

Seaside takes 'one more step' in campus project

City Council OKs plan

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Before shovels can break ground for a new high school campus, Seaside needed to rezone two parcels — one 40 acres and the second 49 acres.

With the third reading of two ordinances Monday night, the City Council opened the door for development of the campus, designed to replace old and vulnerable buildings in the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

"It's one more step in the process of moving forward," Seaside School District Superintendent Sheila Roley said after the council meeting. "The meeting tonight was really about clarification of wording and setting up clearly stated ordinances that reflect the urban growth boundary change."

The property, located at 2000 Spruce Drive, includes the residential portion of the existing Seaside Heights Elementary School site outside the wetlands zone.

The new campus, approved by a \$99.7 million bond vote in November, will be built on 89 acres, 49 of that designated as county forest and the other 40 zoned residential.

See SEASIDE, Page 7A



Sheila Roley



Photos by Marlin Martin/Clatsop Community Action

Regional food bank volunteers process fresh fish for delivery to low-income clients.

Fish on the menu



ABOVE: Fresh salmon wait to be processed for low-income families by volunteers at the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank as part of an initiative to provide higher quality food options. BELOW: Marlin Martin, left, and Dusten Martin, right, process fish at the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank in Warrenton. The facility has been providing high quality food options to low-income families since 2012.



Family food budgets catch a break

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

A 5-year-old program by Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank has expanded its capacity to deliver fresh fish to low-income families. And local staffers hope the idea will catch on with other food banks.

The regional food bank now serves up to 25,000 pounds of fish each year — a healthy alternative for families whose budgets often can't afford fresh food. It also offers elk, venison and produce.

While continuing its 9-year partnership with Fishhawk Fisheries to process food, the food bank has also struck up a relationship this year with Pacific Seafoods — a much larger operation.

The partnership stems from a state law passed five years ago giving private companies more incentives to process fish for food banks. State Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach, pushed the bill through the state Legislature. To date, Clatsop Community Action is the only one of 20 food banks in the state to utilize it.

"We are definitely a horse of a different color in the food banking world," said Marlin Martin, director of the regional food bank. "We do not believe in warehousing food. We believe that we're a food distributor and that our job is to get it on the table of low-income people suffering from hunger as quickly as humanly possible."

Thousands of pounds

Before the change in state law, Clatsop Community Action could accept donations of bycatch — unintentionally caught fish — from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon

See FISH, Page 8A

Trial on Port hotel begins

Favoritism allegations against commissioners

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

A trial over allegations that the Port of Astoria played favorites in a lucrative deal for the Astoria Riverwalk Inn kicked off Tuesday.

A lawyer for Param Hotel Corp. questioned former Port interim executive director Mike Weston and Param's owner, Ganesh Sonpatki, about how the deal came together and subsequently fell apart.

Sonpatki had been trying to take over the Riverwalk Inn since 2014 from Brad Smithart, the hotel's former heavily indebted operator. The company sued the Port for breach of contract in November 2015, shortly after the agency chose another operator.

Param claims the Port violated an agreement approved by the Port Commission and showed local favoritism toward Astoria Hospitality Ventures, a company owned by Astoria native William Orr, whose brother-in-law Stephen Fulton was a Port commissioner at the time he gained the lease. Param also sued Port Executive Director Jim Knight for fraud.

See TRIAL, Page 7A

Warrenton to redesign unsafe intersection

Some private property will be affected

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — A problematic intersection in Warrenton is getting an upgrade next year.

Due to its size and alignment, the intersection of S.W. Ninth Street and S. Main Avenue is a safety hazard, according to city staff.

"I think it's been an issue since it was designed," said City Engineer Collin Stelzig, the interim Public Works director.

'I THINK IT'S BEEN AN ISSUE SINCE IT WAS DESIGNED.'

Collin Stelzig | city engineer and interim Public Works director

It can be difficult to navigate the intersection and turn safely if another car is present, and the intersection can't accommodate all vehicle types, especially larger vehicles. Still, school buses must use the intersection to reach Warrenton Elementary School.

At a City Commission meeting Tuesday night, city staff proposed a design that would adjust the position of the intersection slightly to allow vehicles to safely maneuver through the area. The new design would cut into small slivers of surrounding private

property, requiring the city to obtain additional right of way through easements or by purchasing the affected sections of land.

"Public Works believes we have developed a schematic design that is economical and requires the least amount of additional right of way," wrote City Manager Linda Engbretson in a memo to commissioners.

The capital improvement project was not on the city's list of projects for the fiscal year, but Engbretson said it had long been one city staff hoped to

move up the priority list if possible. Another street project on S.E. Second Street that came in under budget gave them an opening, she said.

The city has \$175,000 left over from that street project and proposes putting the money toward a redesign of the Ninth Street and Main Avenue intersection. Design and construction work is estimated to cost \$160,000.

Commissioners Pam Ackley, Mark Baldwin, Tom Dyer and Rick Newton approved a request by staff to contract for design services and construction at the Ninth Street and Main Avenue intersection. Mayor Henry Balensifer was not present. City staff plan to begin talking soon with property owners who will be affected by the redesign. Work is expected to begin next summer.

