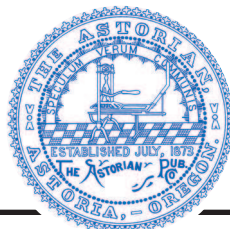


OPINION



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GUEST COLUMN

Gearhart park not suited for fire station

Gearhart needs a new fire station. The existing building is antiquated and constructed of unreinforced masonry that will not perform well in an earthquake.

A new fire station should be in a location that best serves the community, has the support of the community, and is designed to contribute to making Gearhart safer and more resilient.



STUART
EMMONS

The Lesley Miller Dunes Meadow Park (aka Gearhart Park) is at the center of Gearhart's oceanfront, and one of the places being considered for the fire station. It is also one of the places that makes Gearhart special. In this unique beautiful park,

as Mrs. Miller had dreamed, everyone is able to have "a place to play baseball, football, have a picnic, or just sit, relax and watch the sunset." People have even been married in the park.

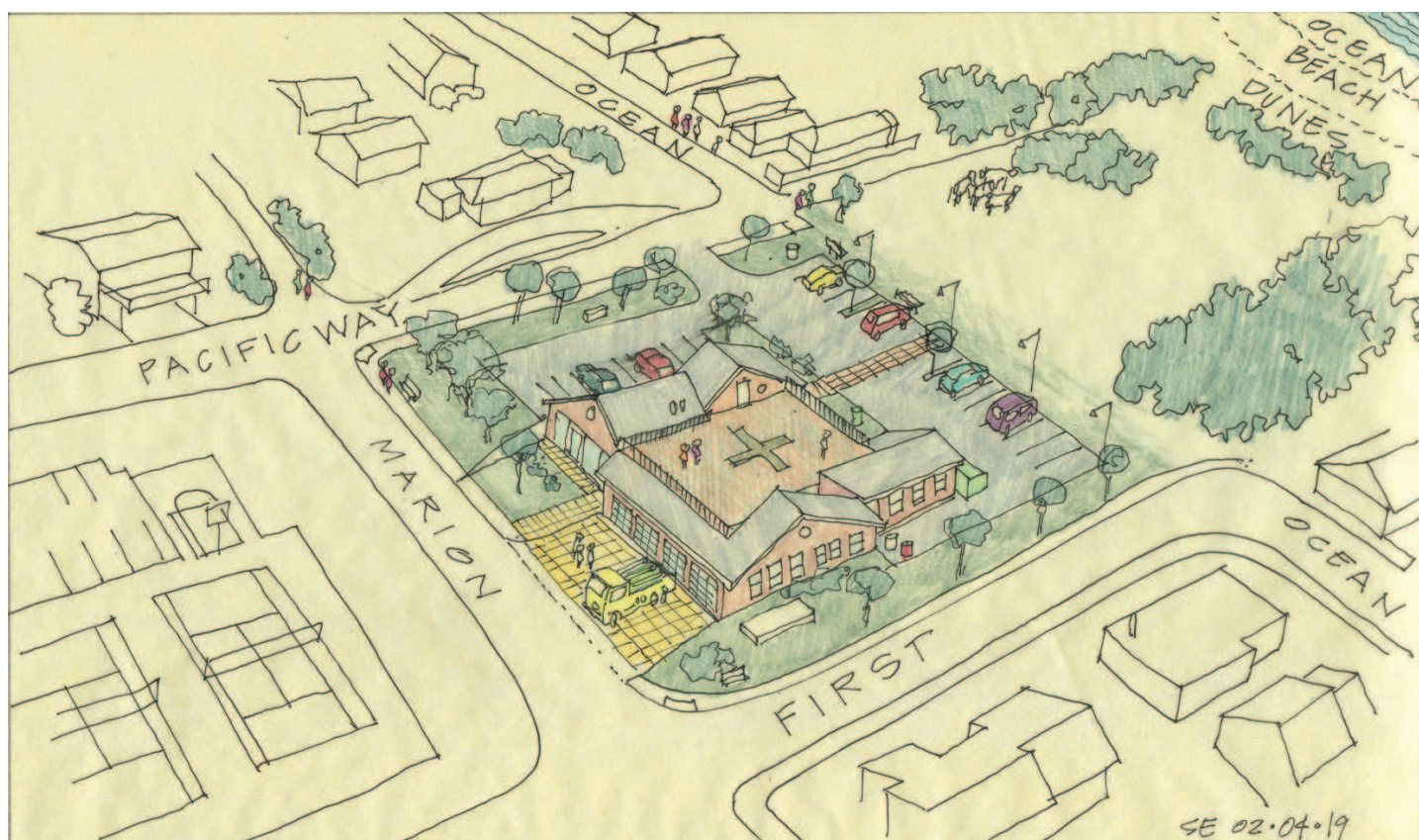
Parks are important for towns — we should make more of them, not pave them over. The park should not even be considered for a fire station, unless there are no other options.

There are also many pragmatic reasons to not site a fire station in the park.

- Gearhart residents deserve a new fire station that uses taxpayer money wisely. Contrary to what the city of Gearhart estimates, I and many others believe that the "Gearhart Park station" option will end up being extremely expensive, probably well more than the other options being considered, due to the numerous complex regulatory and legal challenges with the site. There is a good chance of costs spiraling out of control with this option.

- The Lesley Miller Park is in the State DOGAMI (Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries) tsunami inundation zone. Oregon law prohibits new fire stations from being built in these zones. An exception will clearly be required. Yes, exceptions are possible to get approved, but primarily if there are no other strategic alternatives, which is clearly not the case here.

- The park was decided to the city by the county in 1947 with the agreement



Stuart Emmons

An artist's rendering of the proposed fire station site plan in Lesley Miller Dunes Meadow Park.

that it always remain a park. I don't see why the county would vote to modify the use, especially with so many county residents opposing this modification, unless there were no other site options, which is clearly not the case here.

- The city has stated in its literature to residents that park loss would be "minimal." Apparently they want to bring in a fleet of dump trucks after cutting down most of the trees on the site and fill in a large area of the dunes for a replacement park in sensitive dune areas. Creating open space on already open space. The reality is that a 13,000-square-foot fire station and large unsightly asphalt parking lot on one of the most beautiful places on the North Coast will have a massive negative impact on the park, effectively ruining a place that people on the North Coast have enjoyed for generations. This park is the wrong place to put a fire station.

The city has spent several years trying to find a suitable site for a new fire

station. It would be a very difficult undertaking for any group. The Gearhart Fire Station Committee has worked long hours and we are grateful for their work, along with city staff and elected leaders working hard on this difficult problem. Let's now all come together around a solution that has broad community support.

Fortunately, Gearhart has several viable options for locating a fire station. The city has higher ground outside of the tsunami inundation zone is around McMenamins, sometimes called Palisades or Highlands, at 60–70 feet above sea level. The other is at the south end of South Ocean Avenue. If we have an earthquake, I'm certainly not going to Lesley Miller Park to ride out a potential tsunami. I am going to the Palisades or South Ocean Avenue, like every-

one west of 101 should. They are the highest places in Gearhart west of the foothills.

The sooner residents say "no" to a fire station in Lesley Miller Dunes Meadow Park, the sooner everyone can focus on finding the best site and getting the fire station built.

As Joni Mitchell sang in Big Yellow Taxi: "Don't it always seem to go ... That you don't know what you've got ... 'Till it's gone ... They paved paradise ... And put up a parking lot."

The park is a paradise for many of us. Let's forget about destroying the park for a fire station, come together to find the best solution, and build something that makes Gearhart safer and more resilient. And then, let's all watch one of those magnificent sunsets from the park, together.

Stuart Emmons is an architect and planner who used to have a woodshop on the North Coast and now comes to the coast frequently.

Water under the bridge

Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers



10 years ago this week — 2009

Jewell schools were closed and Knappa and some other districts delayed classes today as winter's latest snowfall meant hazardous and unpleasant driving conditions around the North Coast.

Law enforcement agencies were on alert to traffic problems while the U.S. Coast Guard warned of the need for fishermen to take extra care on the ocean and in the Columbia River.

The wealth of the first residents at Station Camp suggests that a tribal chief or close relative might have lived there.

"The amount of wealth items found at this site suggests that either a close relative of Concomly or Concomly himself lived here," said archaeologist Doug Wilson.

The mouth of the Columbia River was a major trading location long before Lewis and Clark arrived — and long before the first tall-masted ships sailed up and down the West Coast.

The Chinook Indians held a near monopoly in fur trade along the Columbia. They controlled all the trade going in and out of the river. No one came through without trading with Chinooks. And historic records show they were accomplished traders.

The arrival of the large sailing ships changed the Northwest.

"Two hundred years ago, events changed the course of history of the Northwest," said Wilson at Thursday night's Columbia Forum. "It changed from a Stone Age culture to one affected by the Industrial Revolution."

50 years ago — 1969

A dam on the North Fork of the Klaskanine River to increase fish hatchery production was proposed to the State Water Resources Board in Astoria Monday. The response was favorable.

"This would be the salvation of the salmon industry, in my opinion," said board member La Selle Coles after



1969 — The site of the proposed earth-filled dam on the Klaskanine River is in central Clatsop County, about 15 miles from both Seaside and Astoria.

the proposal was made by Larry Snyder, chairman of the Clatsop Water Resources Board.

Snyder said his board proposes a 83-foot-high earth-fill dam, six miles east of the State Fish Commission hatchery on the Klaskanine River. The 1966 cost estimate of such a project was \$259,000. A feasibility study to determine where and how the dam should be built would cost some \$25,000, he said.

Proponents of a water-level route between Skamokawa, Wash., and the northern end of the Astoria Bridge said Rep. Alan Thompson would introduce a bill in the Washington Legislature this week calling for construction of the new route.

The petition states that the following benefits will follow construction: Shorten distance between Vancouver and the coast by 20 miles; eliminate a crooked highway over KM hill; provide a new scenic drive; improve highway safety and increase use of Washington highways.

The Port of Astoria Commission approved a resolution Tuesday night calling for rerouting highway 30 around Astoria to the south.

The resolution said the fact that the highway now goes through the business-industrial section of Asto-

ria means "large transient commercial vehicles hauling over the main business districts of the city of Astoria, constituting a dangerous and congested situation to exist."

The commissioners said relocating the highway east and south of the business-industrial district with adequate provisions with access to the city, would relieve, if not eliminate, congestion.

75 years ago — 1944

Among the recommendations made by the house naval affairs subcommittee investigating congested areas on the Columbia River district was one recommending that the federal housing project in this vicinity be made available to servicemen and their families; another that the navy should provide housing quarters in close proximity to the new naval hospital for medical officers and maintenance personnel; another that rail transportation between Astoria and Seaside should be improved either by establishment of an additional train between the two points or by a revision of the schedule to provide transportation from Seaside in the morning and back in the evening; and a final recommendation that drydock facilities be expanded in this area and utilized fully by the armed services.

Coast guardsmen from the Point Adams station at Hammond tried without success to dislodge the fishing boat Electra from her sandy trap on Clatsop spit again last night.

It was the fourth try to re-float the big Seattle deep sea boat, and guardsmen have employed every known method to refloat the boat, or to pull her off the sand. Last night the tender Rose was brought into play as a tug.

The Electra went aground in early evening January 26. She has not been subjected to much heavy seas during her sojourn on the beach, and is thus not breaking up, although some seams have opened. Although hope of salvaging the boat is waning, it is not entirely abandoned.

Joseph Migliore and Donald J. Gavin, crew members on a naval unit at the Astoria port docks, escaped with minor injuries when a car which they "borrowed" from the Ginn funeral home went on a wild plunge at the Hellberg drug store corner early this morning.

The car sheared off an 18-inch Pacific Power & Light company pole, knocked down a mail box, sideswiped another automobile belonging to the Columbia River Packers Association, uprooted a water hydrant and demolished a neon sign, the front entrance doorway and plate glass window of the drug store.

Both were in the city jail today awaiting action by civil and naval authorities.