



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Uniontown Apartments in Astoria could soon house the homeless.

Homeless shelter expands to Astoria

Up to 70 beds in Uniontown

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

A former Finnish boarding house in Uniontown could become a dormitory for homeless people looking to get back on their feet.

Helping Hands, a nonprofit that works with the homeless to rebuild their lives and find jobs and housing, announced it has entered a purchase agreement with Northwest Oregon Housing Authority to buy the large yellow house on Marine Drive next door to Motel 6.

The organization plans to turn the boarding house into dorm-style temporary housing. Alan Evans, the nonprofit's executive director, hopes the house can accommodate up to 60 or 70 beds, a portion of which would be set aside for emergency shelter.

Helping Hands is already well-established in Seaside, but an expansion to Astoria is a critical step, said Raven Brown, the organization's development director.

Astoria is the Clatsop County seat and many resources will now only be a walk or a short bus ride away.

"We're really looking forward to balancing out our presence on both sides of Clatsop County," she said.

The sale is contingent on Help-



A large three-story building on Marine Drive in the Uniontown neighborhood of Astoria may soon become a shelter for the homeless.

ing Hands obtaining any permits the city requires, Evans said.

The city and Helping Hands staff have had preliminary meetings to figure out what the re-entry organization needs to apply for going forward. Homeless shelters are not explicitly addressed in Astoria's codes, and the Helping Hands model is different than the average shelter. The facility could fall under the category of a semi-public use, said Mike Morgan, interim city planner.

"It's in a good location for what they want to do," Morgan said. "They're not in a residential neighborhood like the (Astoria Warming Center) that would raise some concerns of neighbors. I think it's a good location, but that exterior is in really rough shape."

One thing Morgan knows for sure is that the house is a historic building and any exterior repairs will need to adhere to the city's historic preservation standards.

"It's a big task to take on that building," he said.

Costly to repair

The Uniontown Apartments, built around 1896, is the last remaining Finnish boarding house on Marine Drive, according to city documents. Repairs could be costly. Several years ago, the housing authority calculated it would cost about \$4 million to renovate both the Uniontown Apartments and the Owens-Adair Apartments on Exchange Street.

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'THIS PROJECT AND THE WORK HELPING HANDS DOES ALIGNS CLOSELY WITH CURRENT CITY, COUNTY AND STATE PRIORITIES FOR ADDRESSING THE HOUSING CRISIS IN OREGON.'

Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose

Under pressure, city draws line on homelessness

Divided Astoria City Council backs more aggressive track

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Astoria city councilors on Monday urged police to more aggressively enforce city rules after business owners spoke out about how the homeless have deterred customers and intimidated employees.

City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill made a motion to support police "in dealing with the bad behavior of certain individuals on the street, recognizing that homelessness is not a crime." The motion followed numerous meetings over several months where councilors discussed what could be done to address issues raised by downtown businesses and residents about the homeless.

Police Chief Geoff Spalding had suggested at a work session in January that the police department could be more proactive about enforcing certain city rules, but would want the City Council's support before he gave that direction to his officers.

Nemlowill's motion was supported by Councilor Bruce Jones and Mayor

Arline LaMear. The motion passed 3-2. Councilors Cindy Price and Tom Brownson voted against it, saying they would have preferred more time to think through the language and the implications. Price worried about singling out specific populations and individuals.

The rules councilors want police to aggressively enforce include minor infractions like harassment and dogs off leash, but also cover public urination and defecation — issues noted with increasing frequency around downtown businesses, most recently in the 13th Street alley near the shuttered J.C. Penney store.

Spalding asked the council to include the clarifying statement that "homelessness is not a crime," a phrase he has emphasized at other meetings. He assured Price that police officers are already enforcing city laws. The council, in its motion, was not asking the department to do anything new or different, he said, adding that the laws apply to everyone.

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Conservation groups step into flood plain lawsuit

Claim industry would reverse years of effort

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Several conservation groups are intervening in a lawsuit brought by a coalition of construction interests, property owners and local governments against the federal government over flood plain development rules.

The Oregon Home Builders Association, the National Association of Home Builders and Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit Oregonians for Floodplain Protection filed suit last year against the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service and Federal Emergency Management Agency. Oregonians for Floodplain Protection

includes property owners, homebuilders, business organizations and local governments covered by the National Flood Insurance Program, including Warrenton and Tillamook County.

The plaintiffs claim a biological opinion from 2016 and proposed flood plain rules are based on inadequate analysis, would restrict development and have bypassed the public rule-making process. They seek a withdrawal of the opinion and to suspend implementation of the new flood plain rules until after a public rule-making process and a review under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The judge in the case recently approved a motion by the Audubon Society of Portland, Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife to participate in the case.

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A VIEW WITH A SWIRL

Ice cream vendor coming to the Astoria Column this May

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

If your New Year's resolution was to visit the Astoria Column more and eat less ice cream, 2018 is going to be a long year.

Frite & Scoop, which makes and sells French custard ice cream out of a storefront on the Astoria Riverwalk, plans to open a mobile location at the Column in May.

The Friends of the Astoria Column, looking to enhance the experience of the park for locals and tourists, asked six local vendors if they were interested in submitting proposals for serving ice cream. Only Frite & Scoop took the non-

profit up on the offer. The Astoria City Council approved the proposal unanimously at a meeting Monday night.

Swirl, the mobile incarnation of Frite & Scoop, will serve soft-serve ice cream made from scratch, said Kevin Malcolm, who owns the business with his wife, Lisa.

"Soft serve made a lot of sense for us because with the ice cream we make at Frite & Scoop it requires a lot of storage and a lot of freezers," Lisa Malcolm said. "We don't have that option at a mobile location."

The Malcolms also wanted to serve something that would be unique to the Column. They plan to add other concessions including coffee but, as

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