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CORONAVIRUS



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Astor Elementary School students hold signs and cheer on Astoria High School seniors as they made their first stop of grad walk on Thursday. The seniors graduate Saturday.

A STUDENT SALUTE

Hotelier turns sights to apartments

More than 80 units of housing in Seaside

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Masudur Khan owns five hotels in Seaside — and could build more. But the hotelier is turning his sights to developing two apartment complexes with more than 80 units aimed at stemming a lack of affordable housing.

"I'm excited for the projects," Khan said. "I could build a hotel, but I prefer to do the housing because that's most important for the city at this moment. At this moment, we have enough hotels."

Khan, who serves as chairman of the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association, is considering using some of those apartments for his own employees, engineer Mark Mead said at Tuesday night's Planning



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Looking west at where the proposed River Run apartment complex would stand.

Commission meeting.

"I do know that part of the units will be some of his employees, because he has 100-and-something employees between all the different hotels in Cannon Beach and Seaside area," Mead said.

On S. Holladay Drive, Khan plans to replace four old retail and storage buildings with a three-building, 28-unit complex. The site is located in the city's general

commercial zone. It also contains parking and open space.

Building A will include a small, 875-square-foot office space to be used for management and maintenance of the project, along with a possible small office space to be rented out. The second and third floors will provide four two-bedroom and two one-bedroom apartments.

Building B will provide parking on the ground floor. The second and third floors will provide four one-bedroom apartments.

Building C will provide parking and two one-bedroom ground floor apartments. The second and third floors will provide three one-bedroom apartments.

See Hotelier, Page A6

County urges Gov. Brown to drop vaccine requirement

Commissioners call it a burden on businesses

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners has called on Gov. Kate Brown to end a policy requiring businesses and churches to verify coronavirus vaccination status before allowing people to take off their masks.

In a letter to the governor on Thursday, commissioners said the mandate places an unfair responsi-

bility and burden on businesses and churches.

"The notion of a 'vaccine passport' is not included in the federal guidance," the letter said. "Requiring this type of validation process creates risk, liability and expense to businesses and churches. Placing the burden of verification on businesses and churches already reeling from the devastating affects of COVID is unreasonable, unnecessary and prone to conflict."

Major retail groups and political opponents have

See Vaccines, Page A6

Cannon Beach public works director facing ethics probe

Two complaints against La Bonte

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — An ethics complaint alleges Karen La Bonte, the city's public works director, may have violated state conflict of interest laws after the city hired a company she co-owns to make signs during the coronavirus pandemic.

A second complaint alleges La Bonte also inappropriately disposed of surplus city property.

La Bonte declined to comment when contacted by The Astorian. City Manager Bruce St. Denis described the complaints as part

of a campaign of harassment.

"There is a concerted, ugly effort to harass and discredit Karen La Bonte and the city by implying (with no proof, only allegations) that bad things are going on in the town and nothing is being done about it," St. Denis wrote in a letter to the City Council outlining the situation.

A preliminary review by state investigators for the Oregon Government Ethics Commission found La Bonte may have violated several of the state's conflict of interest provisions after the city hired the sign company she co-owns with her husband for two different jobs last year.

See Probe, Page A6

State, adult foster home provider reach settlement

Agreement reached just before trial

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The state Department of Human Services and KC Care LLC have reached a settlement to resolve a dispute over abuse and neglect findings at foster homes for people with developmental disabilities.

The state substantiated reports of abuse and neglect at KC Care foster homes and moved to revoke the provider's licenses. KC Care, based in Seaside, challenged the state's findings.

The settlement was disclosed just before a trial was set to begin in Clatsop County Circuit Court in late May.

According to Sherryl Hoar, a spokeswoman for the Department of Human Services, Ken Biamont, the registered agent for KC Care, is resigning.

Cravalynn Weber, Biamont's partner, will take over the corporation and will be licensed subject to passing a background check, Hoar said.

Hoar said Weber will not apply for or be licensed for any adult foster home or provide services to anyone in foster care funded through the state Office of Developmental Disabilities Services for five years.

KC Care does not currently operate any foster homes, according to the state, but is licensed to provide community living supports.

"The Office of Developmental

Disabilities Services licenses and monitors programs supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to ensure the safety of each person in the program," Hoar said in an email. "We can confirm that we reached an agreement on terms for a settlement that will protect people with I/DD who receive services from KC Care."

Biamont and his attorney could not be reached for comment.

In court filings, Biamont's attorneys had denied the state's abuse and neglect findings and

See Settlement, Page A6



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