

Cannon Beach considers new tree rule changes

Nearby property owners would get notification

By LYRA FONTAINE
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — More requirements for tree removal requests on city-owned property could be ahead.

After residents complained in November about tree cutting on city property near the city-owned RV Resort, the Planning Commission approved recommending amendments to the city's tree removal ordinance at a late December meeting.

The City Council will discuss the recommended changes on Tuesday and hold a public hearing on Feb. 7.

If the council follows the Planning Commission's recommendations, tree removal requests on city-owned property could be subject to additional requirements. The city would need to notify property owners within 100 feet of the trees requested for removal and give notice to any person who has commented on the request. The city would also be required to post its tree removal request on the city's website and at City Hall.

In November, the city removed about 35 trees from the RV Resort. Some trees that were removed were dead or dying, according to the permit application. Residents who live near the RV Resort expressed concerns to the Cannon Beach Gazette about the removal.

The trees were selectively thinned as part of the second phase of the RV Park utility upgrade, Public Works Director Dan Grassick said in November.

"Thinning will allow the healthy tree specimens that



The Daily Astorian/File Photo
Trees fill the city, like this reaching to the sky at Spruce and Harrison streets.

remain to branch out and fill in the upper canopy while creating a more park-like atmosphere versus dense forest," Grassick said. "The underground utility construction also will damage a few trees that likely will need to be removed as a result of the excavation. Those will be evaluated on a case-by-case."

The park was over-planted with the idea that not all of the trees would survive since it was too dense, but nearly all the trees survived and were

never thinned, Grassick said.

This has led to forest health issues, such as one pine species starting to die off, Grassick said. The overcrowding has also created challenges with RV sites since the RVs have become larger with more accessories.

The city is following the recommendations of licensed arborist Joe Balden, who was hired to evaluate the health of the park's forested area. More than 250 trees will remain, Grassick said.

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New mayor, council president in Gearhart

Jesse is Gearhart's second in command

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — With a change at the top of city government came a call for a second in command, council president. Mayor Matt Brown ushered in the new year at Gearhart's first council meeting of 2017 and among his agenda items was the job of appointing a council president.

Dan Jesse was unanimously elected to serve the role.

The position, man-

dated in the city's charter, calls for council members to elect a president among themselves. In the mayor's absence from a council meeting, the council president would preside. Whenever the mayor is unable to perform the functions of office, the president acts as mayor.

Sue Lorain held the post under the term of Dianne Widdop.

In nominating Paulina Cockrum, Kerry Smith called for a "well-rounded council."

"Instead of re-electing a person, I'd like to see somebody else has the chance," Smith said. "It makes sense another council member to get the experience."

Lorain nominated Jesse, who is serving his second

four-year term after running unopposed in November.

Cockrum, the junior member on the council, withdrew her name from consideration and joined Brown, Lorain and Smith in voting for Jesse.

Jesse's career in public service began with the Seaside Civic and Convention Center and the Seaside Improvement Commission, before he and his wife, Julie, moved to Gearhart, where he served on the Planning Commission before election to the City Council.

"Being the council president in Gearhart is largely symbolic, but if the mayor were to be absent, at that point I would be next in line," Jesse said after the meeting.

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