

Cannon Beach Academy celebrates approval

Charter school plans to open in fall 2017

By LYRA FONTAINE
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Community members of all ages gathered at Chamber Hall last week to celebrate the Cannon Beach Academy's unconditional charter application approval by the Seaside School District board.

This major step brings the school closer to opening in fall 2017.

"We have come a long way," board President Kelly Dewey said to the crowd. "Hard work from the start is now paying off for our families and our community. There still remains tons of work ahead, but our approved charter without conditions is a milestone that needs to be acknowledged and celebrated."

The Cannon Beach Academy formed in 2013 after Cannon Beach Elementary closed. The school district had denied two of the school's proposals, and withdrew its conditional approval for another proposal earlier this year.

The academy and school district worked together this year on the charter application. Before getting approved, the academy clarified certain aspects of its financial plan, with revenue to be generated primarily through district funding, pledges, fundraising and grants, board members said in October.

"We want to thank you all for being here and helping us start this from the ground up," Dewey said. "We wouldn't be where we're at without you all."



Cannon Beach Academy board members Patti Rouse, Barb Knop, Sally Steidel, Phil Simmons and Kelly Dewey with Jeneé Pearce-Mushen, Yohali and Alondra, who translated for Spanish speakers in the audience.

Lyra Fontaine
The Daily Astorian

Moving forward

The academy can now start to finalize financial details, apply for grants, plan for enrollment, prepare the school building and start hiring staff, according to board members. With its approved charter, the academy can apply for state Department of Education charter school implementation grants that will be available in the spring.

"If we can dig down and find the drive to take us to the finish line so we can open those doors for the first day of school, we will be so grateful," Dewey said. "Imagine the smiles on those kids' faces. We are not only providing this school for our community, but also a choice in education, which is what every child deserves."

Dewey and board members Sally Steidel, Barb Knop, Patti Rouse and Phil Simmons were available for the audience to answer questions.

Jeneé Pearce-Mushen and two local children, Yohali and Alondra, translated Dewey's words for Spanish speakers.

A "fundraising mountain" created by artist Bill Steidel will serve as a marker for funds raised by the academy. Board members thanked Steidel for contributing his original artwork.

"I think you've all noticed that we have a mountain, and we do have a mountain of work to do," said Sally Steidel, adding that the piece of art will be placed somewhere in town.

Getting ready

The academy's grade levels will start with kindergarten through second grade, then add a grade each year. The board will recommend 17 to 21 students per class.

A contract will likely be secured with the school district by the end of the year, and enrollment could open in March.

Getting the building ready is one of the top priorities,

Knop said. Because the academy's conditional use permit expired, board members have turned in a revision for the Planning Commission to review in December. The school is temporarily located at 171 Sunset Blvd.

With potentially vulnerable bridges between Seaside and Cannon Beach, not having a school in town is a "major logistics issue" in the event of an emergency, parent Ryan Dewey said.

"It's not about my kids' individual experience," he said. "It's for the community. If you don't have a school, grade school kids, parents and grandparents in a community, it's not a community. It's a resort town."

The potluck gathering also celebrated voters approving the Seaside School District's \$99.7 million bond measure to relocate schools out of the tsunami zone.

Council poised to pick Seaside's next mayor

Mayor Larson leaves vacancy

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Mayor Don Larson stepped down this month as the city's top official after the second year of his four-year term. How will the next mayor be chosen?

A City Council workshop on Nov. 28 could make things clearer.

Larson, 80, has served as mayor since 2002, when as a city councilor, he defeated Rosemary Baker-Monaghan. He subsequently won re-election in 2006 and 2010.

In the 2014 election, Larson garnered 62 percent of the vote, defeating challengers Angela Fairless and John Dunzer.

According to the city charter, a mayor's four-year term begins at the first council meeting of the year immediately after the election and continues until a successor assumes the office. The mayor serves as chairman of the council and presides over its deliberation, with authority to enforce rules and determine the council's order of business.

Vacant offices are filled by appointment by a major-



EO Media Group/File Photo
Mayor Don Larson prior to re-election in 2014. Two years of his four-year term remain.

ity vote of the remaining members of the council. The appointee serves immediately after appointment and continues until the January following the next general city election.

The appointee will fill the remaining two years of Larson's four-year term.

Councilors may select any registered voter with at least one year of residence in Seaside.

Will incoming Councilor Tom Horning be part of the council's decision-making process?

"That's something the council will determine at the workshop," City Manager Mark Winstanley said.

The council workshop is scheduled for 3 p.m. at Seaside City Hall.

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