

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

144TH YEAR, NO. 40

DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 2016

ONE DOLLAR

Developer tries to save Miles Crossing project

Apartment complex could help with housing shortage

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

A developer has appealed a decision to deny a proposed 48-unit

apartment complex in Miles Crossing to the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners.

Richard Krueger filed the appeal with the county, claiming the Clatsop County Planning Commission's denial in July was based on a formality and not on actual requirements.

The Board of Commissioners unanimously agreed Wednesday to hear the appeal and take a fresh

look at the proposal. Supporters of the Bella Ridge Apartments see the project as a much-needed source of affordable and workforce housing.

A hearing is scheduled Sept. 14 during the board's next regular meeting.

In his appeal, Krueger asked county commissioners to only review the sole issue of contention, which was a question about sewer capacity

in the region. Krueger wants to build the Bella Ridge Apartments on 10.4 acres between Lewis and Clark Elementary School and the Lewis and Clark Golf & RV Resort.

County staff, however, recommended the board revisit the entire project.

Commissioners agreed to hear all the evidence, and not limit what can be discussed during public comment.

"I think it's important that we allow the public to say what they want to say," Commissioner Sarah Nebeker said.

Sewer concerns

Neighbors against the project have been outspoken with concerns ranging from traffic impacts to whether

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Jetty gets armored up

Repairs to jetty system at the mouth quicken

By DAVID PLECHL
EO Media Group

LWACO, Wash. — Crash! Bang! Boom! On a recent afternoon, the construction site at Jetty A, near U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment, was something straight out of a child's imagination. On a barge tethered to the tip of the jetty, a crane was swinging rocks as big as cars ashore. The giant claw of an oversized excavator hefted most of the massive boulders into oversized dump trucks and plunged some of the rock directly into the weather-worn chinks in the jetty's aging armor.

Workers at the site were unloading the third of six barge-loads of meta-basalt that will be used to fortify the 77-year old jetty at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Built in 1939, the 1 1/2-mile-long jetty's primary function is to direct river and tidal currents away from the North Jetty foundation. Engineers say the lifespan of a jetty is about 50 years, so on the whole, Jetty A has outlived expectations.

Nonetheless, the jetty has been in need of repairs and upgrades for years. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began the estimated \$30.5 million effort to bring the jetty back up to full strength in June. The ongoing construction at Jetty A is part of a comprehensive effort to repair all three jetties at the river's mouth, a project Corps officials expect to last through 2023.

Project overview

Rocks at the core of the jetty are smaller, while the largest, "armor rocks," form the shell of the structure. Those can range in size from 18 to 32 tons, project managers said. Although the Corps is responsible for the planning, design, and monitoring of all jetty operations and improvements, Vancouver-based Kiewit Corp., which provides construction, engineering and mining services, is the primary contractor for the job. Several years ago, Kiewit made repairs to the South Jetty. The company also had the ability to barge rocks in from its own Beaver Lake Quarry in Mount Vernon.

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Photos by David Plechl/EO Media Group

Jerry Otto, a Army Corps of Engineers civil engineer, and the Jetty A project manager, led members of the media on a tour of the site and explained how crews were rebuilding the 77-year-old structure back up to its full functional capacity.



ABOVE: A "spotter" scrambled over the rocks near the ocean end of Jetty A after advising a crane operator precisely where to place an "armor rock" that will make up the exterior of the mile-and-a-half long structure. The \$30.5 million project will buttress the jetty with more than 82,000 tons of new stone. BELOW: Built in 1939, the jetty's primary function is to direct river and tidal currents away from the North Jetty foundation. The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for the planning and design of the project, while Vancouver-based Kiewit Corp., is the primary contractor



Lead test costs high

State mandate may not come with money

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

As the deadline nears for school districts to turn in plans to test for lead and radon, local administrators understand the need but worry about the costs.

The state Board of Education this month voted to require school districts to test for lead and radon. The vote came after scandals in Portland Public Schools over contaminated drinking water ballooned into a statewide issue. School districts have to turn in preliminary plans to test for lead and radon into the state by October, with final plans due by January.

"We want to ensure that our water and air are going to be safe for students," Superintendent Mark Jeffery of the Warrenton-Hammond School District said of the new requirements. "It would have been lovely if they would have come forward with some funding."

Jeffery said he is hopeful funding for testing will be forthcoming. The city of Warrenton tested the district's water at no charge, but Jeffery said he doesn't know how far that arrangement will go.

School advocates have said the Legislative Fiscal Office is working on a funding proposal to present to the state's Emergency Board in September.

The costs of testing and mitigating problems are largely unknown. The state School Boards Association has said testing and fixing problems could cost districts hundreds of millions of dollars statewide.

New Knappa Superintendent Paulette Johnson said her district spent about \$400 on testing throughout its schools. The results came back Tuesday, with only one lightly used fountain shut down.

"We have to keep our kids safe," Johnson said. "If that takes testing, I'm OK with that. I'll put it in the budget."

Astoria and Seaside schools have also received results back from lead testing. Astoria shut off two fountains at

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Mark Jeffery



Paulette Johnson

Mental health agency on a better track

Strong leadership key to success

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The chief executive for regional mental health care on Wednesday praised the Clatsop County manager and the interim director at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare for stepping forward to "really save a local program from the brink."

Kevin Campbell, who leads Greater Oregon Behavioral Healthcare Inc., which oversees mental health services in Clatsop and several other counties, believes Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare is beginning to turn a corner.

County Manager Cameron Moore



and Amy Baker, the interim executive director of the mental health agency, have been working to stabilize the agency after a leadership shakeup this year.

"I can tell you that GOBHI is willing and ready to continue putting resources into this community to see that we get to a not only a functional, but an exemplary, mental health system," Campbell said at a work session with the county Board of Commissioners.



Amy Baker



Cameron Moore

An internal investigation and a state review by the Oregon Health Authority documented the management challenges and led to the departure of top administrators at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare. The agency, which provides mental health services under contract with the county, also suffered through an

exodus of professional talent.

Details of the dysfunction dribbled out publicly over the past year through anecdotes from law enforcement and social-service advocates, union action and federal lawsuits.

Baker told county commissioners her biggest fear when she took over in June was that the agency's crisis team had dwindled to just one person. "And that is a position you never want to be in as a community mental health program," she said.

Baker is gradually rebuilding staff throughout the agency and is working to improve infrastructure. On Wednesday, for example, she said she went through the agency's intake process herself to see what patients experience.

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