

# Warrenton balks at new restrictions on ministorage

## City Commission will discuss issue

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

WARRENTON — A proposed change to city code that would have allowed ministorage facilities only on the east side of U.S. Highway 101 has been kicked back to the Warrenton City Commission.

The Planning Commission on Thursday unanimously denied an amendment to city ordinances that outline what businesses are permitted along Highway 101 and in the city's general commercial zoning district. The commissioners agreed with residents who said the amendment, targeted only at ministorage businesses, was

too broad and could hurt existing businesses or even limit future development in and around downtown.

Earlier this year, Mayor Henry Balensifer suggested a policy that would restrict the further development of ministorage units in the downtown area only, arguing that allowing these facilities at main thoroughfares and gateways was contrary to the city's community vision plan. He pointed to an example of a storage facility that ended up where, originally, the city had envisioned a fish market, a public square and other amenities intended to enhance livability.

"I'm not against ministorage in general," the mayor said when told about the discussion Thursday night, "nor

did I propose the more expansive policy being considered now. I just wanted to ensure that we preserve at least a few options for reviving the downtown and entryways."

Balensifer didn't intend any new policy to impact existing storage facilities — as some people who testified Thursday feared it could. Skip Urling, community development director, drafted the amendment at the city commissioners' request. Since the Planning Commission denied the amendment, Balensifer says the City Commission may discuss a different approach at a future meeting.

Since the amendment applied to city code, the Planning Commission had to review it first before passing it

on to the City Commission for final approval.

People who objected to the amendment pointed out on that city code would still allow a variety of businesses along Highway 101 such as woodworking and sheet metal shops, wholesale storage and distribution facilities and RV parks. Elsewhere in the city limits, businesses such as fuel oil distribution, research and development, tool and equipment rental and churches are allowed on properties in the general commercial zoning district.

Sunil Raju, a lawyer with Campbell & Popkin in Seaside, argued on behalf of Paul Leitch, who owns a ministorage business and the sporting goods store Sturgeon Paul's in Hammond. He said he understood the city was concerned

about livability but the ordinance was poorly drafted and would not solve the issues it attempted to address. He said it arbitrarily singled out ministorage units.

"This ordinance is way too broad," Leitch said, adding, "It is not fair to simply prohibit all miniwarehouse businesses west of Highway 101 ... my small business in no way interferes with the downtown master plan and yet the ordinance treats my small business as if (it) were a troublemaker and a blight on the city."

Others said storage is badly needed in the community. Jason Palmberg, a developer, added that the ordinance did not define ministorage facilities or miniwarehouses. He worried that the lack of clarity could restrict future development on some parcels along

the highway that might include storage as a component.

During the commissioners' deliberations, Planning Commissioner Christine Bridgens commented, "I think the thought behind (the ordinance) was a good one, but it just got out of hand."

In other business Thursday, the Planning Commission approved, with conditions, the construction of a two-building, 68-unit apartment development by developer Richard Krueger. The 8.8-acre property is set between S.E. Ensign Lane and Alternate Highway 101 and Willow Drive, backed by wetlands. The commissioners commented that the development will "certainly fill a need in the county" for workforce housing. The buildings will contain a mix of one- and two-bedroom units.

## Water line break leads to boil water notice in Astoria

*The Daily Astorian*

Some Astoria communities off Highway 202 are under a boil water notice after a water line broke near the Clatsop County Fairgrounds Thursday night.

Customers in the Willowdale and Riverpoint areas, the fairgrounds, the adjacent Ore-

gon Department of Forestry office and Cavalier Court must boil water for at least a minute to disinfect it, city staff said.

The line break caused a loss of water pressure, which can allow contaminants and pollutants to enter the water system. City staff are taking samples to ensure the water is safe but

will not have final results until Saturday.

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