

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

146TH YEAR, NO. 73 DailyAstorian.com // WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018 ONE DOLLAR



Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin, far left, visits with inmates at the county jail last November. Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Design for new hotel gets another rejection

A 2-2 vote stalls project

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Plans to build a four-story hotel along the Columbia River have failed for a second time.

Astoria’s Design Review Committee was split 2-2 at a hearing Tuesday night on whether to approve a new design for Hollander Hospitality’s 60-plus room Fairfield Inn and Suites. The size of the hotel was the primary issue. With only four committee members present, the split vote resulted in a tentative denial of the project.

Mark Hollander, the owner of Hollander Hospitality, who attended the hearing, would not say if he plans to appeal the decision to the City Council.

Hollander appealed to the City Council after the Design Review Committee and the Historic Landmarks Commission shot down a previous version of the hotel in July. But at the appeals hearing, instead of arguing the merits of the hotel’s design, architects presented entirely new plans. The City Council sent these new plans back to the Design Review Committee.

The old design featured a standard Marriott-brand look that critics derisively called “a cigar box.” The design would have incorporated The Ship Inn restaurant as a lobby and dining area. The new design got rid of The Ship Inn and was intended to evoke Astoria’s 19th-century cannery buildings, featuring details found in other historic structures — a response to feedback received at previous meetings, developers said.

“We’re trying to bridge the gap between the old and the new,” said Craig Riegelmeier, with Carleton Hart Architecture. The city pointed the developer to a specific “working waterfront” style, he added.

Hotels are an outright permitted use where Hollander wants to build, but the area falls under Bridge Vista, a section of the Riverfront Vision Plan that outlines design and height requirements intended to preserve public views and access to the river.

Most everyone — from critics to city board members — agreed Hollander’s new design was an improvement.

But committee members Sarah Jane Barty and Hilarie Phelps voted against the project, arguing that the scale of the hotel did not suit the area. Size remained a sticking point for many who testified against the project.

Hollander is not interested in further limiting the size of the building.

“I’ve gone round and round to try and ask this town what they want within the code and that’s what I feel I’m presenting,” he said Tuesday. “We’re at this point where I don’t know how much more we can keep designing this thing and accomplish what you demanded within your code.”

“I appeal to the fact that I tried to listen to the community,” he added. “I know there’s been opposition but I’ve been in this town

See HOTEL, Page 5A

For county jail bond, a struggle to break through

New jail competes with money for schools, recreation

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

As Clatsop County officials promote a November bond measure to relocate the county jail, a lot of the questions they’re facing have little to do with the actual facility.

The \$20 million bond would relocate the jail from Duane Street in Astoria to the shuttered North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton. It is the third time since 2002 that the county has tried to upgrade the 38-year-old, overcrowded jail.

If the bond fails this time, competing priorities could be the primary reason.

“Well, a jail bond is never a very popular measure because it affects a very small group of people in the community,” said Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis, who supports the bond. “One of the greatest concerns is, since this is the third time we’ve asked in 15 years, why should I say, ‘Yes?’”

Marquis and others in law enforcement have long lamented the number of



The visitation room at the Clatsop County Jail sits empty.

people released from the jail each week because of overcrowding. Officials have cited several studies over the past two decades that have highlighted a need for more jail beds. The studies also pointed to a cramped, inefficient operating environment for deputies at the jail.

Nearly nine people each week were released early from the 60-bed jail last year, according to Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office statistics. If the bond passes,

the new facility would allow for 148 beds with an ability to expand in the future.

“We have a unique opportunity, with the immediate closure of the (youth correctional) facility, to take over the footprint and use a lot of the walls and some of the facilities,” Marquis said. “I don’t think that’s going to be around in five years.”

See JAIL BOND, Page 7A

‘THERE SEEMS TO BE KIND OF A SPLIT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ABOUT WHETHER THEY WANT IT OR NOT. THERE’S PROBABLY 15 REASONS PEOPLE CAN COME UP WITH AS FAR AS THEIR RETICENCE TO JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON.’

Henry Balensifer | Warrenton mayor

School bond campaigns take different approaches

More money behind Astoria campaign

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The political action committees created to stump for the Astoria and Warrenton school bond measures on the ballot in November have taken different routes to get the message out.

Yes for Astoria Kids, a committee supporting a \$70 million bond, has raised nearly \$29,000 as of Tuesday. Yes for Warrenton-Hammond Kids, formed to stump for a \$38.5 million

MEETING

The Warrenton-Hammond School District has scheduled a meeting for 7 p.m. Oct. 17 in the high school library to gather feedback and unveil conceptual plans for a new campus and middle school that would be funded by a \$38.5 million bond in November.

bond, has so far raised \$4,700.

The Astoria campaign’s contributions include numerous local businesses, several based in Warrenton. The Warrenton campaign has so far reported only a single contribution from a major business, Bergerson

See SCHOOL BOND, Page 5A



The Warrenton-Hammond School Board is asking voters for \$38.5 million in bonds to fund the purchase of a new master campus and build a middle school. Future bonds would relocate the school district’s other campuses.

