

Oil terminal: Would have a daily output of 360,000 barrels

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After working with city staff, they submitted a resolution to the council that reflected their concerns in general and the concerns they believed were especially unique to Astoria's position at the mouth of the river.

"It is very important for the mouth to have a voice," said Dan Serres, conservation director for Columbia Riverkeeper.

The terminal would have a daily output of 360,000 barrels of crude oil, which would be carried by five mile-and-a-half long trains and then put on tankers to cross the Columbia River Bar.

Though the City Council as a whole shared the group's concern for the safety of the estuary, Jones, a retired Sector Columbia River Commander for the U.S. Coast Guard, said in July that he needed to look at safety standards, studies and environmental impact statements before he could sign a resolution.

After conducting research and looking into a derailment that occurred last summer in Mosier that released 42,000 gallons of oil into the environment, Jones was ready to make his decision.

He was against the terminal project.

There were still too many safety concerns on the rail side of things and no guarantee that state and federal recommendations to increase rail safety would be followed, or implemented in a timely manner, he said.

"I think they ought to work those kinks out somewhere other than these sensitive environmental areas," he said.

But he wanted to make sure the resolution the City Council adopted was well-rounded and reflected the council's views. He submitted his own rewrite of the environmental groups' resolution for the other councilors to consider. There was nothing wrong with the resolution from Columbia Riverkeeper and the activist groups, he said later, but it reflected a one-sided view of the issue.

"I think the benefits of the terminal project to Astoria definitely don't outweigh the risks," City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill said. She added that, given Jones' expertise and the time he put into researching the matter, "I'm glad that you came to the conclusion that you came to because if you didn't I wouldn't know quite what to do tonight."

The entire City Council was in favor of adopting Jones' version of the resolution, with one change. In his version, he removed a paragraph stating Astoria's solidarity with the cities of Portland, Spokane, Vancouver and Seattle and the Columbia River treaty tribes in opposing the project. People who testified Monday night urged the council to put that wording back in. Mayor Arline LaMear agreed and the paragraph was added back into the resolution.

At Councilor Cindy Price's urging, the council also agreed to submit its resolution to Washington's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, which is still accepting testimony on the project. The site evaluation council is expected to make its final recommendation to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee this year.

Ferry: 'It's not a cheap operation'

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that if the Astoria Ferry cannot meet the financial ask and recruit board members with maritime expertise to move the Tourist No. 2 toward certification by then, the nonprofit will dissolve and leave the vessel to owner Christian Lint.

Accomplishments

Lint and co-Capt. Jim Peacock brought the Tourist No. 2 on a white-knuckle cruise to Astoria from Bremerton, Washington, after the nonprofit placed a \$15,000 deposit to buy the vessel on contract.

"It was a pretty horrendous passage," board member Dulcye Taylor said, adding it took a week to get from Bremerton to Cape Flattery amid high winds and rough seas. After reaching the ocean, she said, it took only 20 hours to reach the Columbia River Bar.

The Tourist No. 2 pulled up a year and one week ago to a crowd waiting at the 17th Street Dock. During last year's Astoria Regatta, the ferry hosted several hundred visitors.

Since the Regatta, the Tourist No. 2 has been moored at North Tongue Point, and Astoria Ferry has experienced a sobering look into the challenges of making the vessel an operating ferry again. The nonprofit has gathered around \$70,000 in donations and paid nearly \$40,000 toward the purchase of the vessel.

Challenges

Organizers learned that Lint's insurer for the vessel wasn't going to renew the policy. "Most underwriters wouldn't agree to indemnify a (93)-year-old, 100-foot all-wood structure operated by a nonprofit group with no history of maintaining such a vessel," a report from Astoria Ferry to donors said.

Knowing the vessel could not be acquired without insurance, the nonprofit in December halted all fundraising and all but the most essential maintenance. In April, the group acquired a port-risk insurance policy, which covers vessels laid up long-term in main-



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The interior of the Tourist No. 2 has several decks with ample room for entertaining tourists.



Astoria Ferry Group Co-President and Treasurer Cindy Price takes a look around the engine room of the Tourist No. 2. Price and others with the group are trying to restore the vessel as a tourist attraction.

nance but not public access.

Although the hull of the Tourist No. 2 has proven watertight, Price said the vessel has experienced water damage from above, leaving a musty interior and a mystery of where rain is intruding.

Astoria Ferry hoped to use local shipwright talent and space at North Tongue Point for the vessel's underwater repairs. The nonprofit looked into whether a cradle used by local shipwrights could be retrofitted to pull the 96-gross-ton vessel up on one

of North Tongue Point's seaplane ramps. The idea proved unworkable and left the nonprofit with around \$10,000 in outstanding naval architectural bills.

Getting to inspection

Price said the \$100,000 would provide a cushion to help cover monthly expenses and some repairs, while repaying the debt and making arrangements for haul-out, somewhere upriver. But to fully repair and restore the Tourist No. 2 before U.S.

Coast Guard inspection, she said, Astoria Ferry has estimated between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

Once the Tourist No. 2 is in operation, providing public excursions and hosting events, Price and Taylor said it will cost around \$450,000 to \$500,000 annually to operate, including the captain and crew. But they said the nonprofit believes the vessel can cover its own operating costs.

"It's not a cheap operation, but it can make its own money, but only if it's running," Price said.

New blood

Taylor, a local business owner and president of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, said Astoria Ferry members have remained upbeat throughout the challenges, but that interest started to wane in the spring. Four of the group's original eight board members stepped down, albeit staying on in advisory roles.

Taylor said the group, which includes historic preservationist Lucien Swerdlhoff and Astoria Yacht Club Commodore Bruce Faling, is looking for three or four new board members, preferably with some expertise and interest in old boats. "A retired Coastie would be great," she said.

Toxin: Oregon has yet to open for a single razor clam dig this season

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going to keep watching," said Dan Ayres, coastal shellfish manager with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. "We'll just continue to look at it and hope for the best," he added.

Unsafe levels of domoic acid in razor clams shut down digs in both states this season. Oregon, in fact, has yet to open for a single dig, and Washington only opened sporadically.

The naturally-occurring

marine toxin has become a familiar dilemma in recent years, plaguing both recreational razor clam digs and commercial Dungeness crabbing efforts.

And there are other concerns. While Ayres and state biologists are seeing an explosion of young razor clams farther north now, Long Beach's populations are unusually low.

"We're not seeing a lot of juvenile razor clams that should be there at Long Beach," Ayres said. When that

area opened briefly this spring, the state allowed a higher than normal per-person take of the clams, reasoning that it was the first chance people had had all year to dig for clams. Even then, diggers only harvested a fraction of what the state allowed overall, and, in general, harvest does not appear to drastically impact razor clam populations, Ayres said.

"It's a big puzzle," he said. He has several theories, but razor clam populations can fluctuate from season

to season.

Oregon is in the middle of its stock assessment, and it isn't known yet what fishery managers here will find. At low tide on a beach near Fort Stevens State Park's South Jetty in late July, clams were everywhere, revealing their presence by a variety of "shows" referred to as dimples, doughnuts and keyholes — small indentations and holes in the wet sand.

Though dangerous to humans and marine mammals,

domoic acid doesn't appear to affect razor clams, said Mitch Vance, a shellfish project leader based out of Newport with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Other factors like food availability, how densely packed clams are in an area and how many young clams are produced each year are much more important factors.

"All these things come into play when you're looking at a single population in a single area," Vance said.

Tests at the end of July revealed domoic acid levels in Oregon clams were below the allowed threshold of 20 parts per million. A second round of tests is due by the end of the week. If that round comes back clean as well there could be a few central coast openings for diggers, Vince said. Clatsop County's beaches, traditionally the most productive beaches for razor clams, would remain closed, as they always are from July 15 to September 30, to protect juvenile clams.

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TV LISTINGS

Evening listings TUESDAY

Table with columns for channel, time, and program titles for Tuesday evening (August 8). Includes programs like Jeopardy!, Wheel of Fortune, America's Got Talent, and various news and entertainment shows.