

Seaside council approves zone change for housing

Wildlife, affordability remain at issue

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — A proposed affordable housing development on North Wahanna Road is moving forward, while neighbors remain skeptical.

A zone change to allow 40 units on 2 acres passed through required readings and could be approved at the next City Council meeting later this month. But neighbors remain concerned about discrepancies in the property survey, traffic on Wahanna Road, affordability and impacts on the environment, including wetlands and wildlife.

"I understand they're going to do what they're going to do," Dawn Miller said following the meeting. "I'm all for growth, but this is crazy. It's not affordable housing."

Donna Lyons of Warrenton, whose mother's property is next to proposed development, questioned the feasibility of providing workforce housing at the prevailing wages in the community.

"McDonald's is generous at \$11 an hour," Lyons said. "At \$11 an hour to rent an apartment that's \$1,000 to \$1,500 (per month), how do you come up with 30 to 50 percent? How do you live in that rental without having two or three families in the same rental? Do the math."

Eagle's nest

The 3.75-acre property, of which 2.5 acres is buildable, is located between North Wahanna Road and the wetlands along Stanley Lake. The property is bounded to the north by the North Coast Family Fellowship and to the south by a single-family home. The zone change could allow an apartment complex consisting of five buildings, each containing eight units, with a total of 40 one- to three-bedroom units.

The city is considering a zone change request, City Planner Kevin Cupples said, not a plan for a specific development.

At a February Planning Commission meeting, project owner James Folk said units would rent for between \$800 and \$1,300 a month.

At Monday's hearing, Miller sought protections for an eagle's nest on nearby Stanley Lake.

Miller also questioned numbers in a 1988 survey which could alter the number of buildable acres. "How are we going to move forward with zoning if they don't have 2 (buildable) acres?" Miller asked. "If they don't, why would we do a zone change?"

Jennifer Bunch of Astoria's Wickiup Consulting responded to concerns on behalf of owner Folk and Sierra Partners IV. Development would be resized to fit the property as determined in a new survey, "whatever that may be."

City Councilor Tom Horning said he recognized the need for workforce or afford-



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian
Mayor Jay Barber and councilors approved a proposed zone change on Wahanna Road. Council President Tita Montero is at right. A third and final reading awaits.

able housing, but the zone change could limit the city's input on the building's future plans. The developer would not have to go before the city for any use that is permitted outright, Cupples said. Any plan would need to meet code setbacks, including distance from wetlands, he added.

"I have a little apprehension, especially with eagles nesting in the trees, with the possibility of trees being cut down," Horning said. "I'm on the fence, to be quite honest."

Housing need

City Councilor Dana Phillips said housing remains the city's most critical concern. "I don't understand the double standard if we don't approve this plan," Phillips said.

"This is one of our goals," Councilor Seth Morrisey said. "There's obviously not enough workforce housing in the city and this would fulfill that." Morrisey said the issue ulti-

mately came down to property rights. "This is Mr. Folk's property," he said. "The rest of the debate of what he can do or not do on his own land — it's not our place."

Phillips presented a motion to approve the change, seconded by Morrisey and carried unanimously. A separate item, annexing the Wahanna property into the city for police, fire and water services, was also approved by councilors.

Neighbors hope to reverse the council's action. On Tuesday, Miller said she did not rule out an appeal.

"I think it's going to detract from the gorgeousness of the city of Seaside and the places you can go and totally get away from the city," Miller said. "Everybody uses Wahanna Road. So it's going to get real congested real quick. What are they going to do when Hood to Coast comes? You can't get out of the driveway, as it is."

Fake bomb found in Warrenton

Device was destroyed

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — A device that looked like a bomb in a mailbox turned out to be a hoax.

Warrenton Police responded to reports of an apparent improvised explosive device shortly before noon Wednesday on Northeast Skipanon Drive across the street from Rod's Bar and Grill.

Oregon State Police explosive technicians removed the device from the mailbox and shot it with a water cannon. Further investigation determined the device was not an explosive.

Northeast Skipanon Drive between Harbor Street and Northeast First Street was closed for more than 2 1/2 hours



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
An Oregon State Police explosive disposal technician, center, putting on helmet, prepares to destroy a suspected explosive device discovered in Warrenton around noon Wednesday.

until the device was safely removed.

Police do not yet have a suspect in the case. Evidence will be processed and sent to

the Oregon State Police crime lab in Warrenton. Because the device was located in a mailbox, it is considered a state and federal crime.

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