

Food tax: City expects to begin collecting the tax in July

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“There were, we felt, too many issues with how the election was handled, including the collection of ballots and the opening of the ballot box in Cannon Beach, for us not to pursue legal action,” she said.

Measure 4-210 was approved in a 380 to 374 vote.

The legal challenge alleges a ballot drop box at City Hall was improperly and prematurely opened and that ballots from a drop box in Seaside were improperly rejected.

Some votes, the challenge said, were not properly counted or counted at all. The election results are also invalid in “other ways to be revealed,” the court filing said.

Clatsop County declined to comment.

Miller and Tuckman were among the many restaurant owners who opposed the ballot measure ahead of the election.

Patrick Nofield, the owner of Escape Lodging in Cannon Beach, requested the recount. Nofield and others raised concerns about an incident where city officials opened a ballot drop box in front of City Hall in October.

Questions were also



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Many restaurants in Cannon Beach opposed a food tax.

raised about ballots turned in at a drop box in Seaside not being counted.

City Manager Bruce St. Denis has defended the opening of the drop box in front of City Hall. He said 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 said St. Denis and LaBonte

did not violate any rules.

Meanwhile, Seaside’s drop box was not considered an official drop-off location.

Krevanko picked up two ballots in the Seaside drop box after the election, but they were considered too late to count and never opened.

Opponents of the 5% tax on prepared food worry it could negatively impact businesses still recovering from the coronavirus pandemic. Proponents say it is a way to get visitors to pay their share and raise reve-

nue for city infrastructure and emergency services burdened by tourism.

The tax is estimated to generate \$1.7 million annually, which the city will split with the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District.

The city will use its portion to help fund a new City Hall and police station, while the fire district plans to use its share for operations as calls for emergency service continue to rise.

The city expects to begin collecting the tax in July.

Fireworks: Ban would likely not stop the activity

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Illegal fireworks are considered anything that flies in the air, explodes or behaves in an uncontrolled manner. Legal fireworks like wheels, sparklers and fountains are sold in Seaside once a year, before the Fourth of July.

“I recognize that if we were to pass an ordinance to outlaw the sale here, they simply will move to the outskirts of the city and the county,” Mayor Jay Barber said. “We won’t get rid of it all together. But I’m wondering if the council is open to considering a step toward trying to send a message that we’re wanting to move toward a more and more peaceful Fourth of July?”

The discussion arose after complaints from the community about the noise from fireworks and the impact on veterans and pets.

A proponent of the ban, Cathey Ryan, said fireworks made her home “sound like a war zone on July Fourth. Unfortunately, this bombardment of sound went on

for over five hours.”

At a July meeting, Police Chief Dave Ham said the police department had 19 fireworks-related calls on Independence Day, although he recognized there were many more fireworks illegally discharged. A fireworks ban would likely not stop the activity, Fire Chief Joey Daniels said.

Banning fireworks on the beach would also depend on the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the

state fire marshal’s office, Daniels said.

Fireworks are not allowed in national parks and forests, on federal Bureau of Land Management lands, on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service properties, on Oregon Department of Forestry protected lands, on state beaches, or in state parks and campgrounds.

City Councilor Tita Montero, a proponent of a ban, said it was important to take a stand.

“If we’re feeling helpless about illegal fireworks, there has to be a place to start,” she said. “And banning the sale of legal fireworks within our city is making a statement that we really don’t want fireworks.”

Montero and Barber voted for a proposed ban. Phillips, Councilor Steve Wright, Councilor Tom Horning and Councilor Randy Frank voted against. Councilor David Posalski was absent.

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Port: ‘It’s been a very slow process’

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Forest Products terminated the lease in 2020 as log exports dried up during a U.S. trade war with China and the company later dissolved.

After seeking bids for repairing the damaged asphalt surfaces, the Port estimates that it would cost over \$241,000 to fix Pier 1 and over \$835,000 to fix Pier 3.

Initially, the Port had been working with representatives at Astoria Forest Products to solve the issue, but both parties’ legal teams eventually got involved, Isom said at a Port Commission workshop on Tuesday.

“It’s been a very slow process,” he said.

Representatives for Murphy Overseas USA could not immediately be reached for comment.

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