

FLAVEL HOUSE | STARS IN NEW FILM

READY FOR ITS CLOSE-UP

Astoria looks at rental options

Rules clarified on accessory dwellings

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

When Astoria changed how property owners were allowed to create and rent out accessory dwelling units, the hope was to increase the number of long-term rentals and ease the housing crunch.

Now, changes and adjustments are under review to further clarify the program but also potentially give it more flexibility. A list of policy questions and staff recommendations for how the program might be adjusted will go to the Planning Commission for discussion.

Accessory dwelling units can include remodeled interior spaces or free-standing structures. The city only approved six permits for accessory dwelling units between 2005 and 2016. Since adopting new regulations last year, seven permits were approved.

In March, the Matson family asked that a small manufactured home be considered an accessory dwelling unit — an option that wasn't on the table in past discussions. After hearing the case, city councilors said they'd be interested in discussions about tweaking the program.

City staff recommended several amendments that include clarifying whether manufactured homes can be considered accessory dwelling units, as well as further refining the rules on short-term rentals. A short-term rental is not allowed in any part of a house if there is also an accessory dwelling unit on the site, since this would "add to the density of the use, and increase the traffic and parking impact to the neighborhood."

Staff also recommended steps that could eliminate barriers to people looking to develop an accessory dwelling unit on their property by reducing fees and speeding up the time it takes to process a permit request.

Representatives of the Lower Columbia Preservation Society attended the City Council meeting Monday night just to listen. The group was involved in crafting the accessory dwelling provisions adopted in 2017. Rachel Jensen, the society's president, said later that the group had some concerns about the program in the past.

"Most of it is wording," Jensen said.

Many of the staff's recommendations for further clarification appear to address the society's concerns, but the group plans to remain involved in the discussions going forward.

See HOUSING, Page 5A



A film production crew sets up equipment at the Flavel House.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Film crew finds set, props in Astoria

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

A film crew is in Astoria this week and the historic Flavel House has a starring role.

It's a first for the stately Victorian, the former home of bar pilot and entrepreneur Capt. George Flavel. The house-turned-museum was covered in scaffolding in the 1980s and barely appeared in the 1985 cult classic "The Goonies," which was shot in several locations on the North Coast and still draws hundreds, if not thousands, of fans to Astoria each year.

The house is a character in its own right in the film in the works now, complete with creeping, crawling vines pinned in place by set dressers.

"The Mortuary Collection," directed by Ryan Spindell, is a "Gothic horror anthology film," according to a Kickstarter fundraising page for the project. While some of the plans have changed since the Kickstarter page was created, the film will be a collection of stories. Think "The Twilight Zone." It's a small production with a crew of around 40 people, according to producer Justin Ross.

If it succeeds, the film will join the ranks of other films that used Oregon — and Astoria, specifically — as both a backdrop and an inspiration.

See FILM, Page 5A



A crew member dresses the set at the Flavel House.

'It would probably be easier for us not to participate. Probably it would be easier for them just to build a set, but, you know, it wouldn't be real.'

McAndrew Burns | executive director of the historical society

Gearhart could relax rules on beach landscaping

Scotch broom, other noxious weeds could be cut along beach

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — A new ordinance could make it easier for property owners in Gearhart to landscape their beachfront properties.

Changes to the city's beach overlay district will be more permissive in allowing people to cut Scotch broom and other noxious weeds and prune trees to maintain views.

"The council was very thorough at looking at all the different angles and taking into consideration all the last-minute correspondence in making a

decision to endorse the staff recommendation," City Administrator Chad Sweet said.

The beach overlay district was established to regulate activity in dunes and beach areas in order to protect the landscape. The northern boundary is Fairway Avenue in the Highlands and the southern boundary is the south end of South Ocean Avenue.

The code amendments, presented to the City Council at a public hearing Wednesday, set rules for trimming beach vegetation and provide guidelines for emergency and construction vehicles.

The limited amount of vegetation removal to be permitted "will not significantly affect the condition of the use of the dunes recreation area," a staff report states.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Scotch broom along the trail of Gearhart's Little Beach. Code amendments are designed to clarify rules for cutting invasive and noxious weeds.

See BEACH, Page 5A

