

Mattila: 'It was about turning young boys into men'

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Local guy

Mattila grew up in Longview, Washington. He played baseball and football, wrestled and helped coach little league. At Grays Harbor Community College, Mattila played football under John Elway's father Jack and helped coach powderpuff football and softball teams. He then transferred to Western Washington University to study teaching.

"I like to think that a good coach is a good teacher," he said. "I enjoy teaching. Coaching is what motivated me to become a teacher."

After graduating in 1970, Mattila got his first shot at Tillamook High School, where he taught English and coached the football team, first as assistant and then as head coach. Now the 10th most winningest coach in Oregon football history, Mattila was nonetheless fired from Tillamook two years into his first head coaching job. "We didn't win enough games," he said.

Tillamook's loss ended up being Warrenton's gain.



Former Warrenton High School football coach John Mattila oversees a practice in 2006.

Rising Warriors

Mattila said he saw an advertisement for a head coaching job with the Warriors, applied and started in 1974 teaching social studies, eventually switching primarily to physical education and health. Along with freshmen and junior varsity boys bas-

ketball, he started coaching a football team that had never made the state playoffs.

Within his third year, Warrenton had won its first league championship in football. Between 1974 and 2011, Mattila amassed a record of 252 wins, 129 losses, 15 league championships and 23 trips to

the state playoffs, where the Warriors reached the semifinals several times.

His daughter, Allison, reached her junior high school basketball team in 1996, when Mattila took over as head coach.

"I wasn't getting a chance to see my daughter play,

because I was coaching the boys," he said. "And they (the girls' varsity team) needed a coach."

Over the next 15 years, he amassed 290 wins in basketball, won coach of the year four times and reached the playoffs four years in a row between 2007 and 2010.

By 2003, Mattila retired from teaching but continued coaching. After the 2011 season, Mattila was taken by surprise when the district fired him, citing the need for a change in leadership. Mattila retired in Warrenton, and said he has only missed four or five games since the end of his coaching tenure.

Boys to men

"The thing about sports is ... you've got a carrot that kids want," he said. "They want to be involved, want to be a part of it, want to be successful. You use that carrot to keep them going in the right direction."

By the time he started high school in 1998, Josh Hollaway said, Mattila was already a prominent figure immediately associated with Warrenton football. Hollaway was a lineman for Mattila for four

years and coached with him from 2007 to 2010.

"It wasn't just about football," Hollaway said. "It was about turning young boys into men, and being good people."

Mattila has had many success stories from his years as a football coach, from one student, Dusty McGrorty, making it to the NFL, to the many former students who come back to volunteer their time with the school's sports teams. When former player Tyler McGrorty needed help coaching the 8-year-olds on his youth football team, he reached out to Mattila for help.

"You learn a lot from him," he said. "And he sees things that I don't necessarily see, because he's been doing it for so long."

Deferential to praise, Mattila credits the assistants who volunteer their time to coach sports. And with the kids, he said success goes beyond the football field.

"I don't want to take any credit," Mattila said of the success stories. "I think good kids come from good families, and we have had a lot of good kids that have done really well and been successful."

Library: Board found that new library would likely be cheaper, safer

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into the Waldorf, blending a library with housing and preserving the Waldorf, and relocating to Heritage Square.

The Library Board took no position Tuesday on whether a new library at Heritage Square should contain a housing component. Consultants have estimated that housing on top of a library at Heritage Square could add \$15.6 million to \$17.8 million to the price tag.

The board instead focused on the potential for a modern library that would meet the needs of the community and could become what David Oser, a board member, described as "a beacon for residents and visitors alike."

A new library could serve as an economic anchor on 12th

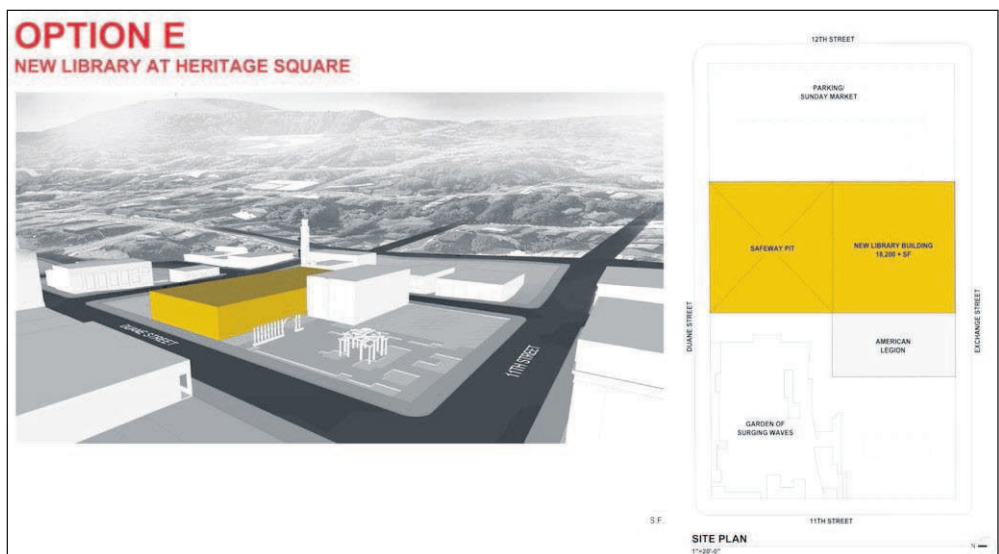
Street and a spur for downtown redevelopment.

The existing library would remain open during construction at Heritage Square, removing the need for a temporary location.

The board found that a new library would likely be cheaper and safer to operate than renovating the existing building, either by using the basement or parking lot or by branching into the Waldorf. Consultants have estimated that it would cost \$5.7 million to \$7.1 million to expand into the basement and \$9 million to \$10.4 million to go into the parking lot. Expanding into the Waldorf would cost between \$8.4 million and \$9.6 million.

Project financing

The city would launch a



The Library Board has recommended a new library at Heritage Square.

fundraising campaign for a library project to help offset the cost to taxpayers.

Oser, a banking and finance expert, believes private donations and grant funding would be

easier to attract for a new library than for a renovation project.

The Library Board approved

the recommendation in a 3-0 vote, with Summers, Oser and Susan Stein in support. Board members Kimberley Chaput and Chris Womack were absent.

The city has about \$1.6 million set aside for a library project, \$750,000 in capital improvement money and \$872,000 available in the Logan Memorial Library Trust Fund.

Some on the City Council have asked for more details about financing, but the presumption is that the city will have to ask taxpayers to approve a bond for a project.

Steve Emmons, who is active with the Astoria Library Friends Association, said he had favored renovating the existing library. "However, if the community truly wants a grand palace of information, show me the money," he said.

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