

2018: YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from Page A1

Jones launched his candidacy for mayor after Price dropped out. Throughout the campaign, he cited his years of experience working with and for government agencies, his time dealing with the aftermath of natural disasters and the work he has already been involved in as a city councilor. His election creates a vacancy in the east side's Ward 4, which councilors will likely fill in January by appointment.

Waterfront hotels

A proposal to build a four-story hotel on the waterfront underscored tensions in Astoria over development along the Columbia River.

Opposition to the project became a campaign issue during the November elections. Hollander Hospitality wants to build the hotel at the site of the former Ship Inn restaurant at the base of Second Street, an area where hotels are permitted as an outright use. But the 60-plus room, Marriott-brand Fairfield Inn and Suites also falls under the city's Bridge Vista overlay, a part of the Riverfront Vision Plan that shapes development on the waterfront.

Critics called the hotel's design boxy and generic, too large and out of line with city codes intended to preserve views and public access. Hollander Hospitality weathered multiple denials by city boards, appealing to the City Council. The developer altered the hotel's design, hoping to echo other large, historic buildings in the area. The City Council, in a 3-2 vote, ultimately upheld an appeal in December, allowing the project to move forward.

By contrast, many in the city welcomed the October announcement that developers behind Buoy Beer Co. and the Adrift Hotel are interested in a boutique hotel at a former seafood processing plant on the river near downtown.

Homelessness

Long-hidden homeless camps were cleared from the woods in Astoria and Warrenton, but the sweeps were examples of — rather than solutions to — the North Coast's struggle to help people in need.

In Warrenton over the summer, police issued eviction notices to homeless people living in a sprawling camp in the woods behind Goodwill.

In Astoria, city councilors gave Police Chief Geoff Spalding direction to more aggressively enforce city rules on camping, trespassing, public intoxication and off-leash dogs. The City Council also strengthened Astoria's "no camping" ordinance by including city-owned forestland.

But Mayor LaMear, Spalding and other city leaders wanted to deal with the home-



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Trash and other debris is removed from a homeless camp in Astoria.

less camps in the most humane way possible. They gave people extra time to move out and sought to connect many with social services. A sweep in late fall was successful in cleaning up the woods, but few people found housing. Many of them just moved on to other camps. Helping Hands opened a new facility in Uniontown, providing re-entry services to homeless people looking to find jobs, housing and sobriety. LaMear was an outspoken supporter of the project, which involved the purchase of an old boarding house from the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority.

Housing

A Clatsop County housing study found that much of the housing being built is priced higher than many people can afford, pushing would-be first-time homebuyers toward rental units.

Local governments and businesses continue to identify a lack of workforce and affordable housing as a major barrier to economic growth.

In Astoria, the city celebrated the purchase of the old Waldorf Hotel by Innovative Housing Inc., a nonprofit affordable housing developer from Portland. Though work has yet to begin on the dilapidated building next to City Hall, the space could provide around 40 units of housing downtown.

In Warrenton, Pacific Seafood pushed through a zoning amendment to allow the company to create dorm-style housing for seasonal workers. The seafood processor hopes to use an existing fabrication facility near the city's dog park. The idea raised

concerns among some neighbors, but city leaders ultimately supported the project.

County leadership dysfunction

Clatsop County Manager Cameron Moore announced his retirement in September after more than a year of bubbling tensions with some county commissioners.

In April, Moore skipped a commission meeting, citing the behavior of Commissioner Lianne Thompson and Commissioner Kathleen Sullivan. The episode was a public example of the behind-the-scenes infighting over whether commissioners should have a greater role.

The county charter gives the county manager authority over day-to-day operations, but some commissioners want an expanded focus. Thompson was re-elected in November, and she and Sullivan gained a potential ally when land use planner Pamela Wev prevailed in a rare runoff over former Astoria City Councilor Peter Roscoe.

Former Warrenton Mayor Mark Kujala was elected to replace Scott Lee, the commission chairman, who chose not to seek re-election.

Moore is retiring on Friday.

Jail bond

After two failed bond measures since 2002, voters in November approved the relocation of the county jail from Duane Street in Astoria to the former North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton.

The \$20 million bond will allow the jail to increase capacity from 60 inmates to 148, with room for future expansion. Inmates are

routinely released early from the jail due to overcrowding.

One of the leaders of the bond campaign was Sheriff Tom Bergin, who announced this year that he will not seek re-election in 2020. County officials expect the move to the new jail will take place within the next two years.

School bonds

Two years after Seaside voters approved nearly \$100 million in school bonds to build a new master campus, voters in Astoria and Warrenton passed large bonds in November to rebuild and refurbish schools.

Astoria voters approved \$70 million in bonds, the first since \$20 million in 2001 that paid for the construction of Lewis and Clark Elementary School. Among various building and security improvements, the bonds will pay for a new academic wing at the aging Astoria Middle School, an enclosed campus at Astoria High School and the renovation of a former gym into a multipurpose room at John Jacob Astor Elementary School.

Voters in Warrenton approved \$38.5 million in bonds to buy a master campus and construct a new middle school. Warrenton and its schools have grown rapidly, with Warrenton Grade School an estimated 40 percent over capacity and one of the five most-populous K-8 campuses in the state.

Marquis retires

Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis announced in January that he would not seek re-election, stepping away after 25 years in office.

The outspoken prosecutor built a national reputation as an advocate for the death penalty, truth in sentencing and crime victims' rights. "A graceful exit is as important as a graceful entrance," Marquis said in January.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown ran unopposed for district attorney and was elected in May to replace Marquis.

Mitchell wins

Tiffany Mitchell, a social worker and political newcomer, won a surprise victory in the Democratic primary in May in state House District 32. Mitchell upset Tim Josi, a Tillamook County commissioner and former state legislator who had financial backing from timber interests and establishment political support. Labor unions and environmental groups helped push Mitchell over the top in the big-spending campaign.

Mitchell defeated Vineeta Lower, a Seaside teacher who was the Republican nominee, in November. Josi crossed party lines to endorse Lower.

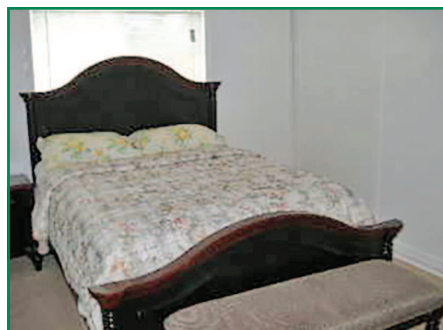
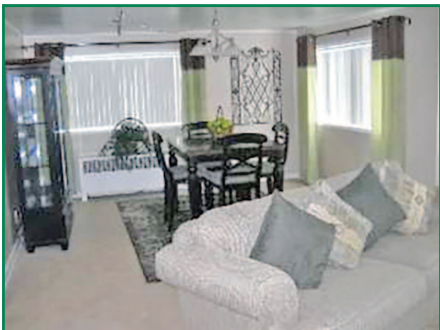
Mitchell, who takes office in January, will replace state Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach, who served for 14 years.

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