that aren’t going well.”

Though the hospital keeps supplies at the middle school, “we’re not as stocked as what we’re used to in the hospital,” McPherson said.

On top of needing more food, water and painkillers, there were a handful of necessary items that wouldn’t even occur to most people without walking through the earthquake response step by painful step — for example, a Polaroid camera.

Why would a Polaroid be useful? For example, to take and post photos of patients who died without first identifying themselves, whose families are looking for them, and who have been sequestered in the makeshift morgue.

“There’s all these little things that you don’t really think about,” McPherson said. “They’re so little, but they become important.”

As the drill wrapped up, helicopters from the Idaho National Guard flew the assorted military personnel — who hailed from Oregon and other states — to Camp Rilea, which is holding its own series of exercises this week for Cascadia Rising.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Adam Miller pretends to be a patient as Oregon National Guard Major Tony Leonardo checks his vitals while simulating a field hospital during Cascadia Rising on Tuesday, at Astoria Middle School in Astoria.

Whatever’s left

At every moment, the folks on scene knew that, however complicated the drill became, the real deal will be worse than they can imagine.

Not only will the hospital have to continue treating the patients they already had in their care — people giving birth and undergoing surgery, for example — when Cascadia comes they will have to treat hundreds of new patients.

“It’s just gonna be a bad day,” said Matt Lindstrom, facilities, engineering and support services manager for the hospital.

Even the notion that Columbia Memorial will be able to move their services up to the school — after

roads have split, buildings have collapsed and landslides have spread earth and debris through the city — may be a fantasy. What’s more, the school itself may have collapsed in the meantime.

Paul Mitchell, a hospital spokesman who served as public information officer and liaison officer during the drill, said Columbia Memorial would likely build the triage center right at the hospital or the nearest feasible spot.

Astoria Fire Chief Ted Ames said flatly that during a 9.0 earthquake “the hospital wouldn’t be able to drive up here.”

“For CMH to be able to get up here, it’s fully dependent on what kind of infrastructure is left,” he said.

Port: Budget committee approved a general operating fund of \$15.8 million

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Knight said Glick has had trouble reaching Leucadia National Corp., the New York-based holding company that was behind the LNG project, meaning the Port would face significant hurdles in trying to challenge whether Oregon LNG is released from the sublease.

“If you’re looking for a recommendation at this point ... that would be to walk away from this lease,” Knight said. “Don’t continue in any disputes or create any disputes with Oregon LNG. The significant cost in attorneys fees could be quite substantial.”

Knight recommended the Port work with the state on lowering the rent on the land and providing credits, adding the state is willing to terminate the lease with the Port entirely. When Port commissioners said they had questions about the situation, Knight convened an impromptu closed executive session following a budget committee meeting.

Julie Curtis, a spokeswoman for the Department of State Lands, said the state is willing to either modify the lease for whatever use the Port decides, or terminate the lease if that’s the Port’s direction.

“We’re certainly willing to work with them to make this work with their plans, if we can,” she said.

Lease troubles

In November 2004, the Port leased more than 90 acres on the Skipanon Peninsula from the Department of State Lands for five years, with two 30-year options to renew. At the same time, commissioners approved an agreement stating the Skipanon property, previously filled in, belonged to the Department of State Lands.

Days after signing the lease with the state, the Port subleased the land to Skipanon Natural Gas, a subsidiary of Calpine Corp., which filed for bankruptcy in 2005. Skipanon Natural Gas was replaced by Oregon LNG.

When the first 30-year renewal came up, the Port renewed the sublease with Oregon LNG, but not the overall lease with the state over lingering questions of whether the Port or state owned the land. Oregon LNG sued to make the Port renew the lease with the state. The Port renewed for 30 years in 2010.

The Department of State Lands charges 10 percent of the assessed land value annually in rent. The property, previously zoned urban recreational and valued at \$384,000, was rezoned marine industrial and valued at \$1.29 million. Oregon LNG has paid the lease through November, but the Port could be liable for \$129,000 annual lease payments thereafter.

In other news:

- The Port Budget Committee approved a general operating fund of \$15.8 million, including a nearly \$5 million runway repaving project at the Astoria Regional Airport and \$1.5 million in financing for new stormwater treatment.

- The Port Commission voted to have staff send out a request for quotations for a general counsel, a service currently provided by Jordan Ramis PC. Knight said the Port will surpass \$200,000 this fiscal year in attorney fees. The budget committee lowered the budgeted amount for attorney fees from \$240,000 to \$130,000 for next year.

- The Port Commission voted to have staff sign a revised lease with the General Services Administration for Customs and Border Protection’s office in the Pier 1 building. The new lease allows customs to install automated gates, a replacement security window and a trans-action drawer. The Port will receive \$15,000 and \$1,440 a year for the six parking spaces customs is taking.

- After discussion of whether Knight should undergo quarterly or annual evaluations, the Port Commission voted to stick with his contract, evaluating him at his two-year employment anniversary in November.

Councilor: Riverfront Vision Plan was approved in 2009

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“We have to get this done,” Price appealed to the City Council Monday night. “I believe that we’re at peril if we don’t. I can’t overstate it. I think we have to do this.”

City Councilor Russ Warr said the Riverfront Vision Plan has turned out much differently than he and others originally anticipated. “I think that what Councilor Price is saying is, ‘We don’t want any development downtown,’” he said. “We apparently don’t want any development anywhere in the city. And the government just isn’t going to provide all the jobs. We need to have the ability to have some development to get people employment.”

“Councilor Warr should not put words in my mouth,” Price responded, adding that she wants to implement the plan like the city had told residents for the past several years.

After other councilors pointed to priorities such as a new library, redevelopment at Heritage Square and an affordable housing strategy, Price intensified her warning.

“And I think that those of you tonight, at this table, who refuse to do it, are saying you don’t care what happens there,” she said.

Her comments drew pushback from Mayor Arline LaMear and City Councilor Drew Herzig, who cited the heavy workload on the city’s community development staff.

“Everyone knows this is on our to-do list,” Herzig said of the Urban Core.

Last battleground

The Riverfront Vision Plan was approved by the City Council in 2009 as a response to the prospect of aggressive condominium development along the river. The recession altered the financial calculation for potential investors, but the city proceeded with new guidelines to help shape future projects.

The City Council has adopted the Civic Greenway leg east of 16th Street, the Bridge Vista phase in Uniontown, and the Neighborhood Greenway stretch in Alderbrook. The guidelines, in general, have recognized the

need for a working waterfront while restricting new development, particularly large condo projects.

Many of the city’s most vocal preservationists wanted stronger restrictions to protect the riverfront’s historic character and views, and the Urban Core is the last battleground.

Price said she raised the issue of timing with the City Council after feedback from constituents about development pressure. Mark Hollander, a Bellingham, Washington, developer who wants to bring a Marriott Hotel near the Astoria Bridge in Uniontown, has purchased The Ship Inn off Second Street and has talked of making additional investments in the city.

“We’ve known for a while that developers are eying Astoria,” Price said Tuesday.

Grant money

The city has relied on grant money and a consultant to help finance and perform the groundwork for the Riverfront Vision Plan. City staff will keep on the lookout for grant opportunities, but will likely

not proceed with the Urban Core soon without direct orders from the City Council.

“It’s still within the Riverfront Vision Plan,” said Kevin Cronin, the city’s community development director. “And the city is expected to implement the Urban Core at some point in the future.”

“We just don’t know when that’s going to be.”

RIVERFRONT VISION PLAN

The Astoria City Council approved a four-part blueprint in 2009 to help guide future development along the Columbia River. Each segment involves land-use guidelines that must go through the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration.

- **Civic Greenway**/16th to 41st streets: October 2014
- **Bridge Vista**/Portway to Second streets: June 2015
- **Neighborhood Greenway**/41st to 54th streets: December 2015
- **Urban Core**/Second to 16th streets: No timetable

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