

Cannon Beach City Hall renovation plan hits a wall

High bids delay fixes at building

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The envelope, please.

But this time there was no winner.

After months of design, updates and review, Cannon Beach Public Works Director Dan Grassick opened sealed bids on Tuesday for a major remodel of City Hall. Two construction bids had been received — and both exceeded the \$150,000 cap the city had budgeted.

“Both were well over the estimate and budget by at least \$80,000,” Grassick said.

A new building would have cost at least \$3 million, but renovations to the existing City Hall at 163 Gower were expected to come in at a fraction of that cost. The Design Review Board approved the final stage of a plan to upgrade office space, windows, doors and exterior at a public hearing last week, with board members unanimously voting to approve a site plan to modify three windows on the north side, a change missed earlier.

The proposed major modifications include changes to



This area of City Hall was among those slated for remodel.

the windows on a portion of the building’s north elevation, including the offices occupied by the city manager, assistant city manager and information technology director.

Among the changes, the police department would have received a new entrance and doorway and more space for storage.

Plans had placed Haystack Rock Awareness Project

offices in an exterior building and the finance corner completely redone and rebuilt.

Building and planning departments would also receive a new, separate entrance so contractors seeking permits can come directly to the appropriate offices.

Plans drawn by David Vonada aim to fit in with the architectural style of Cannon Beach, Grassick said last

week, with wood shingles and white trim. “Dave designed the whole process. They spent a lot of time with the department heads and the employees to decide how the work flow goes, you’ve got to move things around,” he said.

The integrity of the 1940s building is fine, he said, but City Hall would likely not survive an earthquake under today’s standards.



Members of the Design Review Board at a January meeting. Chairman Mike Morgan is at left.

“For us to build a whole new building would be to the magnitude of \$3 (million to) \$4 million,” Grassick said. “Do you really want to move now to a new building, or do you want to remodel until the tsunami happens?”

Contractors would have had 120 days to complete the project. Without a contending offer, the city will be re-evaluating next steps and will not be awarding the project this fiscal year.

“(We) will reconsider what the options are after discussing with the council,” Grassick said.



Public Works Director Dan Grassick in a portion of City Hall that had been slated for remodel.

Water district hits back at Warrenton on dam

District asserts jurisdiction over structure

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Standing their ground against the city, the Skipanon Water Control District on Wednesday issued a statement describing the Eighth Street Dam as publicly owned and under the jurisdiction of the water district.

The statement was in response to the Warrenton City Commission’s emergency declaration in December that asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine whether the aging dam should be restored for flood control. The city alleges the water district’s decision to remove the tide gates on the dam has put public safety and property at risk.

Warrenton also claims the dam is a federal asset critical to the city’s levee system.

In a rebuke, the water district, which has been managing the dam since it was built in 1963 with the help of the federal government, said there is no evidence of an emergency and accused the city of pursuing a flailing legal strategy and squandering taxpayer money.

Rather than negotiate with the water district, the city has made several threats to sue



The Skipanon Water Control District has asserted jurisdiction over the Eighth Street Dam.

for control over the dam and is awaiting guidance from the Army Corps that might help settle the dispute.

“Having been down there, shown our willingness to negotiate, the fact that they seem to be heading over the cliff without talking to us is mind-boggling,” said Bruce Francis, the vice chairman of the water district’s board. “We’re open-minded. We’re sitting here. We’re waiting to talk to them.”

“It is a different style of conducting government,” Robert Stricklin, a board member, said.

“It is,” Francis said. “Yeah, it’s a two-by-four on your head.”

The water district voted 4-0 Wednesday to adopt the statement, which reflects the board’s consensus belief that the dam is publicly owned and falls within the water district’s jurisdiction. Stricklin abstained because he wanted the statement to be more spe-

cific about ownership. He believes the dam is owned by the Department of State Lands, which owns the land underneath the structure in the Skipanon River. The state, however, has not shown any ownership interest.

Removal still sought

The water district also reaffirmed its position that the dam is a hazard and should be removed to help improve salmon habitat and water quality on the river. No partner has

emerged since the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce pulled out of a dam removal project last year because of the controversy with the city, and the water district has no money to launch a project on its own. A project would also require a city permit, which would be unlikely given the hostile climate.

The statement Wednesday, and the move late last year to hire a private attorney, shows the water district is not prepared to shrink in the face of the city’s legal demands. Three board members — Tessa Scheller, the chairwoman; Stricklin; and Gail Galen —

are up for re-election in May and plan to run again.

“There is no basis of which I am aware for a claim of ‘jurisdiction’ and I have no idea what the effect might be of the ‘consensus statement’ which binds no one to anything so far as I can imagine,” Akin Blitz, a Portland attorney representing Warrenton, said in an email.

Army Corps review

The water district appears content that the Army Corps, which originally built the city’s levee system, might weigh in.

Blitz released an email

from an Army Corps assistant district counsel in December that describes the dam and two nearby city levees as “integrally-connected components of what appears to be a single flood risk reduction system.”

Just last year, though, the Army Corps approved a permit for the water district and CREST to remove the dam and made no mention of its importance for flood control or the city’s levee system.

“So obviously, they had looked at it and come to the decision that we were correct in what we were trying to do,” Francis said.

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Celebration of Kim (Kyong S) Fuhrmann's Beautiful Life
Teri and I would like to invite everyone who knew Kim of Kim’s Kitchen, to join us in sharing memories and celebration of Kim’s beautiful life. We especially hope her many caregivers will attend. We include every shopkeeper, waitress and cab driver who took the time and effort to ensure her safety and well-being. We thank you. If you have stories you want to share, there will be open mic during the celebration for you to share. If you cannot make it to the event or don’t feel inclined to share your story in front of the group, please write the story and email them to kimskitchenastoria@gmail.com. I will either read them or post them at the Celebration Service for all to hear. Teri and I look forward to seeing old friends who knew Kim along with new friends Teri and I have yet to meet.
January 28th ❖ 1 to 4pm
Pier 39 (Hanthorn Cannery) Banquet Room