

Airbnb: Inn owners object

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Collection would be aided by a short-term rental software program that would “help make sure Seaside is properly collecting lodging tax from those renting any housing unit as a short-term rental,” according to Rahl in a May staff report.

There are no costs for the agreement, Winstanley said. If short-term rental-tracking software is purchased, first-year setup would be \$8,000 with a cost of \$5,000 per year the following year.

“I believe the agreement with the city is OK,” City Attorney Dan Thiel said. “There’s money out there, a revenue stream, and I want this community to take advantage of it.”

Van Thiel said the city could opt out of the agreement by providing 90 days notice.

Terms questioned

At a public hearing in May, Cynthia and Stephen Malkowski, husband-and-wife owners of the Arch Cape Inn and Retreat, called the Airbnb voluntary agreement a “red herring” that will give the company an unfair advantage over other hotel owners, and ultimately drain affordable long-term housing units to the vacation rental market.

The couple’s concerns led to a tabling of the discussion until Monday night’s reopening of the public hearing.

Terry Bichsel, owner of the Seaside Best Western Ocean View Resort and Rivertide Suites and a member of the Best Western International Board of Directors, urged councilors to delay a decision on the agreement.

“They (Airbnb) operate illegally in most jurisdictions and where they’ve been regulated is where they begin operating legally,” Bichsel said. “It’s a \$30 billion company. It’s bigger than Hilton. It’s bigger than Marriott. It’s huge. This is not some little mom-and-pop organization.” Bichsel objected to terms of the agreement that would limit the city’s ability to audit Airbnb’s reporting for only one year out of four.

“That doesn’t make sense to me,” he said.

Bichsel said all rental properties — whether managed by Airbnb or others — should be required to register with the city in the same way as hotels, with the same degree of oversight and responsibility.

“I would just ask that we have a level playing field and make sure that Airbnb is treated the same way as the hotel requirements, whether it’s requirements for safety, accessibility or collection of rents,” Bichsel said.

He asked councilors to look at things “long term, not short term.”

“I’d encourage you not to sign this tonight,” Bich-

sel said. “Spend a little more time to get it right.”

Split council

City Councilor Tom Horning said the issue could provide an opportunity to lay out goals for affordable housing and the impacts of Airbnb and other vacation rental companies. According to one study, in Venice, California, rents rose 12 percent due to a shortage of housing caused by a surge of Airbnb rentals, Horning said.

“It expels a lot of people from their homes,” he said. “People are choosing to evict in exchange for higher-paying vacation rentals. I think we need to explore this and see where this trend is going.”

Along with Horning, Councilor Tita Montero urged postponement of the decision until more data on the impacts of rentals can be collected. “I think there a lot of policy considerations that we need to talk out,” Montero said. “What all will they find in the community that we don’t know about?”

But postponing the vote could lead to lost revenue, Councilor Steve Wright said.

The ability to terminate the contract within 90 days swayed Councilors Randy Frank and Dana Phillips to vote for the agreement. They were joined by Wright and Mayor Jay Barber in the 4-2 adoption.

Collections begin in July. Airbnb will not be liable or required to produce any personally identifiable information relating to any host or guest regarding any booking transaction. As discussed by councilors, Seaside or Airbnb may provide 90 days written notification for termination of the agreement.

“I am frankly stunned by the actions of the Seaside City Council in voting to sign a contract with Airbnb that creates a double preferential standard for Airbnb, one that greatly discriminates against local law-abiding businesses and continues to exacerbate our housing crisis,” Cynthia Malkowski said in a statement after the meeting.

Airbnb hosts

Laura Spanjian, Airbnb public policy director for the Northwest, said 140 active Airbnb hosts in Seaside welcomed 14,000 guests over the past year, with the typical host renting their home for two nights a month.

In Cannon Beach, 30 active hosts welcomed 6,000 guests over the past year, with the typical host renting their home for fewer than 30 nights a year. In Astoria, 50 active hosts welcomed 6,000 guests over the past year, with 80 percent of hosts renting their home for fewer than 90 nights a year, Spanjian said.

Portland and Lane County have signed similar lodging tax collection agreements with Airbnb.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

City Manager Mark Winstanley and City Attorney Dan Van Thiel at Monday’s discussion of Airbnb’s voluntary tax collection agreement.



Jeff Ter Har/For The Daily Astorian

Seaside’s Class of 2017 boasts 90 graduates, of which five are valedictorians and 22 are in the National Honor Society.

Graduates: Urged to break stereotypes

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Caroline Kotson’s goal for her fellow classmates is to break away from their generation’s stereotype as entitled. Kotson said no matter what each student’s future will look like, “go out and change the perception of our generation.”

After three valedictorian addresses, a slideshow of the graduates played. Students’ baby pictures and senior pictures along with group photos were shown.

Once the slide presentation completed, the fourth valedictorian gave his speech.

Carson Schulte said he spent his first three years at

Seaside High going through the motions in fear of what others might think of him for standing out too much. However, at the beginning of his senior year, his father challenged him to try new things.

Schulte joined choir and other activities where he found a great support system. “If you have a dream, go out and chase

it until you can’t chase it any longer,” he said.

The final valedictorian address, given by Elizabeth Barnes, encompassed that people are unique and special in their own ways. “Don’t let anyone tell you you don’t matter,” Barnes said. “Never stop being who you are and seeking what you want.”

Sturgeon: Fishery will open again on Wednesday

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fished out of Astoria’s East Mooring Basin last Wednesday, were convinced they had caught sturgeon well above the legal size limit.

“These are way too big,” Fackerell thought.

Then they measured the fish. The sturgeon weren’t over the limit — the fishermen had just forgotten how big they could get. They’d gotten used to catch-and-release.

Hull hoisted up one of the fish when they got back to land. The tip of its shovel-like snout hit him just below the shoulders, the long body stretched down and the tips of the sturgeon’s forked tail brushed the toes of his Xtratuf boots. A 50- to 60-pound fish, Fackerell guessed.

‘A chance’

Port of Astoria staff set up the parking lots at the East Mooring Basin like they do in August for the popular Buoy 10 recreational salmon fishery, which can bring in several dozen to several hundred fishermen each day of the month. They blocked off the entrance into the paved lot at the base of 36th Street that ends in the basin’s sea lion-plagued docks and directed trucks hauling boat trailers toward a gravel lot at the base of 37th Street. Both lots were packed each day sturgeon-retention fishing was open.

Oregon Fish and Wildlife employee Brooks Vandevelder was down at the East Mooring Basin all last week, tracking what had been caught and released and collecting pit tags. The retention fishery is one easy way fishery managers can collect an array of data on the sturgeon population, Roler said.

Vandevelder said this sturgeon-retention fishery is very different from ones he has worked in the past. There weren’t the time constraints, for one, he said. Now, fishermen are rushing to get their catch back in before 2 p.m. On Monday, half a dozen boats bobbed in a line at the East Mooring Basin boat ramp at noon, waiting their turn to get pulled out of the water.

“A lot of people go elk hunting, but your chances of getting an elk are not great,” Roler said. “But people still go. I wanted to have fishery where the chances of getting a fish is not great, but there’s a chance.”

‘Fighting fish’

“They’re a fighting fish,” said Dave Astle, a fisherman who went out with Oregon guide Brad Hadfield of Guide Service Northwest last week.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Jake Erickson Jr. mans a pole while fishing for sturgeon last week on the Columbia River in Astoria.

“They have lots of power.”

They’ll start out with feather-light bites at bait, Astle said, and then: “Hang on to your pole!” Sturgeon will leap out of the water when they’re hooked, a kind of dragon or dinosaur caught between

water and sky.

Fishermen first learned that the fishery was opening on May 31, giving guides like Hadfield just a few days to schedule outings with clients. Normally Hadfield would take six fishermen out at a time, but

because of the short notice, he had only four clients last Monday and Wednesday. By the middle of last week, however, he was fully booked for this week.

As Hadfield smoothly sliced away at the 40-pound sturgeon on the table at the East Mooring Basin’s fish cleaning station last Wednesday, he described the meat as dense, almost like chicken.

“A lot of people that don’t like fish will eat sturgeon,” he said.

His clients hit their limits early last week, but stayed out to indulge in some catch-and-release fishing. Hadfield said the number of sturgeon in the river appears to be typical for June, and fishing has been slow and scattered overall. In recent years the catch-and-release fishing that occurs later in the season has been “phenomenal,” Hadfield said. But, of course, his clients didn’t get to eat those fish.

The sturgeon retention fishery will be open again on Wednesday until 2 p.m.



Team members: Jason, Jeania and Christie

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Lawsuit: Venue change sought

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transferred to Clatsop County. Magley’s lawyers filed the case in Multnomah County because West and Oei’s companies have representatives in Portland. But Delphia’s lawyers argue that Clatsop County is where all the actions giving

rise to the lawsuit occurred and is the proper venue.

Oei and West were both indicted by Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis last month on charges of felony assault and misdemeanor reckless endangerment. Magley’s lawsuit claims the two were making and consuming

butane hash oil at the time of the explosion.

Also included in as a defendant is Sweet Relief Natural Medicine, an Astoria marijuana store, and its parent company G.O. Enterprises. The company operated a Sweet Relief outlet in Delphia’s building.