

# Cannon Beach takes another swing at housing incentives

Original ideas voted down by council in April

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

**Cannon Beach will consider a new affordable housing package in September.**

**CANNON BEACH** — A pared-down version of an affordable housing package that was rejected by the City Council earlier this year will be presented at a public hearing in September.

The original proposal, brought to the council by Mike Clark of Coaster Properties and former City Planner Rainmar Bartl, asked the city to reduce parking and landscaping requirements, as well as relax height restrictions in the residential zone designated for multifamily housing. The proposal would have also allowed multifamily housing in a commercial zone as an outright use. The incentives would have

only applied if a developer agreed to put a deed restriction on a project that would forbid the units from ever turning into vacation rentals or condominiums. The two argued the changes would remove roadblocks from developers looking to build affordable housing, as they help drive construction costs down, which would in turn keep rents lower.

But in April the majority of the City Council disagreed, arguing that the changes in no way guaranteed that rents would be affordable and instead would have led to developers tearing down and rebuilding single-family homes to rent at market prices in the residential zone.

At the urging of Mayor Sam Steidel and City Councilor Brandon Ogilvie, who

both voted for the original package, the city is considering a scaled-back version of the amendments. The new goal is to refocus on encouraging development of deed-restricted long-term rentals.

“I feel there is a need for long-term housing across all strata,” Ogilvie said.

Under the new proposal, the deed restriction is kept. Parking requirements would still be reduced and height restrictions for multifamily dwellings would still be increased from 28 feet to 32 feet to match the current standard for hotels — but only for properties in the limited commercial zone. Because multifamily housing is a conditional use in this zone, the Planning Commission would still have discretion to approve or deny variances related to parking and height on a case-by-case basis.

With almost 90 percent of commercial land already developed in Cannon Beach, limiting changes to this zone would be a

relatively low-risk way to experiment with new regulations, City Planner Mark Barnes said.

“It’s not identical to workforce housing, but broadly in the rental market, this kind of housing is not made or marketed for the upper market,” Barnes said.

While City Councilors Nancy McCarthy and George Vetter both recognized the need for long-term housing, they remain lukewarm on the changes. McCarthy said she still takes issue with the fact the proposal has no way to guarantee rents on deed-restricted properties would stay affordable, which is ultimately the problem the council set out to address.

Vetter agreed, adding that it is a gamble to possibly loosen standards for a developer that may not build housing that is accessible to workers and year-round residents.

“(Developers) are going to rent out units at the highest value they can,” Vetter said. “Our best hope is another

employer in town who wants to build employee housing sees this and says, ‘I could make this work now.’”

Steidel urged the council to see the amendments as a framework they could build upon in the future to incentivize affordable projects. Without some regulatory shifts, Steidel said, the city won’t get developers even interested in coming to the table.

“For a developer, these changes could make a project pencil out,” the mayor said.

Councilor Mike Benefield, who voted against the original package, said he is willing to try the changes in the commercial zone, since it would not impact the majority of residential areas.

But the council needs to call it what it is, he said.

“Let’s stop calling it affordable housing amendments. I don’t see this as affordable housing — this is long-term housing,” Benefield said. “We still need a long-term effort to address affordable housing.”

## Bonamici backs national parks funding bill on visit

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**  
*The Daily Astorian*

During a visit Wednesday to Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici discussed her support for a bill that would address deferred maintenance needs.

The National Park Service has estimated that it has \$11.6 billion in deferred maintenance backlogs. Lewis and Clark needs \$3.2 million, according to 2017 estimates.

The Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act — introduced in July — would commit 50 percent of excess energy development revenue from 2019 to 2023 to the parks. A similar bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate in June and is co-sponsored by U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat.

The bill has 66 co-sponsors in the House, including Bonamici and representatives

from both sides of the aisle.

“Typically our national parks have had bipartisan support, and what I heard and saw today just reinforces why, because it’s so great for our youths to see and families to learn,” the Oregon Democrat said after a brief tour of the park and a visit with some members of its youth programs. “And so I would be hopeful that we can pass the bill to maintain the funding and preserve our national parks.”

The bill would establish the National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund in the U.S. Treasury. Revenue would come from energy sources — oil, gas, coal, renewable resources — on federal land. Annual deposits

to the fund would be capped at \$1.3 billion.

“I don’t know how exactly the funding would be distributed, but I will do what I can to make sure that this park here, Lewis and Clark, gets the funding it needs — especially for the maintenance,” Bonamici said.

If Lewis and Clark received additional money, it would likely be spent to upgrade outdated bathrooms and water pipes and to modernize the visitor’s center, Superintendent Jon Burpee said. The visitor’s center updates could include a roof repair, cosmetic repairs and a refurbishing of exhibits to attract younger visitors.

The park is on track to have

about 295,000 visitors this year, Burpee said. That figure would surpass last year’s visitation record of 293,000.

“That’s nice it’s showing growth,” Burpee said. “Where we’re missing is kind of on the maintenance side.”

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