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ONE DOLLAR

Seaside sees a big bang in urban renewal

City takes first steps to build funds for growth

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Seaside took the first steps Wednesday night to form an urban renewal district that could help the city improve bridges and schools.

Covering almost 560 acres of land along South Holladay, Avenue S from U.S. Highway 101 east and the southern section of Highway 101, the urban renewal district would make up about 21 percent of the city's total acreage and 22 percent of Seaside's assessed value.

Funds of up to \$62.4 million — more if matched by state funds or grants — could help build bridges, add traffic enhancements and provide infrastructure needs for Seaside School District's new campus in the city's southeast hills.

Urban renewal is a financing program authorized under state law and implemented locally that allows for the use of property tax revenues to grow the economy in blighted areas.

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Port budget committee punts on fiscal plan

Leaves decision to Port Commission

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria Budget Committee finished its third and final hearing Wednesday by failing to recommend a budget for the coming fiscal year, leaving the Port Commission to decide on the agency's spending plan later this month.

Port staff has recommended a \$13.6 million budget, down from \$15.9 million this year. The Port, like other state and local agencies, is required to approve a budget by the start of the next fiscal year in July.

The budget committee was missing Port Commissioners James Campbell and Robert Mushen, both out for medical reasons, along with local longshoreman Chris Connaway and Warrenton Fiber Co. accountant Mary Iverson. That meant unanimous approval from the six members present was needed for a majority vote to approve a budget.

The committee attempted to pass staff's recommended budget, with considerations from budget committee members for cuts and additions, but could only muster four votes. Outgoing Port Commissioner

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Pyrosomes are made up of individual clones.
Submitted Photos

THE BORG OF THE OCEAN

Weird organisms show up off the Oregon Coast in droves

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

LEARN MORE

To learn more about pyrosomes and watch a video of them in the water visit: <http://bit.ly/2sVJqnW>

A strange organism has taken over the ocean waters off Oregon this spring, clogging fishing and research gear and confounding beachcombers and biologists.

Fishermen compare them to pickles, gummy bears and sea cucumbers. They are the Borg of the ocean, one researcher suggested, referencing characters from the "Star Trek" TV show. They look like "Star Wars" creatures, a biologist said.

They are called pyrosomes, and they are everywhere.

In all his decades doing survey and research work off the coast, Richard Brodeur, research fishery biologist with the National Oceanic

and Atmospheric Administration, has never encountered pyrosomes in these kinds of numbers, or really at all. He knew about them, had seen them down in California, but never off the Oregon Coast.

Then, "starting in 2014, we started seeing a few of them," he said. In 2015 and 2016, he saw a few more. This spring, on a survey cruise, they pulled up 60,000 pyrosomes in a five-minute tow.

"This year," Brodeur said, "we must be setting all sorts of records."

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The ocean critters are a pain for fishermen.



'It's very eerie. There's nothing else. It's just them, and it kind of never stops.'

Sam Zeman
Oregon State University
research associate, speaking of the pyrosomes that have taken over ocean waters off Oregon

Fees could change soon at state parks

Parks director would have new discretion

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Visitors could soon see different fees at state parks and campgrounds under a bill passed by the state Senate Wednesday.

The legislation allows the state parks director to adjust fees, within a range approved by the parks commission and the Legislature, up to four times a year.

The parks department's plan is to hike fees at more popular parks and campgrounds and to reduce fees at parks significantly below capacity.

"We're nearly 100 years old, and we are really looking to the future to try to figure out how we can do things a little bit differently," said Lisa Sumpston, Oregon State Parks director during a hearing in May.

Since 1952, the department has set identical rates at parks.

The change could generate up to \$800,000 in the next two years,

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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Mist and sand blow through the air around the Peter Iredale shipwreck at Fort Stevens State Park. A law allowing state parks to change fees is close.

