

IN BRIEF

Park district to seek two-month middle school purchase extension

SEASIDE — After public comment and a 90-minute closed executive session, Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District board members authorized executive director Skyler Archibald to seek a two-month extension before purchase of Broadway Middle School from the Seaside School District.

The extension request at Tuesday's park district board meeting came after directors received emails, letters and comments from critics of the purchase, including more than 30 people in the Facebook group "Transparency for SEPRD Taxpayers."

"Please stop the speeding train and do some research before the SEPRD makes a huge decision that could have a very negative impact on our community," Margene Ridout, a former park district board member, said.

The project was rushed, lacked public scrutiny and comes with potentially high remediation costs, said Tita Montero, administrator of the Facebook group.

Montero, a City Council member, said she was speaking as a private citizen.

She questioned if the park district has funds to remediate the 71-year-old building or operating capital to make loan payments.

"No matter where the money comes from, the taxpayers are ultimately holding the bag," Montero said.

She proposed a community-based task force to determine park district needs.

"My vision is community conversations rather than confrontations," Montero said. "My vision is that SEPRD plays well with the community."

New Gearhart Elementary School owners to keep fields open to public

GEARHART — The new owners of Gearhart Elementary School have responded to calls to keep playing fields open to residents.

After meeting with Mayor-elect Paulina Cockrum and City Administrator Chad Sweet, Robert Morey, of Scofi Gearhart LLC, announced Thursday he will provide parking and temporary access from both north and south to the more than 3-acre eastern portion of the 8.5-acre site.

The field has historically been available as play fields.

"The western portion of the site will be fenced off while we work to understand building and site conditions and the goals of the broader Gearhart community," Morey said.

State offers information for people in need

Food, cash and child care assistance is available to Oregonians who need assistance during the state's two-week freeze to combat the coronavirus.

The freeze, intended to stop the rapid spread of the virus across the state, asks people to stay home and places restrictions on businesses, including restaurants and bars.

People who have urgent and ongoing needs for food assistance can visit needfood.oregon.gov. For information about applying for a variety of types of assistance including domestic violence assistance, visit govstatus.egov.com/or-dhs-benefits.

People can also access information by dialing 2-1-1 from any phone, texting their zip code to 898211, by emailing help@211info.org, or by visiting 211info.org or Covid19.211info.org

Older adults or people with disabilities can call 1-855-ORE-2372 or visit www.adrcoforegon.org

While many state Department of Human Services offices remain open for essential business, Oregonians are encouraged to apply for help online, by email or over the phone, or to call before coming in. Often an in-person visit is not required to get assistance.

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

Nov. 15, 2020
CAPPS, Eva Elvera "Vera," 90, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

UHL, Gerald Lee, 58, of Kelso, Washington, formerly of Clatsop County, died in Kelso. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 4 p.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., (electronic meeting).

TUESDAY

Astoria Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Knappa School District Board, 5:30 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

A RURAL CHECKUP



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

TOP: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan visits Columbia Memorial Hospital. ABOVE: From left, Chris Laman, director of pharmacy and oncology services at Columbia Memorial; Erik Thorsen, the CEO of the hospital; and Eric Hargan, the deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, stand in the lobby of the CMH-OHSU Knight Cancer Collaborative before a tour of the center.



LEFT: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan, left, elbow bumps with Dr. Pehr Hartvigson, the director of oncology services at Columbia Memorial Hospital, during a tour of the CMH-OHSU Knight Cancer Collaborative on Monday. Hargan visited Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria and Providence Seaside Hospital leading up to National Rural Health Day on Thursday. RIGHT: Chris Laman, left, gives U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan a tour of the CMH-OHSU Knight Cancer Collaborative.

Dungeness crab season delayed until mid-December

The Astorian

Oregon's commercial Dungeness crab season will be delayed until at least Dec. 16, fishery managers announced Friday.

Testing in November revealed crabs remain too low in meat yield. The delay will allow crabs to fill out with more meat, according to fishery managers.

A second round of testing is scheduled to occur after Thanksgiving. The results will determine if the fishery will be further delayed. The coast could be split into areas with different opening dates as well.

In September, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife had eased certain aspects of the fishery, including meat yield requirements in some areas, in an effort to get boats on the water as early in the season as possible to avoid the chances of commercial gear tangling with passing whales.

The commercial fishery traditionally begins Dec. 1, but has been delayed in recent years for everything from price negotiations to high levels of the marine toxin domoic acid.

So far, domoic acid levels remain at safe levels, according to the state. But those in the industry have worried about what prices could look like this season



Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

Low meat yield prompts delay in Dungeness crab season.

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because of the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the last season.

Industry advocates say it is not clear how much crab may be sitting in cold storage, which could depress buying going into this

season.

The commercial Dungeness fishery is Oregon's most valuable. Despite a delayed opening in 2019, the fishery still brought in the second highest ex-vessel value ever — \$72.7 million

— and fishermen landed just under 20 million pounds of crab, about 12% over the 10-year average.

The recreational Dungeness fishery is set to open Dec. 1 as scheduled in all areas.

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