

# Odd Fellows Building could become bar, event center

Sale of building could impact existing tenants

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Potential buyers of the historic Odd Fellows Building in downtown Astoria could turn it into a bar and event center, according to emails exchanged between a tenant and the buyers and social media posts.

A sale is pending on the 93-year-old building, and the potential buyers are expected to close in the next month or two. Current tenants include the antique store Old Things and Objects, Sea Gypsy Gifts and Downtown Coffee Shop on the bottom floor and the nonprofit Astoria Arts and Movement Center, which uses the floor above for a variety of dance classes, community classes and public events.

Jessamyn West, executive director for the arts center, sent an email to the potential buyers. She introduced herself and asked them if they could meet in person to discuss the possibility of the arts center continuing to use the ballroom as a studio.

Tacee Webb, who described herself as the partner of Tommy Habetz, the co-owner of Bunk, the company behind

a chain of bars and sandwich shops in Portland, wrote back. Though plans are not firm, she told West, the buyers plan to use the ballroom space as a venue. She thanked West for understanding.

## 'Romantic'

On April 18, a domestic limited liability company named Oddfellows Astoria LLC was registered with the state. The articles of organization list a Thomas Edward Habetz as the organizer and registered agent, as well as a Portland mailing address.

On April 26, Webb had posted a picture of the Odd Fellows Building and the location "Astoria, Ore.," on her personal Facebook page.

"Isn't it romantic?" she wrote. She added, "I'd love to form a collective of old Portland places, try to invite or reinvent them here ... calling all artists and dreamers! Sure, it will be a fleeting moment ..."

In the comments below the post one person asked, "What's your plan?"

Webb replied with a description of the building — the number of levels, its square footage — and wrote, "I plan to open a venue in the ballroom with a bar. You'll loooooove it. Eventually I will have a shop on the main level also, apparel."

In an Instagram post from March featuring a picture of



LoopNet

A sale is pending for the Odd Fellows Building.

the ballroom she wrote, "Come back to me. The future looks like 1923. October masquerades in this very unloved ballroom. Vintage coast fantasies ..."

Bunk representatives and Habetz did not reply to a request for comment by press time.

Astoria real estate agent Peter Tadei of Myriad Commercial Properties Ltd, who is working for the building's current owners Luottamus Partners LLC, confirmed a sale was pending. He could not comment any further on the matter at this time. He said he first listed the building last summer. It is listed at \$575,000 on the Myriad website.

"The property is well-positioned to capitalize on the town's ongoing resurgence,

embarrassment of treasures, and ever-growing tourism," states a description of the property on the Myriad website. "The highly visible corner makes a very desirable location."

## Frustrating

For West and others concerned about the future of the building, the situation is frustrating.

"They're wanting to offer a bar and event center across the street from another bar and event center that's also for sale," West said, referring to the Astoria Event Center, located down the road and listed for sale on Myriad's website at \$650,000.

West worries, too, about what the buyer's plans would do to the historic nature of the

building.

"It's been a ballroom since the 1920s," she said. "Before we moved in, the Astoria School of Ballet was there."

She says she knows locals who are interested in buying the building, keeping it available to the current tenants and preserving its historical integrity.

Astoria's Community Development Department has not seen any permits yet related to the building or Oddfellows Astoria LLC, but said any change of use would likely come before the Planning Commission.

Odd Fellows Hall is zoned as Commercial, the type of zoning that covers downtown Astoria, and certain uses are permitted outright: eating and drinking establishments, communications business, studios for artists, among others.

A switch from using the space for retail and a dance studio to using it as a bar and event center would likely trigger review by city building officials and community development, according to City Planner Nancy Ferber.

"But it just depends on what they're proposing," she said.

Community Development Director Kevin Cronin confirmed that the department has not seen any permits related to the building. He said he had heard "through the grapevine" that there was a change in own-

ership at the building.

## Landmark

Odd Fellows Hall is listed as a local landmark included in Astoria's downtown area which has been designated a historic district, according to John Goodenberger, and instructor for Clatsop Community College's historic preservation program and an architectural historian and preservationist.

Under this designation, some restrictions apply: If a developer wants to change the exterior of the building, for example, or use different materials, add on to the building itself or take out or enlarge windows.

Dulcye Taylor, president of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, which advocates for the downtown area, said she also heard about the potential buyers for the building. She says she has questions about the "ramifications and repercussions of modifying that building" given its historic nature.

From her own personal perspective, she said she is "very saddened" to think the arts center might have to vacate the building.

"The Arts and Movement Center is a viable, wonderful part of our community that does a lot of great things for a lot of age groups and economic levels," she said.

# Affordable houses at RV Park proposed in Cannon Beach budget

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

CANNON BEACH — Cannon Beach is proposing to build four new affordable housing units in the RV Park by fall as a priority project in the next fiscal year.

"Affording housing is the No. 1 issue we're all talking about. It's important everywhere, but especially on the coast," City Manager Brant

Kucera said.

The RV Resort on Elk Land Road and Haskell Lane was identified as potential site in a report compiled by the affordable housing task force last year, citing the fact the city owned the land, as well as relatively low startup costs as benefits.

Each house would be around 400 square feet and mobile, Kucera said. With rent antici-



pated to be \$600 to \$800 a month, the homes would be intended for single and working-class people with incomes of about \$15 an hour.

The project would be funded by a newly proposed affordable housing fund totaling \$429,740, which if adopted, would take effect in July. The homes would be paid for using a bank loan, rents and construc-

tion excise taxes if the City Council chooses to approve it, Kucera said.

If the pilot program is successful, the city could expand this program out to include up to 12 homes on this property, which in line with the city's goal to build 25 affordable homes by July 2018, Kucera said.

## Excise tax

A citizen survey last year identified affordable housing

as the top priority for the city. But the proposed excise tax — which would contribute an estimated \$92,000 of the total fund — has received a lukewarm welcome from some city councilors.

The proposed excise tax is a one-time 1 percent imposed based on the construction value listed on the building permit. Portland and Salem have implemented these taxes and one is being considered in Astoria.

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