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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Clatsop County may place a moratorium on new vacation rental licenses while commissioners review revisions to the rules.

County weighs moratorium on vacation rental licenses

Review centers on South County

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Clatsop County commissioners have unanimously supported a six-month moratorium on new vacation rental licenses while the county reviews two ordinances that regulate short-term rentals.

The move comes after months of conversations and discussions on proposed revisions to the rules.

Commissioners agreed during a work session in April to pause work on the revisions after strife in Cove Beach and Arch Cape.

During a work session in early June, the board agreed a moratorium was the best way to move forward while the county looks at ways to revise and possibly consolidate the ordinances.

The moratorium is expected to begin in September and the review process could be completed by February. The county has scheduled two town hall meetings in July to get public input on the moratorium.

“What we would like to have as the goal for any revisions that we do end up making is developing a better balance between the quality-of-life concerns and the impacts that short-term rentals can have on a residential neighborhood,” Gail Henrikson, the county’s community development director, said. “But also recognizing that there are investments that short-term rental owners have made, and trying to find a better balance between the two.”

Both ordinances are similar, but one is specific to Arch Cape, while the other covers the remaining unincorporated parts of the county. The key differences deal with parking and length-of-stay requirements.

The Arch Cape ordinance requires a minimum seven-night stay, and only one reservation is allowed during a seven-day period. Street parking is not allowed. There is no limit or minimum stay requirement for other unincorporated areas, and street parking is allowed.

There are more than 200 vacation rental permits in the unincorporated parts of the county. Of those, more than 50% are located in Cove Beach and Arch Cape. Clatsop



Vacation rentals have caused divisions in communities such as Arch Cape and Cove Beach.

Plains also makes up a large share.

Host Compliance, a company that provides vacation rental monitoring and enforcement services, found that the median nightly rental rate for vacation rentals in the unincorporated parts of the county is \$277. More than 75% were for single-family homes. The others were for a single room or portions of a home.

A housing study conducted by the county in 2019 found that while there is technically an oversupply of housing, much of the housing is eaten up by vacation rentals and second homeowners.

The situation is most pronounced in beach communities in the southern part of the county.

Commissioner Lianne Thompson, who represents South County, said she wants the board to set a collaborative tone as the process rolls ahead.

Thompson, who has lived in Cove Beach since the late 1990s, said she has had concerns about vacation rentals for nearly two decades.

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County to remain at lower risk for virus

Coronavirus case counts continue to fall

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Clatsop County will remain at lower risk for the coronavirus as virus case counts continue to fall.

Gov. Kate Brown announced Tuesday that more counties will move into lower risk as the state nears its goal of administering at least one dose of vaccine to 70% of adults.

“Oregon is so close to more fully reopening our economy, and I am grateful to everyone who has stepped up to get vaccinated,” the governor said in a statement. “We will soon need to reach fewer than 100,000 Oregonians to achieve our statewide vaccination goal of 70% and lift the county risk level framework.”

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Astoria police seek community feedback

City to hire an outreach officer

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Amid national conversations about the role of police, the Astoria Police Department is looking to the community for feedback and will add a community outreach officer to its roster.

The new part-time position — focused on community interaction rather than enforcement — is one the department has been interested in adding for a while. It is one of several other new positions included in a city budget the City Council approved Tuesday that are intended to relieve pressure on key city departments.

The survey is in response to the social

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Constance Rouda gives a speech to the Astoria graduating class.

At graduation, student revives mascot debate

Rouda believes ‘Fishermen’ is not inclusive

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Constance Rouda, minutes away from receiving her high school diploma, stepped to the podium at CMH Field on Saturday, adjusted the microphone and used her valedictorian speech to make a final argument to change Astoria’s “Fishermen” mascot.

“Change does not have to be intimidating, it can be exciting,” the senior began.

Astoria High School sports teams have been known as the Fishermen or the Fighting Fishermen for 100 years. Last year, Rouda argued that the name is not inclusive and that the unofficial nickname given

to the girls teams, the “Lady Fish,” is problematic.

She proposed dropping the Lady Fish nickname and changing the official mascot from Fishermen to a more gender-neutral name. Friends had suggested “Fish” or “Mariner.” Rouda wanted it to be a schoolwide and community discussion.

But the effort stalled after a presentation to the high school leadership class last fall. The class, which includes a mix of students across grade levels, was split in its support. Principal Lynn Jackson estimated that as many as 80% of the leadership students who took a survey following Rouda’s presentation were either very much opposed to a change or indifferent.

The coronavirus pandemic and limits on social gatherings hampered the school district from holding a broader school and community discussion, something Jackson and district leaders felt needed to happen before any decision could be made.

So Rouda turned to the biggest social, school-related gathering the school district would hold all year: graduation day.

She was a little nervous. She had been warned by her counselor that the speech may not be received well by some. But she also thought the theme of change made sense for a

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