

Library: 'We have to better utilize the space'

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The mayor, a former librarian, has long been a champion of the library. Though she once pushed for constructing a new building, she supports plans to renovate. LaMear, who is not running for re-election this year, intends to continue advocating for the library when her term ends.

A theme that came out of the Metz study was the community's desire for a "modern library." It's a term library staff say begs the question: What exactly is a modern library? A library with a new roof and updated electrical systems? A library with more computers? More books? Fewer books?

For Jimmy Pearson, the library director, a modern library includes a building that is caught up on deferred maintenance and with features the community has long desired, such as more light, meeting rooms and reading areas. A modern library also includes work areas that allow staff to do their jobs more efficiently, he said.

For now, staff process books and keep up on day-to-day tasks in dark, cramped back rooms. The basement, filled with historic artifacts and documents, acts as a storage space, but could function



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Jimmy Pearson, director of the Astoria Library, turns the lights on in the building.

as more, Pearson said.

The needs of the library and how libraries operate has changed, he added, and "in ways they weren't able to foresee 50 years ago. We have to better utilize the space and that's what the architects have done."

John Goodenberger, a local preservationist and member

of the library foundation who has been working to catalogue historic items in the library's basement, is a fan of the renovation proposals by Hennebery Eddy.

The library, designed by Ernest Brown and Ebba Wicks Brown, has a flexible interior, one that could be easily shifted around or redone to accommo-

date the community's changing needs and desires. But the entire building, inside and out, still has distinct characteristics.

"The plan the architects are proposing respects those characteristics," Goodenberger said.

For all involved with the new design scenarios, Wednesday's meeting is the big test.

Tax: If passed, it would take effect in January

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Other lodging tax proposals across the state have spurred tension with the tourism industry. A Deschutes County judge in May ruled in favor of the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association, which sued Bend for using money meant for tourism marketing for road repairs. Bend is appealing.

The association's support of Clatsop County's tax proposal depends on whether the revenue is adequately spent on tourism promotion, said Jason Brandt, the association's CEO. That will not be fully known until next year at the earliest.

Brandt did, however, call the proposal "counterintuitive."

"It doesn't seem to be popular amongst the local lodging operators as far as we can tell," he said. "What

we're seeing more of these days is an interest in raising taxes so that governments can get their hands on that 30 percent. It seems to me that the process might be somewhat backwards, that they're imposing the taxes for the minority money. The conversation should be more focused on how to spend the majority."

After a public hearing Wednesday, commissioners will need to hold a second hearing before adopting the tax. If passed, it would take effect in January.

If voters do not approve the November jail bond, commissioners would have the option of withdrawing the tax.

"I don't think you're going to see much push-back," Bergin said. "But if they do, hopefully commissioners will do the right thing."

Butler: Owner recalls their instant connection

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But what has kept the Seaside native at Beach Books for the long haul is not just her love of literature, but also for the woman who hired her.

Karen Emmerling, the owner of Beach Books, remembers having an instant connection with Butler, to the point where she trusted Butler to run the store alone on her first day.

"Her math teacher, who is a good friend of mine, recommended her," Emmerling said. "And said that maybe she wasn't all that good at math, but she was very responsible. I just trusted she was going to do it right."

Over the years, the relationship slowly progressed from co-workers to friends, and then friends into family.

The two joked about keeping sleeping bags upstairs for long days worked during the

summer rush. Their conversations behind the counter are laced with laughs and inside jokes.

One of Butler's favorite memories was throwing Emmerling a surprise birthday party in the store.

"I had no idea that when I was in high school that I would be treated like a daughter," Butler said.

Since then, Emmerling has entrusted her with more responsibilities. For the past few years, she has sent Butler to regional and national bookseller's conventions and conferences to hone her skills and network with authors.

One day, she could see passing the baton to Butler.

"She knows books so well, and if she's passionate about a book, you aren't leaving without it," Emmerling laughed. "She's engaging and she's going to make a great bookseller."

Grant: 'Preference doesn't mean to exclude'

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The Tourism and Arts Commission itself was split when evaluating the request from the trail alliance.

Commissioners in favor saw the project as a year-round benefit to the tourism industry, which is trying to attract more visitors with interests in outdoor sports.

"It's an investment in the future. I liken it to surfing. Twenty years ago, you just saw a few surfboards on cars. Now they are everywhere, and we have multiple surf shops to support it," Commissioner Greg Swedenborg said. "That's where bik-

ing is going."

Some voted against the grant request after former City Attorney Tammy Herdener raised legal questions about whether lodging tax dollars, which come with restrictions, could be used to finance the trail project.

There was debate about whether the trail system qualified as a tourism facility, which is defined by the state as "real property that has a useful life of 10 or more years" and substantially supports tourism. The trail alliance and the private landowner have a five-year agreement, which could raise questions, Herdener said.

Others took issue with the

fact that the project had no ties with the arts and was not based in Cannon Beach.

While Weintraub recognizes the arts emphasis of the grant money, he said nothing in the ordinance precludes other tourism-based proposals from being considered. He pointed to the Fat Bike Festival he pitched last year, which was also met with skepticism, but turned out to be successful when it debuted in April.

"This is a Tourism and Arts Fund, and the city's directive is to give preference to arts," Weintraub said. "But preference doesn't mean to exclude."

Weintraub said he person-

ally is in favor of expanding arts funding in Cannon Beach, but believes the city also needs to find ways to fund opportunities for "a broad array of visitor attractions."

The bike trail system near Klootch Creek will still be built, Weintraub said, but perhaps not as quickly because of the loss of the grant money.

If the city is not going to fund the trail project, then Weintraub wants city councilors to use the \$12,143 to improve trails and walkways in town.

"The Northwest Trail Alliance is more than willing to provide advice and guidance in such a plan," he said.

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