

Candidates take the stage in Seaside

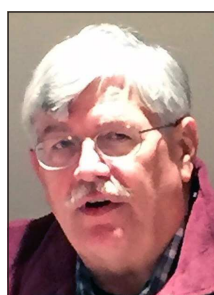
Gearhart mayor, Seaside council in contested races

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Housing, tsunami safety and a potential new school campus in Seaside dominated discussion Monday night as the American Association of University Women hosted a candidate forum at City Hall.

Moderated by AAUW Finance Vice President Virginia Dideum of Gearhart, candidates from Gearhart and Seaside shared their viewpoints to an audience of more than 100 residents from both communities.

The mayoral race in Gearhart and the battle for City Council Ward 3 in Seaside were the only contested races, and differences



Tom Horning



Don Johnson

between the candidates in each provided the starkest differences in political opinion.

Seaside Ward 3
Ward 3 Councilor Don Johnson faces a

challenge from Tom Horning, a geologist and member of the city's Planning Commission. Horning is running on a platform of tsunami awareness, and presented a visual presentation illustrating the risk to the city.

"One of the things I've found most compelling about this election is tsunami preparedness," Horning said. "New information is coming now that compels us to doing evacuation infrastructure at a higher priority and a higher speed level than we have."

Horning said tsunamis are due every 340 years — and the last one occurred 316 years ago, in 1700. Seaside is "all going to be flooded" in the event of a tsunami,

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R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop, front, was among those in the audience at the American Association of University Women Forum Monday night.

MORE THAN A ROBOT

Fifth-graders get 66 minutes to find a way to retrieve underwater cannons



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Bryce Yeager, left, Darby McCleary, center, and Aria Larsen work in a group to construct their underwater robot with other fifth-graders at Lewis and Clark Elementary School on Wednesday at Columbia River Maritime Museum's Barbey Maritime Center in Astoria.

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

What happens when fifth-graders are left to their own devices and asked to build a robot?

Columbia River Maritime Museum tried it out last week at the Barbey Maritime Center, giving about 150 fifth-graders from Lewis and Clark Elementary School the chance to design, build and deploy their own underwater robots.

The invitation was an Astoria-only pilot for the new Under the Sea STEM program, an effort to engage students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics at the museum.

"The main goal for me with the education department here is to make everything hands-on and activity based," said Nate Sandel, who manages the museum's education department.

Six fifth-grade classes visited the museum last week, two per day Tuesday through Thursday. Sandel gave students their mission: Design, build and deploy an underwater robot

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Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Kaden Thomas, center right, looks into the water with other classmates to see his group's robot try to retrieve an underwater object Wednesday.

Council decides not to fill void

Astoria councilors opt to wait for election

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Tom Brownson is a shoo-in for Astoria City Council. The retired contractor is the only candidate on the November ballot to replace Drew Herzig, who stepped down and moved to Massachusetts.

But Brownson's future colleagues have chosen to wait for the election rather than appoint him immediately to fill the vacancy.

City Councilor Cindy Price recommended Monday night that Brownson be named to the Ward 2 seat so the south side would have representation and the council would be at full strength through the end of the year.

Price said Brownson, who has been regularly attending council meetings, is "prepared and ready to honorably and respectfully represent the citizens of Ward 2 and participate in this deliberative body."

In an awkward moment, though, her motion did not receive a second and died.

Other councilors preferred to wait.

"Could I ask why?" Price said. "We have a candidate here. Ward 2 has been used to being very well represented robustly by Councilor Herzig. I'm really not understanding why — it's a vacant seat, it's unopposed — we can't move forward with a full council."

Once Brownson is officially elected in November, he would take the oath of office in January with the winner of the election to replace Councilor Russ Warr, who is not seeking a fourth term representing the east side. Bruce Jones, a former U.S. Coast

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Cargo parklet a first for downtown Astoria

Wooden benches will take over parking spaces

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Hoping to bring a neighborhood feel downtown, a parking space and a loading zone outside of Cargo on 11th Street will soon get converted into a parklet.

Wooden benches will be placed on the street near the curb so people can enjoy a cup of coffee or take a break. The urban street design is popular in Portland, Seattle and San

Francisco, so Astoria agreed to experiment with the tiny parks.

Jim Defeo, who is behind Cargo, the Astoria Coffeehouse & Bistro and Carruthers restaurant, is sponsoring the parklet. The benches and other features have been designed by artist Jeff Daly using reclaimed wood and other recycled materials. Defeo may add tables and other improvements.

Michele Reeves, an urban strategist, had urged the city in 2012 to make downtown more vibrant and walkable, even at the expense of coveted parking spaces.

"That's what we want to do," Daly said. "We want to see people downtown, daytime

and nighttime, celebrating their businesses and taking care of our business owners."

The City Council last year approved the parklets concept in a two-year pilot program pitched by the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association. The council also reserved the right to authorize individual parklets, and voted for Defeo's project Monday night.

The parklet in front of the Cargo shop will extend about 7 feet into the street and will be about 40 feet long, covering a parking space and a loading zone.

"I'm anxious to see it," City Councilor Russ Warr said. "I think it will be interesting."



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council approved a parklet with wooden benches outside Cargo on 11th Street downtown.

