

Relay: ‘This is all subject to change’

Continued from Page A1

teams. A new event, the 130-mile Portland to Coast Challenge Relay, leaving from the Tilikum Crossing Bridge in Portland, is open to 70 teams.

Still, the race series needs approval from all 35 governing bodies along the route, Floyd said. “Therefore, our neighbors and the communities that host the event will have to permit the event first,” he said.

In March 2018, Seaside and Hood to Coast inked a new contract, starting at \$25,000 and increasing 5% a year through 2022, when Hood to Coast will pay the city more than \$30,000.

The 2019 relay brought 19,000 runners and walkers to Seaside, and another 3,000 volunteers. Organizers estimated between 40,000 and 60,000 participants, specta-



Hood to Coast Race Series

Runners at the starting line of the Hood to Coast Relay.

tors, family and friends.

The event delivered more than \$900,000 to the Providence Cancer Institute.

Last year’s Hood to Coast was a casualty of the pandemic, which also led to the cancellation of the Seaside Beach Volleyball Tournament, the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program and

the Fourth of July fireworks show.

The Hood to Coast and Portland to Coast relays will come with social distancing in place, face coverings and contactless team check-in, among other safety measures.

“Relay events are innately socially distanced, as only one member of a relay team

participates at any given time,” Floyd said.

Runners will cross the finish line at the beach in Seaside as in years past. Afterward, however, activities have been curtailed, Seaside Chamber of Commerce CEO Brian Owen said.

“As for the beer garden, I do not believe we will be able to have this feature,” he said. “We hope that the event attendees who would generally stay for the runners’ party will instead stay and visit our restaurants and bars, creating mini runners’ parties meeting all current regulations.”

“Right now, we intend to hold the ‘finish’ in Seaside, but not a ‘finish party,’” Floyd said. “We are not going to encourage large gatherings by having a band, fenced areas, or in-person dining. This is all subject to change, but for now, game on!”

Annex: Likely won’t come anytime soon

Continued from Page A1

“There’s a variety of ways it could be used that we’re looking at, in trying to serve the community in various ways,” he said.

The Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission approved a plan by the church in March to build a 5,000-square-foot annex, including covered parking, a basketball half-court, showers and a kitchen. Gabled to mimic Bethany Free Lutheran, the building’s roof rises to 34 feet and runs east-west.



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Bethany Free Lutheran Church is on 34th Street.

Randy Stemper, who defended against the appeal as project manager for Bethany Free, said the church has gone out of its way to work with neighbors and has met all the city’s criteria. The church looked at moving the annex farther east to avoid blocking views but is restricted by a city sewer easement, he said.

“We’ve proposed multiple different things with the neighborhood to try and make everybody happy,” Stemper said. “But at the end of the day, we have asked to develop the property in what is a compatible use and an outright use to the city of Astoria.”

City councilors commiserated with the Tadei family and acknowledged the gray area created by neighborhood compatibility not being defined in city code. But they backed the landmarks commission’s decision with a 4-1 vote Monday.

“I feel for the neighborhood who disagree with ... the structure itself, the size of it,” City Councilor Joan Herman said. “But for its site right along U.S. (Highway) 30, or very, very close to it, I don’t think it’s incompatible.”

City Councilor Tom

Brownson argued that the historic homes involved in the appeal do not face the proposed annex and thus are not relevant to the design, which is meant to mimic the church.

City Councilor Tom Hilton, who represents Uppertown, was the lone vote in support of the appeal.

“I believe in the historical significance of our community,” Hilton said. “There’s no doubt about that. I think in some way, if this goes through and they do build this building, that in some way they should protect the rights of the neighbors so that Mr. Tadei has a view, and his neighbors have access to their properties.”

The Tadei family has not indicated whether they will appeal the decision to the state Land Use Board of Appeals.

Fundraising

The annex likely won’t come anytime soon, with Bethany Free Lutheran still needing to raise two-thirds of the estimated cost to build it. The church has also put the construction phase on hold until it finds a new pastor to replace Johnson, who is moving to Washington state at the



Some neighbors have opposed the development of the church’s building.

end of April.

Mickey Cereghino, part of Bethany Free Lutheran for seven years and a board member, said church members will eventually vote on whether to construct the annex.

Cereghino is an art teacher at Astoria High School and a coordinator with Young Life, a Christian youth group unaffiliated with the church. He reiterated the difficulty of finding event space and said the annex would help serve youth and other community organizations.

“Our mission is to spread the love and the word of Jesus as far as we can, and as intimately as we can with as many community members and people out there as we’re able to,” he said. “The annex, or the multipurpose building, we just feel it would be a wonderful tool to be able to do that.”

County reports six new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County has reported six new coronavirus cases over the past few days.

On Wednesday, the county reported two cases.

The cases involve a woman in her 20s and a woman in her 70s living in the southern part of the county.

One was hospitalized and the other was recovering at home. The county did not disclose which one was hospitalized.

On Tuesday, the county reported four cases. The cases involve two men in their 20s living in the southern part of the county and a man in his 30s and a man in his 40s living in the northern part of the county.

One was hospitalized for an issue unrelated to the virus, according to the county. The others were recovering at home.

The county has recorded 849 cases since the start of the pandemic. According to the county, 20 were hospitalized and seven have died.

Cemetery: ‘There’s a lot of history up there’

Continued from Page A1

Ocean View, along with the private Greenwood Cemetery established in 1891 near Olney. The Hillside Cemetery fell into disrepair.

Residents spruced up Hillside Cemetery as a park in the 1950s and ‘60s. They installed a wooden sign on 14th and a stone plaque detailing Welch’s donation and the site’s history, albeit under the name Astoria Pioneer Cemetery.

City councilors shared their surprise at the site’s history and supported adding interpretive signage. Mayor Bruce Jones said he’d always heard of Pioneer Cemetery since moving to Astoria in 2011 until several months ago, when someone told him about Hillside. Later research found references of Hillside Cemetery dating back to the 1880s.

City councilors shared their surprise at the site’s history and supported adding interpretive signage. Mayor Bruce Jones said he’d always heard of Pioneer Cemetery since moving to Astoria in 2011 until several months ago, when someone told him about Hillside. Later research found references of Hillside Cemetery dating back to the 1880s.

“It’s a fascinating example of the sort of layers and layers of history in this town, the little mysteries,” Jones said.

Some have raised concerns that the Pioneer Cemetery name also glossed over the nuanced, often violent history between Native Americans and European settlers. It also didn’t encompass the wide demographics John Goodenberger, a local historian and preservationist, said have been identified at the site.

“There were Native Americans there,” he said. “There were Chinese laborers there. There were Scandinavian cannery workers there, et cetera. And so it’s a swath of Astoria’s history.”

College students documented tombstones at Hillside Cemetery, something Goodenberger said has been done several times throughout history and could help track the movement of bodies out of Astoria. They will clean and realign burial markers in the coming weeks. Goodenberger expects the new sign to go up on 14th Street by the end of the college’s spring term in June.

The Astoria Pioneer Cemetery will likely stay put as part of the site’s history, which Goodenberger said could be interpreted in many different ways.

“It could be something like a single sign talking about the cemetery,” he said. “It could be a series of signs like what they did in the Masonic cemetery in Eugene, where you go around and you can read the histories of the people that are lying there.”

“The city has only recognized the fact that there’s a lot of history up there, and lots of folks don’t know it,” he said. “So let’s put it out there for them, so people can appreciate what’s up there.”

Kindergarten: Teachers plan to emphasize outdoor play

Continued from Page A1

demand to be high for next school year.

Kindergarten registration opens April 15. Gohr is not certain yet how many students Astor Elementary will be able to accommodate as state rules about distancing and other pandemic-related measures change weekly, but, in the past, a large kindergarten class could be around 160 students.

Some remote education will likely still be offered since every family has different comfort levels with a return to in-person instruction.

For Gohr and other educators, though, in-person school means they can see their students’ progress.

“It’s really hard when they’re online to see their work and kind of help them through it,” Gohr said.

For the kindergarten students, in-person classes mean they can interact with each other and build social and emotional skills as they learn.

Teachers plan to emphasize outdoor play and the imaginative play, learning and storytelling that can emerge from being outside, Gohr said.

“For a lot of kids it’s

almost foreign,” she said. “They’re used to being inside or on screens and being outside is the new and different thing.”

The school district began the school year online and has only reopened to regular, in-person education in recent months.

Teachers working specifically with younger students have seen a marked improvement as students began a return to classrooms in February. At school board meetings, Gohr and others working with lower grades had often noted the difficulty in reaching and teaching younger students through a computer screen.

Though schools expect to be in a very different place by September, some precautionary measures may still be in place.

Superintendent Craig Hoppes has said he expects mask-wearing, for example, will still be necessary. But the state has already eased certain social distancing requirements, allowing schools to bring back even more students in the final months of this school year.

At the elementary schools, educators have found mask-wearing has not been a problem for students.

Risk: ‘We are going to see more cases’

Continued from Page A1

Clatsop County is one of six counties that will be at moderate risk through April 22. Fourteen counties will be at high risk and 16 will be at lower risk.

Counties with a population of 30,000 or more are evaluated for risk based on virus cases per 100,000 over two weeks and the test positivity rate for the same period.

Counties at moderate risk have a case rate between 50 and 100 per 100,000 people, and may have a test positivity between 5% and 8%.

As of Saturday, Clatsop County had 97 cases per 100,000 over a two-week period. Test positivity was 5.4%.

Capacity for indoor dining at restaurants and bars in counties at moderate risk is 50% or 100 people, whichever is smaller, with an 11 p.m. closing time and a maximum of six people per table. Up to 150 people can dine outdoors. Tables must be limited to eight people.

Gyms, indoor pools, museums, theaters and other entertainment venues can operate at 50% of capacity or

CLATSOP COUNTY HAS STARTED VACCINATING FINAL PRIORITY GROUPS, INCLUDING FRONT-LINE WORKERS AND PEOPLE LIVING IN MULTIGENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS.

100 people total, whichever is smaller. Indoor full-contact sports are prohibited.

Grocery stores, pharmacies, retail shops and shopping malls can operate at 75% of capacity.

Churches can convene at 50% occupancy indoors or 150 people total, whichever is smaller, and 250 people outdoors.

Indoor social gatherings must be limited to eight people from two households in counties at moderate risk. Outdoor gatherings can have 10 people.

Indoor and outdoor visits are allowed at long-term care facilities.

Employers should recommend remote work if able.

The county has recorded 849 virus cases since the pandemic began. According to the county, 20 were hospitalized and seven have died.

Margo Lulich, the coun-

ty’s interim public health director, said the county is going to see more cases.

“And yet we’re being told that we can open up more, people can move about in the community more,” Lulich said during a county Board of Commissioners work session Tuesday. “We’re seeing less people wearing masks. It’s spring break. There’s more people here. It’s fantastic everything’s opening up — schools are meeting more in person, kids are playing sports. So we are going to see more cases.”

“The challenge is if it moves us into that high-risk level, it becomes that much more challenging to shut everything back down again, and move across the spectrum.”

“The message continues to be, even though people are getting vaccinated, even though we’re being told we

can go travel, the reality is there are still infections. And people need to wear their masks and they need to wash their hands and they need to stay home if they’re symptomatic and they need to get tested.”

Brown announced Tuesday that all Oregonians over 16 will be eligible for vaccination on April 19. The Biden administration last month instructed all states to make vaccines available to everyone no later than May 1. The president on Tuesday moved the deadline up to April 19.

Clatsop County has started vaccinating final priority groups, including front-line workers and people living in multigenerational households.

People 16 to 44 with underlying health conditions are also eligible for the vaccine, but the county is only vaccinating people 18 years and older since the Moderna vaccine, which is the one administered at the clinics, has not yet been approved for people under 18.

As of Monday, more than 17,000 vaccine doses have been administered in the county, and about 5,200 people are fully vaccinated.