

Seaside eyes moratorium on vacation rentals

City concerned rentals drive up housing costs

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — A moratorium on vacation rental permits could be ahead in Seaside, with the aim to study their impact on affordable housing and city infrastructure.

“One of the discussion items that we’ve been having is, do we have too many vacation rentals?” Mayor Jay Barber said. “Do we need to consider putting a cap on them or do we need to consider a moratorium on them?”

The City Council and Planning Commission met Monday to discuss city zoning policies regarding vacation rentals and updating the city’s comprehensive plan.

Seaside has 316 vacation rental business licenses and 28 vacation rental applications pending approval, code enforcement officer Jeff Flory said.

Since Jan. 1, the planning department has received 73 land use applications. Of those, 57.5% are for short-term rentals, including 32 vacation rentals, seven rental condos and three bed-and-breakfasts.

Overall, there are 411 short-term rental units active and pending, Flory said.

Applications are supported for properties located west of Neawanna Street on the city’s north end, west of N. Holladay Drive and S. Holladay Drive and west of S. Roosevelt Drive. The locations where vacation rental applications are not supported are dominated by full-time residential homes.

The Planning Commission will not support the approval of a vacation rental conditional use permit application if more than 40% of the surrounding properties within 100 feet of an applicant’s property are licensed as vacation rentals.

“When it comes to the spatial distribution, what is it doing in the current real estate market as a house comes for sale?” Flory said. “Is it affecting the sale

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Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The housing crunch and other factors have caused some students to experience homelessness.

In Warrenton, homelessness casts a shadow on school district

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

WARRENTON — While the coronavirus pandemic brought many obstacles for students and school administrators, the Warrenton-Hammond School District also struggled with a familiar challenge: students facing homelessness.

In the Oregon Department of Education’s annual report card for the 2020-2021 school year, Warrenton had the sixth-highest share of students experiencing homelessness in the state at just over 15%.

“It’s definitely the metric that our district thinks a lot about. It is the one that jumps out in the county,” Warrenton Superintendent Tom Rogozinski said.

The school district accounted for 150 of the 267 students in Clatsop

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCOUNTED FOR 150 OF THE 267 STUDENTS IN CLATSOP COUNTY DESIGNATED AS HOMELESS LAST SCHOOL YEAR.

County designated as homeless last school year.

Although the overall number of students facing homelessness has steadily declined since 2016 — and took the biggest drop this past year — Warrenton’s ranking among the top has been a constant.

The school metric captures the housing instability that many families

in the region face.

Under the Department of Education’s criteria, students designated as experiencing homelessness can be in a number of different living situations. The state defines a student experiencing homelessness as lacking “a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” This could mean the student is unsheltered or staying in an emergency shelter, but also covers transitional housing, shared housing due to the loss of housing or economic hardship and living in a motel, tent or trailer.

“It’s generally not those who are living under the bridge ... as much as they are very itinerant, they are very unstable and they go through a number of addresses within a given school year,” Rogozinski said.

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GEARHART

Como named fire chief

Strong family ties to fire department

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

GEARHART — Josh Como is the city’s new fire chief.

On Wednesday, the City Council unanimously voted to name Como chief, replacing Bill Eddy, who retired earlier this year. Como, a second-generation Gearhart firefighter, has served as interim chief.

“I honestly feel that everything I’ve done my whole life has led me to this point,” Como said. “I was raised here. This is my hometown. I’ve been in the fire service for 25 years, whether that’s here or in larger departments. When I was away, this was the one place I missed the most. I kind of believe I have Gearhart Fire running through my veins.”

The City Council and a panel from the community conducted an interview for the position at a special council meeting last month.

The city received 15 applications before nar-



James Hutchinson

Josh Como is the new fire chief in Gearhart.

rowing the pool to the five top candidates. Of the five, four dropped out; one withdrew, one relocated and the remaining two took other positions. The position pays between \$75,000 and \$85,000 per year.

Como’s first experiences with the fire department came when he was 6. There was a period of time when there were four Comos serving with the fire department, Josh, Randy Sr., Randy Jr. and younger brother, Tony.

“I was always under their eye, making sure I don’t mess up,” Como said. “You often see them in sports. The coach’s son is often benched and his performance must be much better.”

At 23, Como moved to the family farm community in Wallowa County, where he joined the fire department. While there, he gained knowledge and experience from much larger departments.

He became a youth pastor and received a master’s in leadership and administration through George Fox University.

In Montana, he met his wife, Trissa. They have four children, Tanner, Jayden, Brighton and Elianna.

Returning to Gearhart, Como became a paid member of the fire department, serving as training officer and captain.

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A rendering of the proposed Jordan Cove LNG terminal in Coos Bay.

Battle over Jordan Cove LNG project is over

Developers pull plug on \$10 billion project

By LIAM MORIARTY
Jefferson Public Radio

The bitter and protracted battle over the Jordan Cove Energy Project has finally come to a close.

The Calgary-based Pembina company formally asked federal energy regulators Wednesday to withdraw authorizations for the proposed pipeline and liquefied natural gas export terminal in southwest Oregon.

Pembina’s plan called for a 229-mile-long natural gas pipeline that would have run from Malin, on the California border, over the Coast Range to Coos Bay. The gas would then have been super-cooled into a

liquefied form, loaded onto ships and exported to Asia.

The \$10 billion proposal raised concerns about environmental impacts to waterways and wildlife habitat. It was also expected to become the largest single emitter of greenhouse gasses in Oregon.

Jordan Cove was given a key permit in March 2020 by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which included the right of eminent domain. That would have allowed the company to force property owners along the pipeline route to sell land to Pembina. But proceeding with construction under that authorization was contingent on Jordan Cove obtaining required permissions from the state.

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