

# the Astorian

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## DRIPPING WITH SUCCESS



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Josh Gizdavich feels the material of a high-quality wetsuit and recalls how far the technology has come since he opened his shop, Cleanline Surf, in 1980.

## Local surf shop finds profit in online wetsuit market

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

**S**EASIDE — Josh Gizdavich, who started Cleanline Surf in 1980, remembers his first online sale in the mid-1990s after starting a website — a pair of sunglasses to a customer from Norway. “I remember my friend asking me, ‘Are you sure this is legal?’” he said.

Cleanline now makes half its sales online, becoming one of the largest national retailers of wetsuits.

A Seaside native, Gizdavich grew up surfing in the always-cold waters of the North Pacific Ocean. Getting gear was possible, he said, but took a lot of phone calls and waiting. He started selling surfboards out of his house and, once he’d moved 10 or 12, decided it was time to start a shop with his friend, Jack Molan, who’d been selling wetsuits out of his house.

The two opened Cleanline Surf 39 years ago in the former doctor’s offices of Gizdavich’s father, one of the region’s last town phy-

sicians. Molan later left the company to work full time as a fisherman.

Gizdavich recalls starting his shop with only six wetsuits in varying sizes. Customers could try them on, but had to wait for weeks while he ordered theirs.

It took at least five years before Gizdavich, a former chef, felt confident he could make it financially by solely running Cleanline. He slowly built up his inventory, turning offices into storerooms, and kept steadily growing, opening a second shop in Cannon Beach in 1994. In 1999, he started selling wetsuits online.

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One of Gizdavich’s first wetsuits hangs in the corner of Cleanline Surf.

**‘SURFERS WANT TO BUY FROM SURFERS, AND THEY WANT TO SUPPORT A SURF SHOP. ALL THE GUYS THAT ANSWER THE PHONE ARE SURFERS THAT KNOW THE PRODUCT, AND THEY’RE STOKED ON IT.’**

Matt Gabriel | leads the e-commerce business at Cleanline Surf

## Grocery Outlet vote gets delayed

Developers want more time to respond to pushback

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Astorian*

A vote on whether to allow a Grocery Outlet in Astoria has been delayed until September.

On Thursday night, an attorney representing the developers behind the discount grocery store asked the Design Review Committee for a continuance of a public hearing on the project.

Developers hope to build the one-story, 16,000-square-foot store on property off Marine Drive near the Mill Pond neighborhood and the new Astoria Co+op.

The store is a permitted outright use of the property and city planning staff has recommended approval. But the triangular lot where Grocery Outlet wants to build could be tricky to develop to all of the city’s design standards, according to a staff report.

The project received pushback from people concerned about how the new store might exacerbate traffic flow and create a potentially dangerous turn out of the store’s parking lot. Some on the Design Review Committee also questioned if the city’s design criteria could be met at the site.

With written testimony still landing on Thursday and people testifying publicly at the hearing, Michael Robinson, an attorney with Schwabe, Williamson and Wyatt, said he wanted a fair chance to respond to people’s concerns.

The hearing will resume on Sept. 5.

Many of the people who spoke against the project Thursday said they did not oppose a Grocery Outlet, but believed the property — the former home to NAPA Auto Parts and TP Freight — is the wrong location.

Jan Faber, a resident, complimented the developers on their willingness to cooperate with the city and change aspects of the building’s materials and design elements.

“But the one thing I don’t think they can mitigate ... is the traffic,” he said. He questioned the supposed ease of using Marine Drive to enter and exit the parking lot, saying that people who live in Astoria know it is not easy at all.

The Design Review Committee evaluates a narrow scope of criteria and traffic is not one of the items on the list. The committee can look at access to the site and building and parking lot orientation, however.

If Grocery Outlet’s application is approved, city engineering staff and the state Department of Transportation will need to sign off on the proposed access driveways.

### Co-op concerns

Among the comments Grocery Outlet hopes to respond to by September are

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## Port holds off on collecting ship fees

Agency expects a legal challenge

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

The Port of Astoria charged 117 ships coming up the Columbia River in July a \$300 fee for harbor maintenance, but is holding back on collection while awaiting a likely legal challenge.

Earlier this year, the Port Commission voted to charge each oceangoing ship over 250 feet long passing Astoria upriver \$300 to pay

for the maintenance of Pier 1. The agency argues the pier, where the Coast Guard has periodically sent ships with mechanical problems, serves as an emergency pullout.

Will Isom, the Port’s interim executive director, said the agency is trying to expedite a likely lawsuit and hold the money in a protected account in case the Port loses in court.

“While this thing likely heads toward federal court, we’re going to proceed with the billing,” he said. “But how do we protect those funds?”

The Columbia River Steamship Operators’ Association, a group representing oceangoing vessels, has voiced its opposition, arguing that the Port’s fee will set a precedent for others along the

river, causing economic calamity. The commission of the Port of Longview, Washington, recently voted to oppose the fee and sent a letter accusing the Port of taking advantage of collaborative investments upriver.

“Ports upriver of Astoria have invested tens of millions of dollars to deepen and maintain the channel and provide infrastructure within the river to attract cargo to our ports,” the letter said. “Now that upriver ports are realizing the benefits of their combined efforts, Astoria is seeking to capitalize on the financial investments of partner ports and impose unnecessary and cumbersome fees on our customers.”

Michael Haglund, a maritime attorney contracted by the Port,



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The Port of Astoria charged 117 ships heading up the Columbia River in July a \$300 fee for harbor maintenance.

has argued the fee is legitimate. He referenced a U.S. Supreme Court case in which the Alabama State Docks Commission was allowed to charge passing ships near Mobile a

fee for policing.

The Port hopes to have a legal decision on the validity of its harbor maintenance fee within six months, Isom said.

