

Skipanon: Area has become an emergent location for housing, commercial development

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director. “So that’s going to be where the streets are going to go, where the open space and parks are going to be, trails, the different types of land uses, whether it’s different types of housing, commercial.”

The area has become an emergent location for housing and commercial development. To the south of the Kujala property, Johnson was approved to build Eagle’s Landing. Directly east, developer Jason Palmberg has proposed a 30-acre campground and RV park he said could share access and

utilities with the Kujala property. Farther east, the City Commission approved Chelsea Gardens, a high-density mix of commercial and residential development between Ocean Crest Chevrolet and Home Depot.

The Kujala property, platted with streets and various-sized lots but pockmarked by wetlands, spans from Highway 104 north to nearly Seventh Street, abutted to the north and east by the Palmberg property. Seventh Street runs from Galena Avenue, where the Kujalas own property and their company Skipanon Brand Seafood, west to the

Eighth Street Dam, which is in the process of being abandoned as the Skipanon Water Control District dissolves.

The city, water district and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce had approached a \$1.2 million agreement several years ago to replace the graveled, earthen dam with a single-lane bridge. Bonneville Power Administration would have funded the replacement as part of its obligation to improve fish passage along the lower Columbia River. Both the Kujalas and Palmbergs argued for a wider, two-lane bridge over the river to aid in the growth of

the city.

The agreement dissolved over differences about whether the dam is still useful for flood control.

The Kujalas, who declined to comment, have so far been noncommittal about what type of development could come in on their property, Cronin said. A large swath has already been cleared of brush, filled and graded.

“I think what they’re going to do is wait until the last minute based on what the market is telling them what’s the most profitable and what’s going to sell,” Cronin said.

Grocery Outlet: Access on Marine Drive was a factor

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west toward a curve of Marine Drive, its back to 23rd Street and the Astoria Co+op’s new store.

The Design Review Commission last year denied Main & Main’s application, arguing it did not meet pedestrian-oriented or historical design standards. A main issue was the store’s direct access on Marine Drive, forcing pedestrians to cross a driveway.

Main & Main appealed to the City Council, but councilors had the same concerns over the company’s ability to make such

a large store meet city standards on such a constrained lot.

“I like Grocery Outlet a lot,” City Councilor Joan Herman said. “They have a great business model, and I’d love to see them in Astoria. But as presented, the plans ... in my opinion do not fit within our development codes. And from where I sit, we don’t have a choice but to follow the development code.”

Representatives from Main & Main were not immediately available for comment. They can appeal the City Council’s decision to the state Land Use Board of Appeals.

Spa: Closure also sparked criticism on social media

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result in a substantial loss of income for all spa therapists. This new pay structure was scheduled to go into effect on Sunday,” the former employees said in an email. Spa therapists “respectfully declined” the proposed pay structure and requested that their wages remain the same. They stated they were willing to continue to work at their current rate during the negotiation process. They said they received no response to the letter.

“The night before the new pay structure was to go into effect, all spa employees received the notification of the spa’s immediate closure and termination of employment, leaving 13 employees and their dependents without income,” the former employees said.

The massage therapists said they were told by management they would be given their client contact information to continue serving them at another location. However, they said they have learned that the hotel is referring clients to other local businesses.

”Spa staff, some of whom have been with the Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa since it opened 14 years ago, are still in shock and saddened for their clients who were left without their scheduled appointments and much needed therapies, many of whom rely on these treatments for chronic health issues and injury recovery; as well as for the clients that were left without services on Valentine’s Day weekend,” former employees said.

The closure also sparked criticism on social media.

“After the architect and owner Jake (Jacob) passed away this hotel was sold to a corporation. A corporation that fired the entire spa staff with zero notice or apology. Disgusting. We will never come back and



Former Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa employees walk to the hotel Monday to pick up their last paychecks.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian



Spa services at Cannery Pier Hotel closed.

I will steer tourists elsewhere. What a terrible way to do business in a small

town,” Kirsten Norgaard, the owner of Kit’s Apothecary in Astoria, wrote

Sunday in a review on the hotel’s Facebook page.

“A lot of us feel like the

spirit of the Cannery Pier is getting lost,” said Cameron Wagner, a former employee for the spa.

Vesta Hospitality purchased the hotel last year from the estate of late founder Robert “Jake” Jacob, who died in 2018.

Vesta announced on Wednesday that the Cannery Pier is planning a multimillion-dollar renovation, which the company expects to complete by the end of the year. The renovation includes upgrades to the spa, lobby, rooms, kitchen and the addition of a full bar.

The hotel and spa will remain open throughout the renovation, but spa treatments have been suspended.

West said he believes Vesta Hospitality will help the hotel.

“The hotel as it was, had

gotten to a place where if we were going to move forward, we needed help from a corporation like this that has a lot of support to move the dial forward. So, yeah, I can understand why some people think we’re losing the charm, but they really don’t want to lose that charm. They want to enhance it as much as they can,” he said.

“These are good people and I think they’ll be good partners for the community and good partners for the staff going forward. I’ve been here 14 years and I’ve worked for a lot of people over the years, and I couldn’t be happier with the transition that’s happened. Is that going to be great for everybody? Obviously not. It hurt me to have to do this, but it was a necessary thing to do.”

Forum: Senator described as an iconoclast

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life of Neuberger in a chapter for a book he is authoring with four other writers called, “Eminent Oregonians: Five Who Matter.” The book will be published next year.

Forrester spoke about Neuberger during a Columbia Forum talk Tuesday night at the Baked Alaska Nekst Event annex in Astoria. He described the late senator as an iconoclast, a prodigy and one of the most consequential Oregonians of the first half of the 20th century.

Neuberger was born in Portland in 1912 to Jewish immigrants. As a writer, he reported on national and world events that marked the first half of the century. As a politician, Forrester said Neuberger “gave the Oregon Democratic Party a voice.”

“He was also precocious,” he said. “He did not hesitate — in his 20s — to reach out to prominent figures such as Supreme Court justices Felix Frankfurter and Louis

Brandeis.”

Forrester described Neuberger’s writing career as prolific. He wrote for a variety of magazines and newspapers, including Harper’s Magazine, The New York Times Magazine, Collier’s and Frontier Magazine. He also co-authored six books.

Neuberger was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1940 and then the U.S. Senate in 1954.

When he won his seat in the Senate, the Democrats became the majority and Lyndon Johnson became majority leader.

Forrester said Neuberger’s victory helped define Oregon for the rest of the century.

As senator, Neuberger co-authored The Wilderness Act and moved the Highway Beautification Act through the Senate. He also authored the bill that created the Fort Clatsop National Memorial.

Forrester described the relationships that influenced Neuberger’s life, including his relationship with U.S.

Sen. Wayne Morse, which developed into a feud.

“Meeting Morse was the beginning of one of the most complex, stimulating, rewarding but torturous relationships of Dick’s life,” Forrester said.

When Neuberger died in 1960 at the age of 47 from testicular cancer, Forrester said senators across the political spectrum expressed their grief, including U.S. Sen. Richard Russell, the leader of the Southern Bloc and a segregationist.

He said Russell, in his eulogy, said he was not disposed to like Neuberger, but came to respect him and called him a “genuine liberal.”

Forrester read part of the eulogy in which Russell said, “I came to admire him greatly. He was a gentle man and a kindly soul. He was incapable of hate. This man loved all of God’s creatures and all of God’s creation. But, with it all, Mr. President, he had the courage — in things political — of a lion.”

Cap and trade: GOP walked out last year

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suggested opponents seek an amendment to Senate Bill 1530 for pulp and paper mills.

The senator did not publicly identify the legislator who made the suggestion.

“The politics surrounding SB 1530 are deeply disappointing,” Johnson and Witt said in the statement. “The proponents are desperate to pass a bill that will result in no significant environmental gains but will greatly burden the pocketbooks of our constituents.

They said the “thinly veiled attempt to ‘improve’ the bill by holding good union pulp and paper workers hostage is unacceptable.

“If the co-sponsor of the bill thinks we can ‘save’ pulp and paper jobs with an amendment, why wasn’t the fix included in the original bill? Why wouldn’t the co-sponsors

use their superior negotiating position to add the amendment themselves? How disingenuous is it to ask opponents of SB 1530 to beg for their constituents’ jobs?”

“The only way to save pulp and paper mills and Oregon manufacturing is to stop the politicking and get serious about a carbon reduction policy that doesn’t annex our state into California ... where there are no pulp mills thanks to the cap-and-trade program.”

The cap-and-trade bill is intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. The state would establish a cap on emissions that would decline over time. Industry would have to acquire allowances for emissions that could be bought and sold at market.

Witt said he plans to introduce an amendment calling for the creation of a state commission that

would review proposals to reduce carbon emissions and award grants, similar to the Connect Oregon infrastructure grant program.

Witt, who doesn’t see much support for his proposal, said it would incentivize carbon reduction, while “our state would not be involved in creating a security exchange commission, the likes of which are scary enough to make me want to hide under my bed.”

Republicans have vowed to stop cap and trade, arguing it will damage the state’s economy. On Tuesday, House Republicans disrupted an evening session by leaving in protest because they said their members needed more time to consider contentious bills.

Last year, Senate Republicans walked out, denying the Senate a quorum to take action on bills.