

State money could help Marine Drive corridor in Astoria

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council heard a presentation Wednesday from City Engineer Nathan Crater and representatives from the Oregon Department of Transportation about a funding opportunity that could accomplish at least five city traffic projects at once.

The transportation department wanted city approval to apply for funding through the state's All Roads Transportation Safety Program for a dangerous traffic corridor on Marine Drive that runs from Columbia Street — where the Doughboy Monument is located — to about Ninth Street.

If the funding is secured, it could mean big changes to the corridor, potentially dropping the number of lanes on each side from two to one, but adding a center turn lane, bike lanes and improved pedestrian crossings. Crater said these changes would only add an estimated 30

seconds of travel time during regular peak traffic.

Amanda Salyer, a traffic investigation engineer for the state, and Ken Shonkwiler, a senior region planner for the state based out of department's Astoria office, noted a number of safety concerns along this stretch of road.

Salyer noted that the section is considered a "high crash corridor," and is especially dangerous when people must use the inside traffic lane to turn left, stopping vehicles behind them and then crossing two lanes of oncoming cars.

The transportation department will need to further analyze traffic flows and other issues and any funding is several years away. Though there were some concerns about how changes to Marine Drive could impact traffic flow, the city councilors agreed the transportation department should go ahead and apply for the money.

"This conversation here is not committing you to anything," Salyer said.

Astoria 911 Dispatch to add two new dispatchers

The Daily Astorian

Two new dispatchers will soon begin work at Astoria 911 Dispatch.

The state Department of Public Safety Standards and Training will graduate its 109th Basic Telecommunications Class on Friday in Salem. Dispatchers Misty Lindstrom and Melissa Patterson, who were hired to work in Astoria, are two of the class's 21 graduates.

Throughout the two-week course, graduates learn emergency call handling techniques, stress management, civil liability, ethics, criminal law, overview of fire-rescue and law enforcement operations along with a number of other topics. Lindstrom and Patterson will return to Astoria for monthslong training with a field training officer.

The graduation ceremony begins at 11 a.m.

Gearhart could give residents more leeway over dunes

Concerns about invasive species and views

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — A last-minute call to extend the discussion failed to derail Gearhart's plans to update rules for cutting trees and vegetation in the dunes.

Ordinance 910 will allow more vegetation removal than the current beaches and dunes overlay code does.

Last month, planning commissioners unanimously recommended passage of the dune vegetation amendment.

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.

Demand from homeowners and contractors for code



Eve Marx
New rules define how vegetation can be cut or removed in Gearhart.

changes have steadily grown over the past two decades with an influx of invasive species posing risks to the environment and vegetation blocking views.

A January 2017 forum organized by Gearhart resident Margaret Marino brought experts to the table and was followed up by formation of the city's dune management committee.

Their recommendations were presented to the Planning Commission, which forwarded it to the City Council for a 2-1

vote Wednesday night.

Changes to the city's beach overlay district will be more permissive in allowing people to cut weeds, invasive plants and trim trees.

The new code expands rules to allow emergency and non-emergency vehicles on public land for water system access and private land "as reasonably necessary" for construction or maintenance.

The code lays out details for pruning, trimming and removal of vegetation. Provisions establish a fire buffer safety zone and designate guidelines for trimming of shore pines and spruce.

City Councilor Dan Jesse and Mayor Matt Brown voted for the amendments. Councilor Kerry Smith voted against, seeking further council discussion. Councilor Paulina Cockrum was absent.

If passed in a second reading at the June council meeting, provisions would go into effect 30 days later.

For now, homeowners can cut Scotch broom, but no pines, grasses or other types of

vegetation, City Administrator Chad Sweet said.

Fackerell appointed

Reita Fackerell was chosen from among three applicants Wednesday for a vacant City Council position.

Former Councilor Sue Lorain, first elected in 2012 and reelected in 2016, left the council in April after relocating to the Portland area. Her term does not expire until December 2020. Fackerell will finish out Lorain's term.

Brown introduced Fackerell as chairwoman of the city's budget committee two years running, with grant-writing experience and membership on a variety of regional boards, including the South County Food Bank and Seaside Chamber of Commerce.

Fackerell, former director of the Seaside Public Library, was named 2017 volunteer of the year by the chamber.

"I think she would be a wonderful asset to the City Council and the community as well," Brown said.

Thompson's voters' pamphlet statement contains error

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

An attribution error has been discovered in Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson's voters' pamphlet statement for the May 15 election.

Much of the statement includes quotes from people endorsing Thompson. One quote was inaccurately attributed to Mike Morgan, a former Cannon Beach mayor. The quote actually came from Mark Morgans, the area manager of Lewis & Clark Timberlands.

"I have observed her work tirelessly on a variety of projects that benefit the citizens of Clatsop County, including economic development,

affordable housing and community emergency response preparations," the quote read.

Thompson said she has apologized to both men.

"I just didn't catch it," she said.

The voters' pamphlet contains notes under each statement stating the information is provided individually by each candidate and that the county elections office does not verify them for accuracy. Verification of each statement would take too much time for the office

and is also not performed by the Secretary of State's Office for the state-level pamphlet, County Clerk Tracie Krevanko said.

"We don't even correct spelling mistakes if they're in there," Krevanko said. "It's not up to us to police it. It's not up to us to correct anything. It's their statement."

In April, the elections office announced the voters' pamphlet contains outdated renderings of county commission districts. The office said it

included correct maps in ballot packets.

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