



INSIDE

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CANNON BEACH

Food tax survives recount

New tally shows a one-vote shift to 'yes'

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — A recount has not changed the outcome for a food tax meant to raise money for city infrastructure and emergency services.

The tax continued to pass by only a handful of votes following a recount Wednesday morning by Clatsop County elections officials in Astoria. The final vote on the controversial measure stands at 380 to 374 — a one-vote shift to “yes” from the last count. Certification of the recount now goes to the Oregon Secretary of State’s Office.

Patrick Nofield, who owns Escape Lodging in Cannon Beach and asked for the recount, said he was disappointed. But, he added, “I think the main thing is not to be reactive. I think we just need to sit down and figure out what it is.”

The tax proposal divided the community. With such a close margin after election night in November, Nofield felt a recount was justified.

He remains concerned about an incident where city officials opened a ballot drop box in front of City Hall in October. City Manager Bruce St. Denis has defended the action, saying people had shoved several ballots into the side of the box and city staff wanted to make sure the ballots were protected from the rain. He and Karen LaBonte, the city’s public works director, unlocked the box and put the ballots inside.

County elections staff say St. Denis and LaBonte did not violate any rules.

“They did not break any laws and they are under oath,” County Clerk Tracie Krevanko said. Granted, she added, it probably wasn’t a wise decision on their part given the controversy around the tax.

The incident continues to trouble some in Cannon Beach, including Nofield.

At a City Council meeting Tuesday night, several people voiced their concerns about the opening of the ballot drop

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SALUTE

TOP: A salute is given after the laying of the wreath by World War II veteran John Sefren in Seaside on Tuesday as people remember the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

RIGHT: Members of the American Legion Post 99 hold the American flag at the Necanicum River in Seaside during a remembrance of Pearl Harbor.

Photos by R.J. Marx/
The Astorian



Safety concerns cause schools to cancel classes

Seaside, Ilwaco respond to incidents

By R.J. MARX and BRANDON CLINE
The Astorian and Chinook Observer

Two local school districts canceled classes this week as precautions after threats and misbehavior involving students.

School administrators suspended all classes in the Seaside School District on Tuesday after a possible threat was sent to a Seaside High School student over social

‘(PRE-PANDEMIC), YOU COULD DEESCALATE SITUATIONS AND YOU COULD BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN GROUPS. THAT’S JUST NOT HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.’

Amy Huntley | Ocean Beach School District superintendent

media. Police later determined it was not a credible, localized threat.

Ilwaco High School closed on Wednesday to address concerns over an unusually high number of incidents of misbehavior

among students.

Schools across the country are on edge after a mass shooting at a high school in Oxford, Michigan, in late November left four students

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Infill on commissioner’s lot causing headaches

Newton faces a potential fine

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

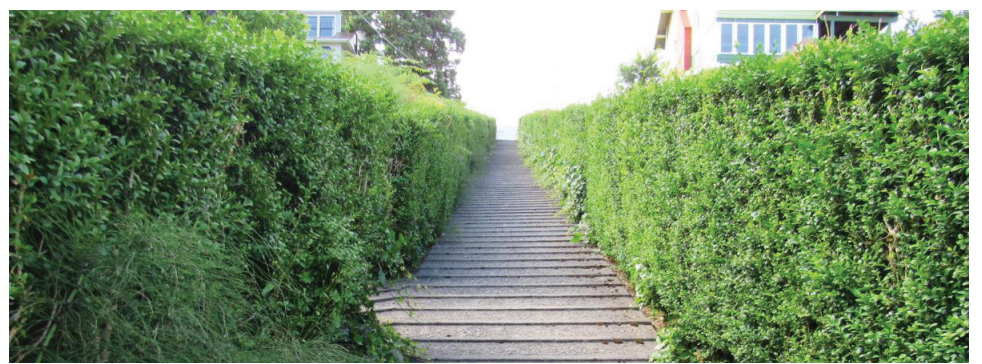
WARRENTON — A property owned by City Commissioner Rick New-

ton was flagged by the city after he accepted infill from a city-approved construction project.

During the summer, Big River Construction removed the infill — a mixture of materials — from a road reconstruction project on S.W. Alder Avenue, and after communicating with Newton, dumped it at his property on First Avenue. Newton and his girlfriend, co-owner Patty Cardinaletti, had planned to

build housing units on the lot. “There was some confusion on what the material was actually supposed to be,” Scott Hazelton, the city’s planning director, said. “It was interpreted by the building official that it was going to be gravel only — that it was going to be waste rock on the property — and not the mud, silt, sand, everything that is there now.”

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The 11th Streets stairs are ‘pigeon steps’ — shallow, narrow steps set on the city’s hilly sidewalks.

Homeowner told to remove structures at 11th Street stairs

O’Neel did work without a permit

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

A homeowner who built part of a fence and deck on city property at the top of the 11th Street stairs without a permit will need to take it all down.

Billie O’Neel said she wanted to keep deer out of her garden at her Jerome Avenue house, create a level place for her husband to walk and cover an unsightly retaining wall that belongs to the city. But she built into a public green space and a city right of way to do it — taking advantage, O’Neel said, of good weather and

the sudden availability of workers and supplies.

After the fact, in an attempt to bring the work into compliance with city code, O’Neel submitted a request to use the public property next door.

But city staff noted multiple issues with what O’Neel had built and recommended that city leaders deny her request. O’Neel decided to take the matter to the City Council. At a meeting Monday night, the council agreed with staff and denied her application.

The city will work with O’Neel on a reasonable timeline to remove the portions of the fence, deck and an arbor that intrude on city property and setbacks, according to City Engineer Nathan Crater.

The city is also investigating other code violations associated with O’Neel’s work on her property.

“I’m really sorry this has come to this impasse,” City Councilor Joan Herman told O’Neel, “but it would not have happened if the proper permits had been sought to begin with.”

O’Neel, an Arkansas resident, has been renovating the house in preparation for a move to Astoria. Herman was sympathetic to O’Neel’s efforts to improve her home and said she understood working within the city’s codes could be frustrating, but she and other city councilors bristled at O’Neel’s characterization of interactions with

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