

Building: 'My main goal is to sublease'

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The wood staircase was stained a dark brown to match the color of the Roman columns. A print of Michelangelo's "The Creation of Adam" can be seen on display above when descending the staircase.

"My main goal is to sublease and to create spaces and environments that you could just move in here and run your own business," he said.

From a deli or coffee shop, to a secondhand store or vintage dealer, Hicks wants it all to fit.

"I'd really like to have stuff in here that is relevant," he said. "That's something people need here in downtown Astoria."

Hicks will initially have to run his own inventory to get Astoria Court off the ground.

Some of his successful inventory from Hollywood Vintage has already made its way to Astoria. Rows of vintage and commercial eyeglass wear hang on the racks near windows at the front of the building. A collection of men's hats occupy two square sections at the entrance.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
William Hicks, owner of Hollywood Vintage in Portland, has brought some of his inventory to the new Astoria Court.

"It's getting real close," he said.

A grant from the state's Diamonds in the Rough restoration program will match Hicks' estimated cost of \$7,100 to

take down the Abeco sign and restore the facade to its original 1940s look.

Hicks plans to reconstruct the city about the zone expansion. "But they're tracking the movement."

sign comes down, customers will be able to sit and "watch the world go by" through the second-story windows overlooking Commercial Street.

Zone: 'We've got a lot of empty buildings to fill'

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Commission, who attended the City Council meeting Monday. The Port is in the process of upgrading the East Mooring Basin to accommodate more cruise ships, as well as other projects.

Still, in moving forward, the City Council differs from its partners in wanting to ensure hotels and motels are not eligible for enterprise zone incentives, an option Spence isn't sure will be a possibility.

"There are four bodies involved now and it has to be uniform for all entities," he said, pointing out that the Port has land reserved for a Marriott hotel within the proposed zone expansion. "So that question will be up in the air and will be debated later as to whether such a restriction can even happen."

To date, no businesses in Clatsop County have taken advantage of the Clatsop Enterprise Zone, but new projects and expansions are on the

horizon, especially with Astoria on board.

"No one has a project per se," Estes told Brownson, who asked if anyone besides Hyak had approached the city about the zone expansion. "But they're tracking the movement."

Melanie Olson, with Business Oregon's regional development office, believes several businesses in the downtown core could be eligible for enterprise zone incentives in the next few years.

"It does seem like there could be some in the downtown area that could use this tool," she told councilors, pointing to Pilot House Distilling, Buoy Beer, Reach Break Brewing and Fort George Brewery.

"It seems like anything that brings a business in would be a good thing," Mayor Arline LaMear said after the meeting. She voted in favor of joining the enterprise zone in 2015. "We've got a lot of empty buildings to fill."

Food pantry: 'I just don't know what's going to happen to the people here'

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Meanwhile, money the pantry received from the city in 2015 in the form of a social service grant through the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank has run out.

The city's decision to give money to the food pantry in 2015 — \$5,000 from the Warrenton Business Association, a city advisory board tasked with distributing business license income — was controversial. City leaders questioned the constitutionality of government directly providing funds to a church-run non-profit and decided to pass the money through the regional food bank instead.

The grant helped the pantry stabilize operations. It paid the pantry's bills and allowed managers to purchase extra food or items beyond what the pantry received as one of the regional food bank's partner organizations.

Calvary Assembly of God subsidized the pantry when the grant money dwindled.

This arrangement became an issue after the church hired Guiendon as a dedicated pastor last year and struggled to cover his salary on top of the food pantry's bills, said Meri Paddock, worship pastor at Calvary.

When Guiendon arrived, the congregation had dwindled to only nine people. It has since grown to 50 people, "but the money doesn't flow immediately," Guiendon said.

The food pantry is pretty much the only one of its kind in the city, said Dusten Martin, chief operations officer for the

Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank. Another church-run pantry is only open once a month.

If the pantry is struggling to make ends meet, Martin said he and food bank staff will ask: "What can we do that we haven't already done?"

Martin is in conversation with Guiendon to understand the scope of the pantry's needs. He didn't want to speculate about the future of the pantry yet.

But, he said, "We're not going to let people be out in the cold, high and dry. We're going to make sure there's a mechanism in place to serve folks."

The food pantry distributes food once a week, and serves people in Warrenton, Hammond and the Sunset Beach area. It is staffed by just a few community volunteers — usually around four to six people — and provides a mix of fresh produce, dry goods and packaged food.

Tom Bonine and Shawna Denney, who co-manage the pantry, said it is important to be able to provide people with a variety of food options. Some of the people who come for food have no way of cooking or storing perishables and need items that are easily portable.

As Bonine and Denney worked to unload food out of the back of Denney's pickup truck last week, they talked about the future of the pantry and the young families, elderly people and homeless who rely on the food.

"I just don't know what's going to happen to the people here," Denney said.

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