

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

145TH YEAR, NO. 108

DailyAstorian.com // WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2017

ONE DOLLAR

Private investment preserves affordable housing



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Workers continue renovations on affordable housing at the Alder Court Apartments in Warrenton Monday.

Alder Court residents in Warrenton are seniors and people with disabilities

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — An investment of nearly \$14 million will help preserve more than 50 units of affordable housing at three complexes around Warrenton.

The Northwest Oregon Housing Authority, a regional supplier of low-income housing, recently formed Alder Court LLC to manage the Alder Court, Canim and Wapiti apartment complexes.

Totaling 52 units, the three complexes comprise nearly half of all federally designated affordable housing in Warrenton, said Todd Johnston, executive director of the housing authority. Such complexes are increasingly important for people on lower and fixed incomes as rents continue a steady increase throughout the region.

“Just generally in Astoria and Warrenton, we’ve seen a huge increase over the past two years,” Johnston said. “In Portland the rents have gone up quite a bit, too, and I think it’s just a ripple effect from that.”

The Alder Court project has been two years in the making, starting with a Meyer Memorial Trust grant that allowed the housing authority to assess its portfolio of housing throughout the county. Alder Court, a 40-unit complex for the elderly and disabled built in 1979 and not substantially retrofitted since, became the highest priority.

General contractor Bremik Construction started last week rehabbing the first of several buildings at the Alder Court Apartments near downtown.

The contractor will also make more minor exterior repairs at Canim, a four-



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The Wapiti Apartments, left, offer eight units of low-income housing east of the North Coast Retail Center.

‘JUST GENERALLY IN ASTORIA AND WARRENTON, WE’VE SEEN A HUGE INCREASE OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.’

Todd Johnston | executive director of the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority

plex along the Skipanon River Trail, and Wapiti, an eight-unit complex in a recent development east of the North Coast Retail Center. The two smaller properties are part of the portfolio of Clatsop County Housing Authority. The regional authority has been managing the properties for the county since 2013, when the two authorities began to merge. The inclusion made the project work financially, Johnston said.

Oregon Housing and Community Services oversaw a competitive bidding pro-

cessing involving the housing authority and others seeking private investment in affordable housing. The authority was awarded \$10.8 million in federal low-income housing tax credit equity through affordable housing investment firm WNC Inc., along with \$1.2 million in state affordable housing tax credits and a \$505,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s home investment partnerships program.

See HOUSING, Page 4A

Dialysis center to move near Riverwalk

Planning Commission votes 6-1 for approval

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

A new dialysis center could be built along the Astoria Riverwalk after the Astoria Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit for the business Tuesday night.

Many of the planning commissioners were initially reluctant to OK new construction in the aging parking lot between Sixth and Seventh streets off Marine Drive since that area is zoned for tourist-oriented development. Other commissioners argued that part of what makes Astoria attractive to visitors is the fact that it is a “working town.”

“In terms of facilities for tourists, the thing that makes Astoria what it is, is when you make choices that benefit the people who live here,” Commissioner Jan Mitchell said. “It makes it more a place that people want to come to.”

She believed the commissioners were trying to juggle a code that was adopted “when we didn’t realize exactly what was going to balance out this community.”

Fresenius Kidney Care’s dialysis clinic operates out of the Park Medical building across from Columbia Memorial Hospital. Representatives say the clinic has outgrown the space. They looked at more than 20 other buildings and sites around Astoria, but few fit the clinic’s requirements. The single-story building developer Chester Trabucco has proposed for the Sixth Street site would allow the clinic to expand from the 12 dialysis stations for in-center treatment it has at the Park Building to 17. An expansion would answer a growing demand for dialysis services in the area and existing patients would have more treatment time slots to choose from, representatives said.

Kendall Beatty, area director of operations for Fresenius Kidney Care, pointed out that the clinic often serves visitors to Astoria during the summer months.

Planning Commissioner Kent Easom said “we don’t have people beating our doors down” to develop the parking lot property.

“This is something that is definitely needed in our community, and unfortunately it’s a growing business,” he added.

The commissioners voted 6-1 to approve the conditional use application. New commissioner Joan Herman was the sole “no” vote. She said she was worried about placing a dialysis facility in the shoreline zone, “especially since there are so few such sites left in Astoria along the waterfront.”

See DIALYSIS, Page 4A



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

A new dialysis center is planned off Sixth Street near the Astoria Riverwalk.

Code changes sought for Astoria homeless shelters

Planning commissioner outlines new criteria

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

An Astoria planning commissioner is advocating for changes to city code that would define emergency homeless shelters and outline criteria for approving or denying such facilities in the future.

At a meeting Tuesday, Commissioner Daryl Moore passed out a code amendment he had drafted, saying he hoped the proposal would generate a discussion among planning commissioners and, ultimately, the City Council “to address the absence of some social services in our development code.”

When the Astoria Warming Center was

required to obtain a one-year conditional use permit this year, one of the factors city staff and planning commissioners struggled with was the lack of guidance in city code and zoning. The warming center operates on a temporary basis, opening for the evening only when temperatures and rainfall hit certain thresholds and providing homeless people with a place to sleep and a warm meal.

When the warming center’s conditional use permit was under review, some planning commissioners, including Moore, said the shelter was needed but its location in the middle of a neighborhood above downtown was not the right place.

A code amendment with language that specifically addresses emergency shelters would give the city direction next year when planning commissioners will likely review the warming center’s conditional use permit again.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Dan Parkison walks by a rack of donated coats and other clothes as he brings in supplies to the Astoria Warming Center.



7 29467 20121 7

See SHELTERS, Page 4A