

IN BRIEF

Warrenton, Gearhart voters approve tax options for fire districts

Voters in Warrenton and Gearhart on Tuesday approved five-year local tax options for rural fire protection districts.

The Warrenton option would raise a maximum of \$280,000 over five years for the fire district. The estimated tax rate is \$0.51 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in the first year.

The ballot measure was approved 68% to 32%.

The Gearhart option would raise an estimated \$135,000 to \$152,000 a year for the fire district. The tax rate is \$0.33 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The ballot measure was approved 58% to 42%.

Columbia Memorial to open Seaside clinic in January

SEASIDE — A Columbia Memorial Hospital primary care and urgent care clinic at the Seaside Outlet Mall could open on Jan. 6.

The new clinic will follow the model of Columbia Memorial's Warrenton clinic, offering primary care, urgent care, X-rays and labs.

Erik Thorsen, Columbia Memorial's CEO, told the City Council he anticipates 25 to 30 new full-time family wage jobs will open up through the clinic.

Columbia Memorial has a 10-year collaboration with Oregon Health & Science University, which provides cardiology, emergency, urology and general surgery care.

Lower Columbia Hispanic Council hires new executive director

The Lower Columbia Hispanic Council has hired Jenny Pool Radway as the new executive director.

Pool Radway moved from Denver, Colorado, where she founded and directed Diverse Communities LLC, which designed and implemented programs for international and national organizations to encourage inclusion and address systemic and institutional inequity.

She replaces Jorge Gutierrez, who resigned in July.

— *The Astorian*

Ocean Beach Hospital resolves survey issues

ILWACO, Wash. — A regular audit of Ocean Beach Hospital revealed problems with hospital documentation, equipment use and staff training.

The audit, completed by the state's Department of Health in March, resulted in the loss of the hospital's chemotherapy services. Other findings have since required hospital leadership to update its policies.

"We don't look at this process as punitive. We look at it as educational," said Larry Cohen, the hospital's CEO. "The surveyors are very helpful."

The state surveys Ocean Beach Hospital roughly every 18 months. The March survey lists 22 deficiencies.

The hospital was required to submit a correction plan to address the deficiencies. None of the deficiencies put patients in immediate risk, said Jessica Baggett, the Department of Health's external communications supervisor.

— *Chinook Observer*



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Astoria City Council granted a new hearing for the developer hoping to build a Grocery Outlet.

Grocery Outlet gets a new hearing

Appeal will go before City Council

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The Astoria City Council granted a new hearing for the developer hoping to build a Grocery Outlet.

The city's Design Review Commission unanimously denied the store near the Mill Pond neighborhood last month, citing issues with access from Marine Drive and challenges it would pose for pedestrians. Michael Robinson, an attorney for the developer, appealed the denial, arguing it did not reasonably explain how the project could be approved.

City Manager Brett Estes recommended at a City Council meeting on Monday that a new hearing is the best way to allow for fresh public input. The other option is an on-the-record hearing, during which the council would review existing materials but not take new input.

Main & Main Capital

Group wants to develop a new location for the national grocery chain on a triangle-shaped lot where Commercial Street runs into Marine Drive. The site is just west of the new Astoria Co-op grocery store slated to open in December.

The developer can submit a revised site plan in a new hearing, which the council could send back to the Design Review Commission for a new recommendation. The 120-day appeal period on the Grocery Outlet project lasts until Jan. 23, but the developer has stated they would extend the appeal another two months to provide enough time, Estes said.

The only recent on-the-record hearing by the council was for a final appeal of the Design Review Commission's second denial of a Marriott-brand Fairfield Inn & Suites hotel franchise. The final hearing came after the council had already sent a revised design back to the Design Review Commission, providing exhaustive chances for public input before ultimately approving the proposed hotel.

Estes and City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard also recommended providing a new hearing because of an ex parte contact — meaning one-sided and outside the hearing process — by Commissioner Sarah Jane Bardy that was not disclosed until after the Oct. 3 public hearing on the store and could have been used as a basis for appeal.

Bardy commented after the closure of the public hearing on issues she had with the cookie-cutter design similar to other Grocery Outlets, noting some online research she did. That research should have been declared during the hearing as an ex parte contact, Estes said. Allowing Bardy's comments in a new hearing would cure the procedural issue, he said.

Bardy said she didn't realize her Google searches were considered ex parte contacts, or that she necessarily agrees, but that she would have noted the research beforehand if she had known. Her research into other similar-looking Grocery

Outlet stores stemmed from the developer's claims that their building was tailored to the local aesthetic, she said.

Mayor Bruce Jones disallowed public comment during the decision Monday on what type of hearing to hold, citing numerous attempts at ex parte contacts with the City Council.

Aside from any procedural issues, Jones said, he preferred the new hearing as the best way to allow adequate public input. City Councilor Roger Rocka said it seems fair that a new plan would be heard anew by the Design Review Commission.

Bardy recently resigned from the Design Review Commission, citing time constraints and saying it was a good time to step down with no active projects before the body.

Jones appointed Dulcye Taylor, the owner of Old Town Framing Co., to replace her. Taylor is also a former president of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association and ran unsuccessfully for mayor last year.

DEATHS

Nov. 2, 2019

COMINS, Norma Yvonne, 81, of Astoria, died in Portland. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the

arrangements.

GARBER, Nadine Gladys, 81, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Tuesday, Nov. 12

MALCOLM, Ned Irwin and Geraldine Jean (Haines) — Joint celebration of life at 1 p.m., Seaside United Methodist Church, 241 N. Holladay Drive in Seaside.

Memorial canceled

HAGNAS, Carl Axel — Memorial and open house at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 350 Niagara Ave., originally scheduled for Saturday, has been canceled.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

• William Edward Gonzalez III, 21, of Seattle, was arrested Wednesday on U.S. Highway 101 and Perkins Lane for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Northwest Oregon Housing Authority, 10 a.m., 147 S. Main Ave., Warrenton.
Clatsop County Board

of Commissioners,

12:30 p.m., work session, 800 Exchange St., Astoria.
Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Cowlitz County blasts state over methanol plant permit

Project at the Port of Kalama

By KATIE FAIRBANKS
The Daily News

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Cowlitz County officials blasted the state Department of Ecology for holding the proposed \$2 billion Kalama methanol refinery to a higher standard than other projects and for asking for information the agency has already been given.

"I also find it troubling that the level of review now superimposed on this project is inconsistent with how Ecology has addressed greenhouse gas mitigation within other, recent projects with Ecology," Elaine Placido, the county's community services director, said in the letter sent to Ecology on Monday.

The letter is a response to an October request from the Department of Ecology for more information about the plant's potential impact on global climate change before the agency makes a make-or-break decision on a shoreline permit for the project. Placido said she is "disappointed" by the demands for more information, saying

it sometimes exceeds what state environmental rules require or consists of information that already has been provided to the agency.

Northwest Innovation Works wants to build the plant at the Port of Kalama to convert natural gas into methanol for shipment to China for use in plastics manufacturing.

The Department of Ecology asked for specific details on Northwest Innovation's proposed plan to offset the project's in-state greenhouse gas emissions and an analysis of the project's global and in-state greenhouse gas emissions.

The offset plans were included in an environmental impact study released in August, but the department wanted more details. In her letter, Placido wrote that the county and the department had agreed to would work out further details once the shorelines permit process was completed.

In October, the Department of Ecology also asked the company to further explain the environmental study's conclusion that the plant would displace coal-based methanol facilities. The department additionally requested an analysis of the

affects of using methanol as a fuel, something opponents to the project have voiced concerns about.

Kent Caputo, Northwest Innovation Works general counsel, said there has been "confusion," but the company has been consistent about the intended use of methanol for plastic manufacturing.

Placido said the August study already addresses the Department of Ecology's concerns. "This ...raises concerns whether Ecology undertook a thorough and adequate review of the information provided by the county before tendering its (Oct. 9) letter," Placido wrote.

The county is the review agency for the methanol project and has twice approved a shorelines permit for the project. The Department of Ecology now has to either affirm that decision, reject it or approve it with conditions.

Once Ecology reviews the information and if it finds the application complete, it will notify the applicants, said Jeff Zenk, Ecology spokesman. The department will then have 30 days to make a decision.

Northwest Innovation

Works first proposed the project in 2014, pitching it as a way to combat global climate change by displacing coal-based methanol production in China. The August report on the plant's greenhouse emissions said the project would cause a net annual net reduction global greenhouse gas emissions of 13 million tons. That's about 12% of the carbon produced annually by all the cars, factories and other sources in Washington state.

Columbia Riverkeeper said in a statement Monday the plant would lock the state into decades of fossil fuel use when the state is trying to move toward clean energy. It claims the August study, conducted by a consultant, is based on outdated information.

"For five years, NWIW has tried to deceive the public and regulatory agencies about the purpose and impact of building the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery on the shores of the Columbia River. Washington's Department of Ecology has repeatedly asked for basic information, and NWIW has once again refused to provide a complete, thorough response."

the Astorian

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