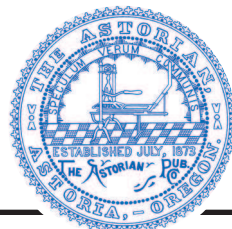


OPINION

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GUEST VIEW

Public should guide process on new Gearhart fire station

I've always felt that as elected officials, it's our job to engage the public and allow our residents to guide the decision-making process. And I've always had great faith in the citizens of Gearhart to make the right decisions for our community. All of our faith has been tested the last several years as we have had difficult and complex issues to navigate, but as I have always predicted the citizens have made the right choices again and again.



MATT BROWN

Whether it's electing officials who honor and uphold our Gearhart Comprehensive Plan or like in 2017, when our citizens overwhelmingly voted in favor of continuing common-sense vacation rental regulations, designed to keep Gearhart the quiet residential community we all know and love. These choices have continued the quality of life we all enjoy as full-time or part-time residents.

We are now undergoing a new public process to help determine a suitable location for a new Emergency Response and Resiliency Station to replace an aging fire station that was built more than 60 years ago. This is not an easy undertaking. While the majority of folks living in Gearhart may agree we need a new station, there are many questions we need to answer to get to the finish line — such as “how are we going to pay for a new station?” and “what location will serve the day-to-day needs of our community the best while providing emergency infrastructure and resiliency?”

These are not easy questions, but ones we can answer if we cooperate with one another and listen to other points of view. Luckily, once again, this is going to be a public decision. In order to build a new station, it will have to go to a public vote, but even before we get to that point we are teaming up with every full-time and part time resident to help choose the right location. This three-month intensive public feedback process allows each resident to fill out an important questionnaire to give their



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

The Gearhart fire station.

feedback on their favorite location and how they think the community should pay for it.

All of the updated information is available on the Gearhart city website, including a video of our Jan. 29 informational town hall where we presented the public need for a new station and new information on emergency preparedness and the current threats posed by a Cascadia earthquake and tsunamis.

This public process is about education as well. Residents and neighbors are getting together with folks who may have missed the town hall or have questions on the quickest and safest evacuation routes and how Gearhart can be resilient and sustainable in the midst of all types of emergencies. The education process is very important, as it's a nat-

ural human reaction to attack information that might be contrary to what we thought we knew or what we may be afraid of.

Sometimes fear and misinformation can lead to cynicism, fake news on social media, or a reluctance to prepare ourselves and our families properly for a natural disaster. But once again, our citizens are rising to the occasion and are getting the correct information out, so residents can make choices based on facts that give us all the best chance to survive a tsunami-level event.

The feedback process will continue through April 29 and the results will be published in a public report that will be presented to the City Council. So far, I've heard from many of our residents, who have given valuable feedback that will help the council understand the

needs of our community and how a new station can be designed and located to benefit the entire population.

We have always been lucky in Gearhart to have an amazing volunteer fire department that is certified and trained to deal with all types of emergencies, from fires to medical emergencies to natural disasters. A new station would be a great tool for our community, and in addition to our brave volunteers, give us continued peace of mind that we will be safe and protected.

I couldn't be more excited to begin this public process with all of you. As always, I have faith that you will make the right decision for Gearhart.

Matt Brown grew up in Gearhart. He served for seven years on the Planning Commission and was elected mayor in 2016.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Worried about Port

I am worried about the public's tax dollars being spent recklessly by the Port of Astoria. Last year the Port spent \$2,300 for a staff Christmas party, and \$840 for a tenant appreciation party. If the Port is in such dire straits, why couldn't this money be used for fixing the bathrooms in the Chinook Building? Instead, they have to use an outhouse in the winter, with no running water.

The Port of Astoria Commission has a treasurer to oversee these kinds of things. Who authorizes these parties with taxpayer dollars? I've seen the vouchers paid by the Port to verify these numbers. Why did the executive director give away \$1.5 million in free money to help fix failing infrastructure without first going to the commission?

I have seen monthly vouchers where the port manager gets a mileage reimbursement for \$999, \$846 and \$413. This is just the three months I looked at. The one for \$999, at approximately 50 cents a mile, the director would have had to have traveled 500 miles per week in his car. Who is taking care of the Port?

WILLIAM HUNSINGER
Port of Astoria commissioner
Astoria

Take democracy seriously

North Carolina will hold a do-over election to determine the federal representative for its Ninth Congressional District. What? Do it again? Yes. Why? Because the law was broken, and when the law is broken, the right thing to do is do it over, the right way. Why? It shows North Carolina takes democracy seriously, and it restores the peoples' confidence in the electoral process.

The U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, backed up by Vladimir Putin's admission, has concluded that Russia “meddled” in our 2016 presidential election. U.S. election law forbids foreign intervention.

May I propose two logical, radical remedies?

In the Olympic games, when the winner is found to have benefitted from illegal means, the winner is disqualified, and the first-place medal is awarded to the second-place finisher, no matter how many years have elapsed. It happens frequently. It seems logical, simple and fair.

The second proposal would be to hold the election over. Same candidates, different candidates, whatever. Radical, uncharted waters. Yes, but either remedy would not only help restore confidence in the electoral process, but would show the world how seriously we take democracy. To those who say, “that's crazy,” I say, “why not?” — North Carolina did it.

All of this begs the question: Who poured courage in the North Carolina drinking water? If you did it, step forward and please, please pour the rest of it in the federal drinking water. It's never too late.

Mama always said, “watch out for them law-breakin' critters.”
CARL DOMINEY
Astoria

Gearhart fire station

Property owners and Gearhart citizens: On Jan. 29, the city of Gearhart held a town hall meeting about our fire and police station, the Emergency Response and Resiliency Station. If you were not able to make it to the meeting, it is all online to watch. Please go to city-of-gearhart.com, Click on “Community,” then “New fire station.” There is a video, and a list of facts that may help answer any questions you may have. There is also a questionnaire to fill out.

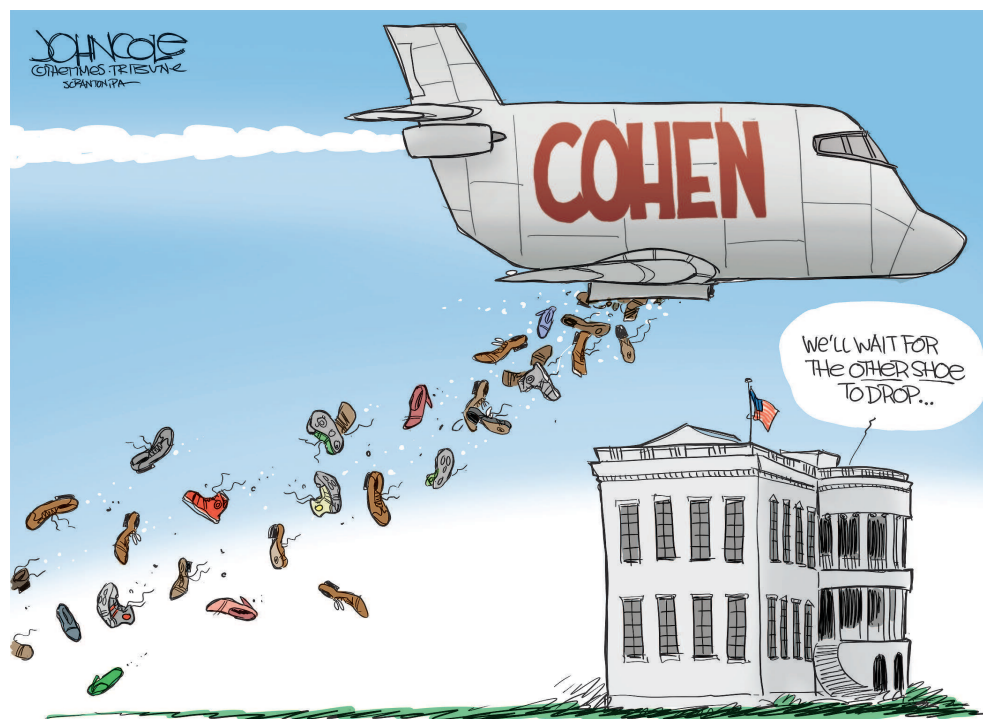
It is very important for all homeowners and citizens of Gearhart to fill out the questionnaire and get it to the city by April 29. If you have the time, stop by and say “hi” to our volunteers and ask questions, if you have any. Almost all volunteers have regular jobs, but when in need they go to fires, car wrecks, medical calls, etc., and even help out after storms or any emergency. They are a great bunch of guys and gals.

THOMAS THIES
Gearhart

Nuclear radiation

To die by nuclear radiation is despairing, excruciating, painfully slow. It is worse than being boiled in oil, because there you get cooked in a matter of hours, not weeks or months.

I have seen the video interview of a Navy man, the last of the people on the ship to survive. He had lost all of his appendages, yes all. He was down to a



scared head and trunk. He had lost his ears, eyes, nose, arms, legs, and yes his male organs. He could talk, undoubtedly on pain meds. He acknowledged that his ship had been assigned the duty of photographing, taking a moving picture, of a test atomic bombing of an island off on the horizon. Little did the military know about nuclear radiation.

Madame Curie died of radiation poisoning, which is the reason I didn't further pursue nuclear physics/chemistry. Nuclear radiation is incompatible with life as we know it. We already have Hanford, etc. Some of the radioactive byproducts have half-lives of hundreds of years. That means that only half of it decomposes in that half-life. So we are looking at hundreds and hundreds of years of exposure to life-threatening radiation not even visible to us.

President Donald Trump is lightly discarding the nuclear weapons ban treaty we have with Russia? If they are not in compliance, then economically sanction, sanction, sanction them. President Ronald Reagan sure pushed back against Russia. And, these bloody Russian viral nerve killing agents are in violation of another international agreement.

MONICA TAYLOR
Astoria

Frustrated with ODFW

I am writing this letter out of frustration about the Oregon Department of

Fish & Wildlife. Normally I put my trust into those who are elected or hired into positions to make laws and regulations, figuring that they are better qualified and educated than myself. But when it comes to the ODFW lately, this does not seem to be the case.

Everyone I talk to is extremely frustrated with the mismanagement of fish and wildlife in our state. Let's start with the Columbia River endorsement fee. This is an additional \$12 charged to anyone fishing the Columbia River that was supposed to be used to, after three years, buy out the gillnet permits on the main stem of the Columbia.

As a tradeoff, the sports fisherman were forced to fish with barbless hooks and forfeit fishing near Youngs Bay. After three years and \$12 each from 400,000 sport anglers, nothing has changed. I'd like to know where that money went, and continues to go. This sounds like fraud. This money should be being used to beef up hatchery production, and bring more fish returning to our river.

Instead of using our license fees to better our fish and wildlife, the ODFW instead wastes tons of money on creating new websites and ridiculous ideas such as cellphone license and tags that nobody agrees with.

If you are frustrated like me please call, email, or write ODFW and our state representatives. Sportsmen are the greatest conservationists. We deserve better resource management.

STEVE HONAN
Gearhart