

Seaside business owners seek help in curbing aggressive panhandlers

City could take a cue from Salem, Astoria

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Downtown business owners in Seaside want help controlling aggressive panhandlers.

"If we sit here and get wishy-washy, and don't take some real measures we're going to have a really, really ugly summer," business owner Neil Dundas said. "It's going to get worse."

At a forum Wednesday hosted by the Seaside Downtown Development Association and Seaside Police Department, business owners asked police to take a "hard line" when it comes to aggressive panhandlers, who, they say, camp out on city streets, intimidate passers-by, play loud music and litter.

Business owner Jeremy Stevenson asked for greater police presence, describing panhandlers who station themselves outside his store for hours at a time, sometimes for days on end.

Wayne Poole, whose Pig 'N Pancake restaurant sits in the heart of Broadway, said the city should "take the aggressive side and figure out how to deal with it."

The perception of Seaside has gotten "sketchy," businesswoman Rebecca Buck added. "My children won't come here anymore."

Seaside has ordinances designed to control begging, public performances and disorderly conduct.

In 2015, the City Council considered new regulations on panhandlers, musicians and itinerant merchants. The amendment would have required a \$50 per day fee for anyone soliciting "for any form of compensation or remuneration."

Opposition was swift. At a public hearing, the amendment was called "wrong," "brutal," "discriminatory" and "a street-sweeping technique."

The amendment failed to pass and the issue was tabled.

Three years later, business owners say problems have gotten worse.

In November, they approached the downtown association and Police Chief



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Broadway in Seaside last summer. Business owners say panhandlers block the sidewalk and intimidate passers-by.

Dave Ham with complaints.

A committee was formed to address the challenge, leading to Wednesday's forum, which brought about 60 people to City Hall.

In 2015, police counted 17 unlawful lodging cases, issuing eight citations. Numbers were similar in 2016. In 2017, when police started tracking tents on the beach in addition to unlawful lodging, 79 unlawful lodging case files were taken. Police issued 15 citations for tents on the beach.

"They're not ticket-happy," Ham said. "Those who deserve the education are the ones who put the middle finger up and say, 'I don't need to listen to you.'"

This summer, police will increase their downtown visibility, adding foot or bicycle patrols, he said. A police intern will add additional patrol capability.

Police will also seek greater compliance from complainants and witnesses. "We can issue a citation, but we need you as a witness," Ham said. "We're going to need your participation."

Other options include reconsideration of a permit process for panhandlers, limiting public Wi-Fi capabilities, outdoor utilities and even replacing wooden benches with less comfortable stone ones to discourage extended



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Business owner Neil Dundas offers a call to action at the forum on aggressive panhandling. Brian Owen, executive director of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce, is at left.

stays.

Seaside could also take a cue from Salem and Astoria, with a program that lets businesses authorize police to enforce trespassing laws on private property after hours.

In Astoria, more than 40 businesses have signed on this year for Property Watch. A one-year contract between businesses and police allows

officers to remove people engaging in loitering or disorderly activity.

State law does not allow police to prevent people from using public spaces — including for panhandling, sitting or lying down.

In Seaside, a sign-up for businesses has been done and will go to the city at a later date for review.

County marijuana sales tax referred to voters this fall

A potential 3 percent tax on retail sales

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County voters will decide in November whether to place a tax on retail marijuana sales.

County commissioners voted unanimously Wednesday to refer the 3 percent tax to the general election ballot. Revenue from the handful of dispensaries outside city limits would be about \$50,000 annually, county staff estimates.

The state ballot measure in 2014 that legalized marijuana sales gave cities and counties the ability to impose a tax of up to 3 percent if approved by voters in a general election. No recreational dispensaries existed outside city limits in 2016, the most recent general election. The tax would be effective 30 days after voter approval.

In other business Wednesday, commissioners:

- Continued a public hearing on updated flood-hazard maps and revisions to land use rules, including requirements for property owners to pay for a permit when developing their land or seek approval before altering structures.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has

required the revisions in order for the roughly 700 affected property owners in unincorporated, flood-prone areas of the county to be eligible for the National Flood Insurance Program. Residents expressed their opposition to the changes both at a county Planning Commission meeting in March and to commissioners Wednesday. Despite the county's efforts since the Planning Commission meeting, the federal agency has not budged on any of its requirements, Community Development Director Gail Henrikson said.

Commissioners are scheduled to hold another hearing in May, when they may vote to adopt an ordinance. The federal agency has mandated that the county implement the revisions by June 20 in order for residents to remain eligible for the insurance.

- Appointed Robert Stricklin to the county Planning Commission. Stricklin has served on the commission before as well as the county Charter Review Committee and various other boards.

The commission makes decisions on land use issues and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. Jacque Presley stepped down in February after four months in the position to focus more time on Angels for Sara Sanctuary — her nonprofit dog rescue organization.



Press is

US House moves to reverse order to aid salmon

By MATTHEW DALY and NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House approved a bill Wednesday that would reverse a federal judge's order to spill more water from four Pacific Northwest dams to help migrating salmon reach the Pacific Ocean.

The bill, approved 225-189, would prevent any changes in dam operations until 2022. It was sponsored

by Republican U.S. Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Dan Newhouse, both of Washington state.

They say the four Snake River dams provide hydropower, flood control and other benefits while already allowing record salmon runs.

"We are recognizing the role dams play in the Northwest and that dams and fish can coexist," McMorris Rodgers, the fourth-ranking House Republican, said after the vote.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

WANTED
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA
Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

Clatsop Post 12
Beef Stew & Biscuits
Friday
Apr. 27TH
4 pm until gone
\$8.00
6PM
"Karaoke Dave"
ASTORIA AMERICAN LEGION
Clatsop Post 12
1152 Exchange Street
325-5771

SHINGLES VACCINE INFORMATION CLINIC
12:30pm • Friday 4-27-18
Suzanne Elise Assisted Living Community
101 Forest Drive • Seaside OR 97138
503-738-0307

Leinassar Dental Excellence
Trusted, Caring and Affordable Dental Care

Hear what loyal and new patients alike are saying...

I have always dreaded going to any dentist, but this was the best experience ever for the hygienist (Julie).

No pain, no sitting in the chair forever. Susan couldn't have been nicer. View was terrific when I could see it.

Glad I went.

- Peggy D.

503 325-0310 • 1414 Marine Drive, Astoria
www.smileastoria.com

JEFFERY M. LEINASSAR
DMD, FAGD

AL HELP CLOTHE KIDS
11th Annual GOLF BALL DROP
SATURDAY, MAY 12TH, 2018 • Astoria Golf & Country Club
Schedule of Events: 3:00pm - Champagne Reception • 3:30pm - Helicopter Drops Golf Balls
4:00 to 6:00pm - Cocktail Party & Silent Auction *Tickets for event are sold separately. \$25.00 ea.

WHERE TO BUY TICKETS:
Visit Holly McHone Jewelers or from an Assistance League Member.
All golf ball ticket sales must be made in advance.

Buy 10 balls. dress 1 child!!! \$10 per ball
Max 2000 balls sold. Each ball 1 chance to win.

1ST CLOSEST TO PIN: \$1500 CASH
2ND CLOSEST: 1 night at the Stephanie Inn & Dinner for 2 (Value \$600)
3RD CLOSEST: 1 night in a suite at the Cannery Pier Hotel & Dinner for 2 at the Bridgewater Bistro (Value \$550)
4TH CLOSEST: 1 night at the Holiday Inn Express Astoria, Dinner for 2 at Carruthers, 1 Hour on The Glam Tram & Dessert from Frite & Scoop (Value \$500)
5TH CLOSEST: 1 night at the Ocean Lodge & Meals at the Driftwood & Tom's Fish & Chips (Value \$400)

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MAJOR SPONSORS

ASTORIA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB, Fibre Federal, Nygaard Logging, GEARHART, USbank, LEKTRO, PACIFIC POWER, NW Natural, SENATOR BETSY JOHNSON SEASIDE TEMPS

We are a volunteer organization focused on promoting self-esteem and emotional well being of children in our community. 100% of all proceeds go to children in Clatsop County.

Visit us at: www.assistanceleaguecp.org