

Jewell could add housing for school

Long commutes can be a burden on staff

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

JEWELL — The Jewell School District is looking to add more housing on campus to help attract staff.

School districts, like most other employers, have struggled to attract employees because of the region's lack of affordable housing. But Jewell, located deep in the rural southeastern corner of Clatsop County, is isolated from any major housing center, with many educators having to commute.

The rural campus hosts five houses for staff, including one built in the 2000s for the superintendent. But the school district still has a waiting list of three or four hoping for a spot on campus, Superintendent Alice Hunsaker said.

"I don't know of any other investment that could move the dial on student achievement more than teacher housing," said Stephen Phillips, the school district's new executive administrator and a likely candidate to replace Hunsaker when she and Principal Terrence Smyth leave at the end of the year.

Phillips has talked about two spots around campus for a single-family home or fourplex. He recently met with Gail Henriksen, the county's community development director, about the next steps.

When the superintendent's house was built, the school district had to go through an amendment to the state's comprehensive land use plan regarding urbanization in rural areas, she said.

"The property where they want to put the units is agriculture-forestry," Henriksen said. "The zoning district allows schools and all buildings essential to the operation of the school."

The state has agreed in the past that a single-family home would be consistent with that intent, she said, but now the school district is looking at a fourplex.

One support staffer and five teachers and administrators live on campus, and the houses there have always been full with a waiting list of people trying to get in, Hunsaker said.

"The No. 1 challenge to get a new teacher here is the commute," said Brian Meier, a school board member.

Staff living on campus pay market-rate rent to the school district. While the housing has not penciled out financially in the past, it has improved the schools, Meier said.

The school district has four three-bedroom homes, some with single staff living in them, Phillips said. His plan would be a multiplex with smaller two-bedroom units, making more larger homes available for families.

School board members were supportive of more housing, but asked Phillips to bring back a conceptual plan with cost estimates before they would signal support for spending money on permitting.

Building a new house on campus to attract a superintendent became a contentious issue in the community. Before any new application for housing, the school district would have to notify property owners within 750 feet and hold a public meeting, Henriksen said.

A PEEK INSIDE 'TERRIBLE TILLY'



Photos by Scott Rekate

Scott Rekate at the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse.

Fisherman shares interior photos of a famous lighthouse

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Scott Rekate remembers a lot about visiting the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse. It was dark. Even a little spooky.

But perhaps what was most memorable was the smell. "It's a popular rest place for birds. The guano there ... the ammonia there would gag you," he said. "To start out to the top you'd have to take a deep breath and then run up the stairs."

In the late 1970s, Rekate was one of the many dory fishermen circling the famous lighthouse in search of a good Chinook salmon run. He was one of a handful who made it into "Terrible Tilly" after it was decommissioned and before it became a columbarium in 1980.

Other than a few photos, the experience mostly fell out of his memory until a few weeks ago, when he read a story about a man who discovered copies of the original schematics for the lighthouse in his Warrenton home.

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The decommissioned Tillamook Rock Lighthouse was photographed before it became a columbarium.



Scandinavian park design gets city blessing



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Judi Lampi, right, the park project chair for the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association, celebrated at City Hall on Monday night.

Last hurdle before construction

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

A proposal to build a park celebrating Astoria's Scandinavian roots sailed through a City Council meeting Monday night.

"Great plan," Mayor Arline LaMear said. "I like it."

"I'm just so impressed with how organized your group has been," City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill said. "Making this decision is one

that I feel I can do with great confidence that the project is in good hands."

The City Council voted unanimously to approve blueprints proposed by the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association for a small, grassy, tree-filled park off Marine Drive between 15th and 16th streets. The vote was the final approval the group needed to proceed with construction.

The heritage association has already begun a capital campaign to raise the nearly \$1 million it will take to build the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Park.

The group is the focus

of Fort George Brewery's monthly Benefit Night fundraiser on Jan. 29. The evening will feature Scandinavian dancers and traditional music, as well as a joke contest and a silent auction.

The park, known by most as Peoples Park, is used primarily by the nonprofit Filling Empty Bellies, which serves lunch to people in need six days a week.

Nemlowill asked if the city had spoken with the nonprofit about the future plans for the park.

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