Port: Fishermens Wharf seeks a 50-year lease of about 100 acres

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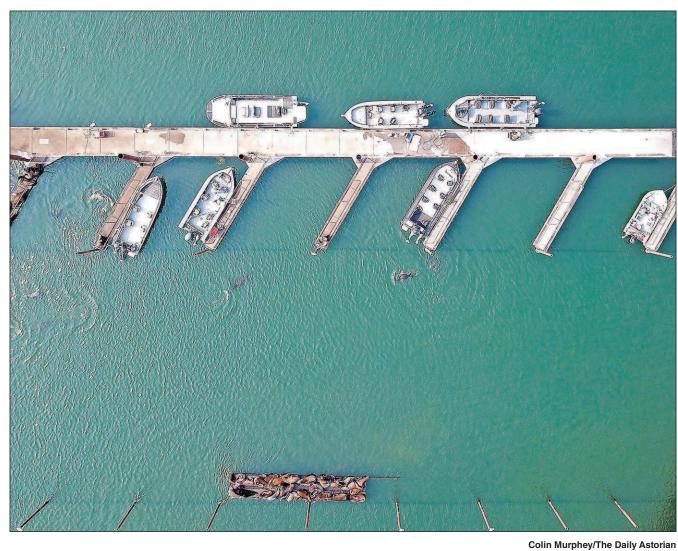
The East Mooring Basin, including a causeway running to an Army Corps of Engineers breakwater protecting the marina, was built in the 1940s as a postwar employment project. Designed to hold around 1,000 slips, the marina is largely empty except for several commercial boats and a seasonal crowd of sea lions following fish runs. The Port has failed at various efforts to evict the sea lions and does not have the money to significantly develop the marina.

Fishermens Wharf has proposed expanding the marina to the east of the causeway while building floating single-family homes to the west, similar to development found in Sausalito, California. The company seeks a 50-year lease of about 100 acres.

The floating homes would provide additional housing, while expanding moorage would help ease the long waitlist at the Port's West Mooring Basin, Sernande said. A second phase of the company's vision would develop a cruise ship dock along the breakwater.

"What we really want to do is create an inviting riverwalk to connect the east end mooring basin to the downtown area," Sernande said.

Commissioner Hunsinger has repeatedly raised concerns about the cashstrapped Port ceding control to



A redevelopment project could transform the East Mooring Basin in Astoria.

work with private entities to develop its languishing properties. He has, for example, objected to the agency exiting its lease at the North Tongue

Point industrial dock early to

allow boatbuilder Hyak Maritime to develop a vessel fabrication and repair center.

The public has shared many concerns with him about what the project at the East Mooring Basin would do to parking, traffic, a boat ramp for recreational fishermen, the longshoremen-handled cruise ship business on Pier 1 and any agreements the Port has with

the Army Corps regarding its breakwater, he said. "What money does the

Port of Astoria get in this public-private partnership with these guys?" Hunsinger asked.

"What kind of money does the Port retain for the property that

we own up there?" Other Port commissioners, while agreeing with Hunsinger's concerns, said the Port is just at the starting point with Fishermens Wharf. Commissioners Robert Stevens and Dirk Rohne both lauded the ability of private enterprise and government to work together

"If as a governmental body we can facilitate good things that benefit the community, I would be for it," Stevens said.

for the public's benefit.

The East Mooring Basin is subject to building and height restrictions in the Civic Greenway portion of the Riverfront Vision Plan between 16th to 39th streets. The Port can get exceptions if the agency presents a master plan that is approved by the Astoria City Council.

The intent is to develop a solution that meets the needs of the Port, the city and Fishermens Wharf's investors, but the company needs to begin due diligence and flesh out what's feasible, Sernande said.

The Port still needs to work on a lease agreement with Fishermens Wharf, along with a master plan for the region that addresses all the issues raised and improves the East Mooring Basin, said Jim Knight, the Port's executive director.

"This is the very first step," he said.

Column: Thick haze of smoke limited views from the attraction

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blocked off several parking spaces to allow for production.

The shoot was one of a few that have taken place in the county recently, including movies filmed at the historic Flavel House in Astoria and Coffenbury Lake at Fort Stevens State Park. Throughout the years, films such as "The Goonies," "Kindergarten Cop," "Free Willy" and "The Ring 2" have used the county's scenery as backdrops.

Kate Karna, a film student at Portland State University, served ice cream for Column visitors Tuesday at the Frite & Scoop mobile cart.

"They're doing pretty good," she said. "It's a great way to bring people in to the area."

Potentially not as good, however, was the weather. A thick haze of smoke from wildfires throughout the Pacific Northwest covered the city, limiting views from the Column.

The views were perfect a few weeks ago when a location scout scoped the area, but changing circumstances are not unusual for production crews.

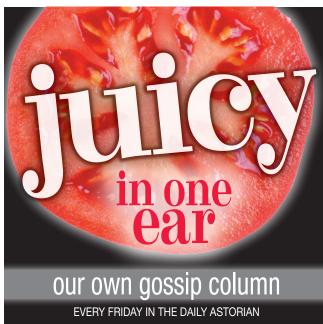
"I think they're worried, but I think at the end of the day they know things can change and they have to roll with the punches," Karna said.



Smoky conditions persist over Astoria as a crew member waits for a photography shoot to begin.

Colin Murphey/ The Daily Astorian

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