

Deer: City can't do much about population

Continued from Page 1A

Halverson once found himself prying a wooden fence board loose trying to free a deer that had caught its hoof between the boards when it tried to jump the fence. The deer had been hanging nearly upside down when Halverson arrived.

After hearing from people in her downtown ward about deer-related encounters over the years, City Councilor Cindy Price told the City Council in June: "At some point, it would probably be useful for us to have a conversation about that just to say whether we love them or hate them."

"Some people, like me, feel like we're lucky to live in a town, an actual town, with an abundance of wildlife on land and in the rivers," Price said Thursday. "Others wish one could shoot firearms within the city limits and get rid of them."

In 2012, the City Council consulted with state wildlife biologist Herman Biederbeck about deer and potential problems that arise when people feed them. Biederbeck has been consulted frequently over the years regarding elk problems in Warrenton and Gearhart.

At the time, Astoria had only one oddly specific ordinance on the books about



A deer walks through a backyard in Astoria.

Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

feeding wildlife. The ordinance dated from 1985 and forbade the feeding of pigeons in Uniontown. The city would later amend the ordinance to also prohibit the feeding of deer, elk, raccoons, opossums, seagulls, bears, cougars and coyotes in city limits.

City councilors worried about the size of the local deer population in 2012, too, and asked Biederbeck about a variety of options to control the herds that included darting deer with contraceptives or trapping and relocating the animals. None of these solutions was ever pursued.

Remember the raccoons?

Ultimately, Price doesn't think the city can do much about the deer, except perhaps be lenient when people erect temporary fencing without a permit to keep deer out of vegetable gardens.

If deer populations are growing in town, Price isn't worried. Remember all the raccoons Astoria used to have? Price does. For a while their bandit-masked faces seemed to peer around every corner.

But in 2010, an outbreak of distemper, a highly contagious disease, ravaged the local raccoon population. People called

Astoria 911 Dispatch reporting raccoons that were acting strange and looking ill. Police officers killed at least eight sick animals at one point.

Deer have their own diseases to wrestle with. There is deer hair loss syndrome, caused by a louse. Deer scratch at and rub affected areas and the disease can lead to death when coupled with pneumonia or other parasite issues, Biederbeck told the City Council in 2012.

So when it comes to the deer, Price reasons now, "there's a natural phenomenon that will take care of the population if it gets too large."

Store: Location could open in the fall of next year

Continued from Page 1A

Planning commissioners agreed with developer Wes Giesbicht and John Nygaard Jr., of Warrenton Fiber, that the commission had leeway in interpreting city codes that ask for three different materials on storefront facades and screening for outdoor storage. Giesbicht and Warrenton Fiber are partners in Trondheim Acres LLC, which owns the roughly 17-acre property behind Les Schwab Tire Center off U.S. Highway 101 where Tractor Supply Co. — a national chain — plans to build.

But Cronin maintained that the code is very clear and that ignoring these two items leaves the project open for appeal.

"This is a perfect test case for how Warrenton manages growth over time and what that growth looks like," Cronin said afterward.

City staff is upholding development standards as written in city code. The Planning Commission can decide differently, but deviation from the code makes the city's decisions vulnerable to appeals, he said.

Sticking by the sections of the code — even if they seem like minor points — was Cronin's attempt to "put in a line in the sand," he told the Planning Commission.

Giesbicht and Nygaard argued that the chances of appeal are low. Only one person is on the record in opposition to the project — Warrenton resident Henry Willener — and he now supports it after receiving guarantees from the developers.

Planning commissioners did stand by Cronin on another condition, though: To mark a future sidewalk and planting strip on a platted but not yet constructed road as "future improvement" on developers'

plans. To Cronin, this put an intention in writing.

Giesbicht argued that any future development would come in front of the Planning Commission again and commissioners could require improvements. Nygaard noted the makeup of the commission might be very different at that point.

"Why tie the hands of the future?" Giesbicht asked.

The Planning Commission wants the Tractor Supply Co. project to go forward, but Warrenton has been bitten by developers in the past, Commissioners Ryan Lampi and Mike Moha replied. Moha referenced a project where the developer had promised to put in streetlights as a future improvement, but, when it came down to it, refused because there was nothing in writing.

The developers are not being required to make the improvements now and Tractor Supply Co. is not being asked to pay for them, Lampi said. The commission just wanted something put on the record.

Giesbicht said he did not want the entire project to hinge on this one point and accepted the condition.

Tractor Supply Co., founded in 1938 and based in Tennessee, plans to build a 19,097 square-foot building and hopes to be open in the fall of next year. The store, as well as a storage area and parking lot, will be built on about 3 acres.

The Planning Commission discussed the Tractor Supply application at a meeting last week, but continued the public hearing to Thursday after a standoff between the developers and Cronin. The commissioners instructed Cronin to work with developers on a solution.

Center: Klean has rented for nearly two years

Continued from Page 1A

Klean is also behind on rent at the downtown office it has rented for more than three years and has been locked out, but still has furniture and other equipment inside, Fitzpatrick said.

"If they get caught up, they are welcome to continue business there," he said. "Otherwise, I'll put the space up for lease or figure out a new use."

Based in Los Angeles, Klean has locations in Astoria, Portland, Bend, La Pine and Long Beach, Washington, where it runs an inpatient treatment center. The company's possible departure puts into jeopardy the region's only outpatient treatment center with a dedicated sober living facility.

Earlier this year, Sunspire Health closed the two drug treatment centers it operated at Astoria Pointe above Uniontown and the Rosebriar, a female-only facility on 14th Street. The closure left Clatsop

County with no inpatient treatment options.

Other outpatient drug and alcohol treatment centers include North Coast Recovery on 30th Street, Potentials on Pier 39, Choices Counseling in the Red Building and Awakenings by the Sea in Seaside.

The treatment options are slimmer for low-income patients on the Oregon Health Plan, the state's version of Medicaid, with Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare and Choices the main avenues for drug and alcohol treatment.

Wendy Hemsley, the CEO of North Coast Recovery and the neighboring North Coast Medical Clinic, said she only knows of one other sober living facility in the county, the independently run Oxford House in Warrenton.

"I would love to do an inpatient center," she said. "We need the services. I just don't have the financial ability to do it."

Alan Evans, the CEO of

social service group Helping Hands, said the issues faced by struggling treatment centers boil down to health insurance companies.

"The struggle is it becomes about money and it becomes about survival," he said. "It changes from serving the people to keeping our doors open."

The issue is nationwide and part of why organizations like his avoid dealing with private health insurers when possible. "Our organizations can't count on them," Evans said.

Hemsley echoed Evans' comments about how subjective and erratic health insurers can be when reimbursing for treatment. Patients also often can't afford the out-of-pocket deductibles to pay for treatment, she said.

Evans lauded the work done by Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare and Choices, which is partnering to provide treatment while Helping Hands will provide housing at a new homeless facility in Uniontown, he said.

District: 'This is not a unique problem'

Continued from Page 1A

Zone 1, for instance, has been particularly hard to fill. The zone that represents the southwest portion of the county was vacant well before this month's election.

"That is not a unique problem," said John Byers, agricultural water quality program director for the state Department of Agriculture.

Conservation districts emerged in the fallout of the 1930s Dust Bowl, which featured dust storms that destroyed crops and led to mass farmer migrations out of the Midwest. Clatsop County grappled with its own set of challenges in that period, as strong gusts blew sand from the coast as a result of unrestricted livestock grazing on dune grasses.

Today, the conservation district largely works with agriculture producers on water quality issues, Ogier said.

"Water quality seems to be

the one the state is more concerned with," she said. "Making sure erosion doesn't get into the runoff is our main issue."

If eligible candidates apply for the two open positions on the board, they likely would be appointed at a meeting next year.

WANTED
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA
Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

GAME MEAT PROCESSING
Debbie D's will be at
Cash & Carry in Warrenton
at 10:00 a.m. every Saturday
to pick up and deliver
meat for processing.
20 lb. min • Each batch individual
Please call or leave message by
Friday so we know to expect you!
DEBBIE D'S Jerky & Sausage Factory
2210 Main Avenue N. • Tillamook, OR • 503-842-2622

MUSICFEST & AUCTION FUNDRAISER
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH • 5:15 TO 7:30PM
STAR OF THE SEA SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
CORNER OF GRAND & 14TH IN ASTORIA

ENJOY A FREE FAMILY NIGHT OF FUN
Free music, Free Munchies, Free Drinks & laughs. While bidding on many, many great auction items.
Cash & local checks only

MUSIC PROVIDED BY:
BARBIE G. Acoustic Folk
ED CHASE Music Machine Inc. The Best DJ in Town!

ADMISSION: 2 CANS OF FOOD OR A DONATION FOR ST. VINCENT DE PAUL FOOD BANK
Sponsored by Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court 151
Proceeds going to Local Astoria Charities

  **Oregon State University**
Extension Service
Clatsop County

2019 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program

January 10 - March 16, 2019

Classes will be held:

Thursdays (6pm-9pm)

Saturdays (9am-12pm)

Social time 5:30 - 6pm Thursdays

Clatsop Community College, Astoria

CLASS SIZE IS LIMITED, SO PLEASE REGISTER SOON!

For more information and to register go to:

extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/clatsop/how-join

Contact:

Linda Jones

OSU Clatsop County Extension

2001 Marine Drive

Astoria, OR 97103

503-325-8573

linda.jones@oregonstate.edu

Deadline is December 14, 2018

Master Gardeners are trained by the best. . . . OSU instructors, Extension faculty and local experts. Classroom training (20 classes) is combined with 55 hours of required volunteer time working with veteran Master Gardeners in the field. Interns will graduate and become certified as Master Gardeners with an exceptional knowledge base of gardening in our challenging coastal climate. Certified Master Gardeners can remain active by joining the local MG chapter, and volunteering on projects such as demo gardens, horticulture related community outreach, plant clinics, and events. Continuing education is made available by the OSU Extension MG Program Coordinator. Successful gardening is a lifelong educational process. Join other folks who have the same interests, and enjoy working together as liaison between Oregon State University and the home gardeners of Clatsop County.

OREGON CAPITAL INSIDER
Get the inside scoop on state government and politics!
We're investing in Salem coverage when other news organizations are cutting back.
OregonCapitalInsider.com