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ONE DOLLAR

Developer wins hotel appeal

A 3-2 vote by the City Council

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

A developer won an appeal Wednesday night to build a four-story hotel along the Astoria

riverfront.

The City Council voted 3-2 to tentatively approve a 60-plus room Marriott-brand Fairfield Inn and Suites, reversing a denial by the city's Design Review Committee.

Mayor Arline LaMear, City Councilor Bruce Jones and Councilor Tom Brownson voted for the appeal by Bellingham, Washington-based Hollander Hospital-

ity. Councilor Zetty Nemlowill and Councilor Cindy Price voted against the appeal.

For Jones and Brownson, the issue came down to a lack of clarity in the city's development code, with the wording leaving things open to interpretation, they said. Based on the code, they did not feel they could deny the appeal.

"It seems to me no matter what

our personal beliefs or not ... I have to vote on the code that we have before us," LaMear agreed.

Speaking to the audience at City Hall, she said, "I would urge you if you want to change the code, to work to do that in the future. But at this point I'm going to go with approving their appeal because I believe they have satisfied everything we asked them to do. And we

have to go with our code."

The City Council must approve findings of fact prepared by city staff before the decision can be considered final, including another set of findings that represent a 3-2 vote made in August to reverse a denial by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

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Knight receives mixed reviews from Port

Executive director a target of criticism

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Jim Knight, the executive director of the Port of Astoria, received mixed reviews from the Port Commission in a performance evaluation, including a surprisingly low rating from Port Commissioner Dirk Rohne.

The commission — Knight's boss — provides annual written evaluations with rankings on aspects of his performance on a scale of one to five. The evaluations are often done in private, but Knight opted at a recent meeting to have his made public.



Jim Knight

The executive director also turned down a pay increase, including a nearly 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment, because of the Port's financial woes. He was inked a year ago to a three-year contract with a base salary of \$168,375.

Knight received overwhelmingly positive comments from Frank Spence, the commission president, and commissioners Robert Stevens and James Campbell, who each gave him a four or five on most performance metrics. But Knight faced a complete lack of confidence from Commissioner Bill Hunsinger, a longtime critic who has said the executive director should resign. He also had a lackluster overall rating of two out of five from Rohne, who is seen as a moderating force.

"The Port director is an approachable and pleasant person to interact with on an individual basis and can speak well in public settings," Rohne wrote. "In some instances there have been some serious credibility issues. The Port director must be seen as forthright and an honest broker in all of his dealings."

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South County wrestles with food trucks



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Vendors at a food truck await customers at the Cannon Beach Farmer's Market in 2017.

Logistical, cultural barriers persist

By BRENN A VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Mike Selberg wants to be able to serve cocktails with the spirits he creates at the Cannon Beach Distillery.

In order to do so, Selberg would have to have a kitchen that satisfies Oregon Liquor Control Commission standards — a costly renovation. Instead, he would like to bring in a food truck for his parking lot, which would satisfy the kitchen requirement and offer a new food option in town.

But there is no way to do that legally in Cannon Beach, which generally prohibits food trucks outside of the weekly farmer's market.

For years, cities like Astoria and Portland have courted the food truck movement. But smaller communities

'WE'RE NOT PORTLAND. WE NEVER WANT TO BE PORTLAND.'

Shelley Crane |
owner of The Oil & Vinegar Bar

like Cannon Beach and Seaside are beginning to question whether food trucks should be part of their culinary scenes.

A large sector of the local restaurant industry objects to food trucks, seeing them as an unfair form of competition and out of step with community character. Many business owners in these tourism-dependent towns say they are already struggling to make enough money in the busy season to carry them through the year.

But others see food trucks as a way to usher in more diverse food options and opportunities for a younger generation of business owners, and believe

cities should get ahead on writing codes that adapt to a growing trend in a way that will limit their community impact.

Spread thin

In November, more than 25 Cannon Beach businesses that offer food met to give major feedback on the subject, mostly in opposition.

The potential for food trucks to take up parking spaces that are already at a premium was a major issue. Many also claimed it wasn't fair to allow new businesses that wouldn't have to pay the same kind of rents and property taxes as brick-and-mortar businesses — a problem especially dramatic along the downtown core, where property values are high.

"I've been closed for over a month and a half because of staffing shortages ... losing thousands of dollars, and then I'm hearing this?" said John Sowa, of Sweet Basil's Cafe. "It raises the hair on the back of my neck."

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County extends due diligence for data center

A 120-day expansion for developers

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County has agreed to extend the due diligence period on a \$1.2 million land sale for a potential new data center and technology incubator.

County commissioners on Wednesday night unanimously approved the 120-day extension for developers to purchase the 67 acres



Agile Design

Mark Cox has proposed a new data center and technology incubator in Warrenton.

in the North Coast Business Park in Warrenton.

Mark Cox, of Agile Design, heads the proj-

ect and is funded by investors based on milestones reached in its estimated \$200 million initial stage.

He was originally given a 60-day due diligence period in August when the county agreed to sell the land.

Prior to the decision, commissioners held an hourlong executive session, which was closed to the public.

Without detailing specifics, Cox said after the meeting that wetland mitigation issues involving the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of State Lands have played a factor. Wetlands account for more than half of the property.

He also mentioned

efforts to find sources of renewable energy and take advantage of the property's proximity to fiber-optic cables.

"Well, this is a complicated project, and it's not a simple real estate acquisition," Cox said.

It isn't the first project, though, to encounter wetlands headaches at the business park. Fort George Brewery purchased 10 acres south of Cox's site in early 2016 to build a distribution center, but has faced similar issues.

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