# Short-term rental owners get reprieve in Gearhart

### Reading of ordinance will wait until August

#### By R.J. MARX The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — Two consecutive days of fourhour meetings, public comment and deliberation still left Gearhart without a short-term rental ordinance. But by 10 p.m. Wednesday, it was getting closer.

Councilors declined to conduct a first reading of the ordinance, designed to regulate properties rented for less than 30 days. But a revised draft of Gearhart's zone code amendments for short-term rental properties from city councilors will be presented at Gearhart's August council meeting.

Officials worked their way through the amendments, picking up where they left off Tuesday night in a public hearing at the firehouse. Most of the conditions presented by the Planning Commission were left intact, with significant changes to the number of permits offered to property owners, an extension to bring properties to code and a discounted fee for property



Paulina Cockrum and Sue Lorain deliberate at the Gearhart City Council meeting.

owners who provide go-bags to their guests. Councilors raised the proposed permit fee from \$500 to \$600 per short-term rental property application, with a refund of \$100 for those who provide tsunami preparedness supplies to their guests.

The permit fee and lodging taxes are designed to cover the city's costs, City Administrator Chad Sweet said. He estimated city income from short-term rentals could reach \$200,000, with more than \$140,000 from lodging taxes, paid quarterly, and \$50,000 from rental fees.

Other conditions for permit applicants include providing neighbor notice and a 24-hour representative able to physically respond to the vacation rental site within 30 minutes. Property owners would be required to display a notice of occupancy, parking and good neighbor policies in every rental, and occupancy limited to two people per bedroom. A provision requiring a maximum occupancy of more than 10 people was deleted if a property otherwise meets the ordinance requirements.

#### **Tsunami ready**

Councilors expressed concern for visitors unprepared for risks in the tsunami zone. "From a preparedness standpoint, I feel all these items should be mandatory," Councilor Dan Jesse said. "We owe it to people coming to our community to have someone looking after them."

A Planning Commission recommendation of go-bags and a NOAA weather radio was modified to offer a discount on the application for homeowners providing emergency supplies.

Councilors also considered what conditions would warrant a loss of permit, forming a consensus that three citations to separate rental parties would

be required to trigger revocation, rather than multiple citations from a single incident.

A "bad group" should not be enough to revoke an owner's permit, Councilor Sue Lorain said.

"I don't think it's fair to kick somebody out because of a bad apple," Jesse added. The city will also provide

language for a variance process, one which could impact several Gearhart properties, including the Lodge at Little Beach and Breakaway Lodge, both of which received approval from the city in 1994 to operate under hotel rules. "Both submitted

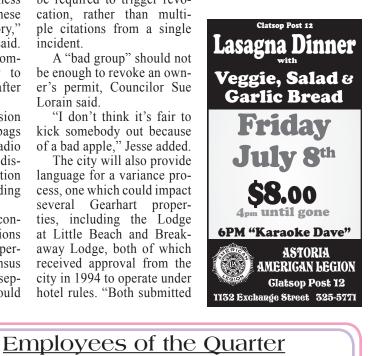
evidence they've long been used as lodges," Watts said.

They have each paid the 7 percent lodging tax since that time, Sweet said, and could be treated as nonconforming properties.

Planner Carole Connell advised putting a "placeholder" to the ordinance to consider variance procedure. "The key is to have crite-

ria that can be applied across the board," Watts said. With the close of delib-

erations, councilors unanimously approved a motion to direct staff to prepare a final document in ordinance form for its August meeting.





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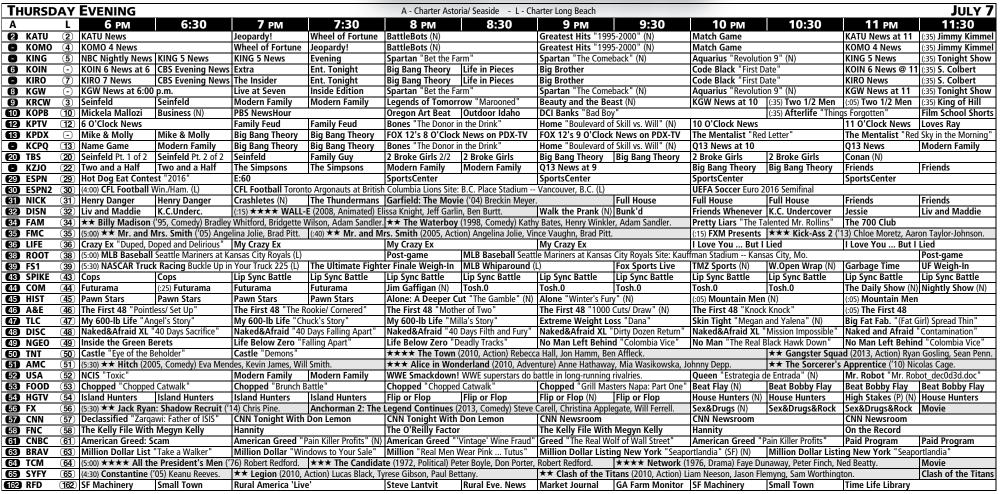
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