

Cannon Beach considers housing solutions

Public rejects use of Tolovana Hall for housing

By LYRA FONTAINE
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Addressing workforce needs, developing city-owned land and using innovative dwelling units could be elements of Cannon Beach's multi-pronged housing approach. The city's affordable housing task force will present its final report with recommendations at Tuesday's City Council work session. Those could be adopted as soon as the next council meeting.

In six meetings with consultant Terri Silvis, task force members agreed in their vision statement to "forge a housing plan that encourages and facilitates the creation of long-term workforce rental housing in Cannon Beach."

Members focused on year-round, full-time employee housing, identified city land for housing sites, analyzed census data and examined

workforce housing in other tourist communities. The draft report also includes the option to create incentives for long-term accessory dwelling units and to limit short-term rental growth.

At its October meeting, the task force discussed the draft report, which includes two development options for middle-class workforce housing and zoning change options.

Recommendations include using up to 10 spots in the RV Park for manufactured "park model homes" that could be hooked into existing water and electrical systems. At about 400 square feet, they could accommodate one person or a couple. The pilot program could be financed from the general fund or borrowed funds and would not lead to a significant revenue loss for the city, the draft report states.

"We think it's a wonderful idea but maybe the people we're targeting might not agree with us," task-force member Ken McQuhae said. "I wonder if we should start with fewer and see how it goes."

The task force may also recommend developing the



Submitted Photo

The Cannon Beach affordable housing task force will recommend up to 10 manufactured "park model homes," like the ones shown below from Woodburn to be placed in the city's RV Park.

former children's center in Tolovana to about nine units.

City Manager Brant Kucera suggested there could be a regional task force on housing. "The bigger issue needs to be addressed by all the cities to succeed," he said.

The task force also discussed whether the city should manage the properties and consider the children's center for housing, but not Tolovana Hall, an idea that

was previously proposed. The hall is used for Tolovana Arts Colony classes and organizations like the Friends of Cannon Beach, Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes and Medical Reserve Corps.

Though it's a "revenue loser," Kucera said Tolovana Hall is a public good.

"I don't see there's any consensus at all to replace that," task-force member Brandon Ogilvie said.

Public response

At the task-force meeting, Jan Siebert-Wahrmund said although the children's center is the only area being considered for housing in Tolovana Park, the adjacent Tolovana Hall is an important gathering space.

"If we lost that, it would be really a shame for community spirit," she said. Siebert-Wahrmund asked the task force for a friend to consider affordable housing for long-term elderly residents who would like to stay in their remaining years.

Ed Johnson said the park model homes are more reasonable than previous concepts of 24 units at the RV Park. He said he hopes the task force's proposal to add park model homes will not affect areas adjacent to the RV Park.

Phil Massebeau said replacing RV units with park model homes was not a solution.

"It doesn't make any sense to me, taking away city prop-

erty," he said. "This won't put a dent in the housing problem. I think you can draw in private developers to do things. It's wrong for the city to put in money into all these things."

The Cannon Beach Garden Club is opposed to any development in the city-owned lot where Tolovana Hall and the children's center are located, club representative John Piatt said at the Tuesday council meeting. The lot was gifted to the city in 1987 with deed restrictions, including one that guarantees the garden club's right to use the property monthly free of charge.

"Tolovana Hall is in use six to seven days a week," Piatt said. "While the garden club recognizes the need for more affordable housing in Cannon Beach, we believe the lot in question is not the answer. It should rather remain true to the spirit of the deed as a resource for the community at large."



Ken McQuhae

Democrats expected to stay dominant in Legislature

Some setbacks likely on Tuesday

By HILLARY BORRUD
The Oregonian

SALEM — Democrats in the state Legislature have a problem this fall.

Republicans have a fighting chance to claw back seats in the House and Senate — thanks to an unusual number of open seats, a slate with some moderate candidates and an infusion of local and national cash.

Democrats aren't expected to lose control of either chamber. But defeats could erase their 18-12 supermajority in the Senate and cut into their 35-25 majority in the House. That would threaten their ability to push priority bills in 2017, from requiring businesses to provide paid family leave to raising the gas tax for a long-anticipated transportation package.

And yet that setback may only be short-lived.

Even if they lost badly this year, Oregon Democrats have a demographic edge that's likely to widen over the next decade, as the state's urban centers — including suburbs and smaller cities such as Hood River and Bend — continue to grow. Those areas already have more Democrats than Republicans, and more people overall presumably means even more Democrats.

Registered Democrats already outnumber Republicans in 39 of the 60 House districts and 22 of 30 Senate districts, according to an analysis of data from the Secretary of State's Office. In a little over a decade, as much as 85 percent of Oregonians could be living in those areas, said Jim Moore, director of the Tom McCall Center for Policy Innovation at Pacific University.

Moore said lawmakers will likely redraw their districts after national censuses in 2020 and 2030 and shift seats from rural areas to "the more Democratic population centers."

"At that point, the Republicans are going to be in a world of hurt, because they're not going to have the suburban districts anymore. They'll just have the rural districts," Moore said. "The demographics are everything, they really are."

Some coin flips

Despite Democrats' overall registration edge, House Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, said several contests this fall are so close — because of open seats in swing districts — they could be coin flips.

Williamson said she's focused on simply holding onto Democrats' 10-vote majority in the House, which puts them one vote shy of a supermajority. With a supermajority, Democrats could pass revenue mea-

asures without any Republican votes.

"We see this as a very defensive cycle," Williamson said. "My first and foremost priority is to return to a majority in the House. I think we can't take anything for granted this election cycle."

Moore said this year's most competitive House races are clustered in Portland's suburbs and a district between Salem and Woodburn.

Right now, they're all held by Democrats who've decided not to seek re-election. And the Republicans looking to replace them have largely positioned themselves as friendlier to a wider spectrum of voters.

Preston Mann, a spokesman for Promote Oregon Leadership, the political action committee for House Republicans, pointed out that candidates lost by roughly 1,000 to 1,400 votes in three of those districts — in Woodburn, around Hillsboro, and near Happy Valley and Damascus — in 2014.

But for all their talk of defense, House Democrats have also gone on the attack in some Republican-held districts where Democrats nonetheless hold a registration edge.

Two of those seats, in Wilsonville and out in Yamhill County, are being vacated by Republicans. But the other three are held by moderate incumbents who've defied demographics to win convincingly in past elections: Knute Buehler of Bend, Julie Parrish of West Linn and Mark Johnson of Hood River.

Privately, some political observers wondered why Williamson and Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, have aggressively targeted those districts with so many open Democratic seats to defend.

Williamson defended the strategy, saying it was valid to challenge Republicans in areas "where we see a Democratic registration edge."

But House Minority Leader Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, called Parrish, Johnson and Buehler the type of centrist candidates who still appeal to voters in increasingly blue suburban districts.

"They're running very vicious campaigns against all three of them," McLane said of Democrats, "which is a shame because Knute and Mark and Julie have shown themselves to be bipartisan leaders and inde-

pendent leaders."

For example, Parrish supported Oregon's 2014 ballot initiative to legalize same-sex marriage and has declined to seek endorsements from groups on either side of the abortion issue, saying "it's not for me to make that decision for someone else."

Buehler, an orthopedic surgeon often mentioned as a 2018 gubernatorial candidate, championed a 2015 bill that made Oregon the second state after California to allow on-demand birth control pills at pharmacies. And Johnson helped Democrats pass an anti-coal law this year that says utilities must serve half their customers' demand with renewable energy by 2040.

Moore said incumbents can remain popular in these districts as they transition from red to blue because voters often prefer centrists in either party.

"Taking on Knute Buehler is a thankless task," Moore

said of the Bend Republican. "He's very popular. He's also an avowedly moderate Republican."

In the Senate, voters in southern Oregon must choose between Republican Alan DeBoer of Ashland and Democrat Tonia Moro of Medford to replace Democrat Alan Bates, who died in August.

Bates, who narrowly won his first election to the seat in 2004, was famed for his bipartisanship.

But last month, Bates' widow took Moro to task for "disappointing" attack ads on DeBoer — suggesting the difficulty Moro could face in claiming the seat.

The ads in question criticized DeBoer for his support of two development projects during his time as mayor of Ashland. Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, said they simply pointed out "in a very above-board way" DeBoer's record.

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