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COUNTY SEEKS BIDS AT NORTH COAST BUSINESS PARK



Clatsop County is trying to develop 130 acres at the North Coast Business Park.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Another push to develop the long-vacant property in Warrenton

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

WARRENTON — Clatsop County is moving forward to develop the North Coast Business Park.

Through Cushman & Wakefield, a commercial real estate firm, the county has issued a request for proposals, asking developers to pitch a concept plan for 130 acres of the site located near Costco and close to U.S. Highway 101.

Developers have until March 17 to respond.

In the document, the county said it is seeking general industrial development, including light, heavy and airport-related industrial activities.

While the county has experienced steady population growth and significant residential development, it “still lacks key industrial services and

jobs,” the document said.

The county hopes a public-private partnership can enhance livability through economic development and job creation.

“With approximately 500 additional households slated to be built over the next five years, the NCBP is a prime industrial location within the county that can continue to support growth on the North Oregon Coast with easy access to the highway,” the document said.

The property has been a source of frustration for years as the county has grappled with what to do with the land. There have even been discussions around disposing of the property.

When the county gained ownership of the site in 1991, the goal was to sell a portion of the land and use the proceeds for infrastructure improvements on the rest.

But over the years, it has sat empty.

A development feasibility report, completed by a Portland consulting firm last year, detailed development constraints, including city water, pump station and wastewater limitations and substantial wetlands.

A data center and technology incubator was the last significant project proposed for the business park in 2018, but a purchase agreement fell apart in 2019 after months of extensions.

More recently, the property was identified as a potential site to relocate the county’s public works facility, which the county ultimately decided against. The county has said it has a desire to get the property back on the tax rolls.

“During all of that, we continued to look at our options as far as marketing

See Business park, Page A6

Stormy weather causes turmoil

Heavy rain triggered flooding and landslides

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

Heavy rain caused flooding and landslides across the North Coast, prompting Warrenton to declare an emergency and schools to close.

In Warrenton, Mayor Henry Balensifer declared an emergency due to an overwhelmed stormwater system that caused widespread flooding.

“We have searched for additional resources within our local partners to try and get some of this flooding dealt with. We are not yet at high tide and water is continuing to pour down and will — the forecast has been extended into Friday,” Balensifer said on a Facebook Live video Thursday. “As a result, to safeguard property and life and safety, we are going to declare an emergency and request additional state resources.”

City crews covered manholes with tarps, plastic and sand bags, Balensifer said, and the city encouraged residents to not open or use sewer manholes or at-home sewer cleanouts for drainage purposes, as the system cannot handle any more inflow.

See Weather, Page A6

Virus spreads rapidly in county

Dozens of new cases over the past several days

By ETHAN MYERS
and GARY WARNER
The Astorian and Oregon Capital Bureau

The coronavirus spread rapidly across Clatsop County over the past several days as Oregon broke state records for new daily infections.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 45 new virus cases for the county on Thursday and 46 new cases on Wednesday. Since the pandemic began, the county had recorded 3,007 virus cases and 36 deaths as of Thursday.

See Virus, Page A6



SEASIDE

Planning Commission sidesteps vacation rental moratorium

Decision left to the City Council

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — A planning commissioner’s effort to show support for a vacation rental moratorium failed to gain support.

Kathy Kleczek, the vice chairwoman of the Planning Commission,

moved that the commission make a formal recommendation to the City Council to declare a moratorium on new conditional use permits for vacation rentals.

“It is basically putting the ball in their court,” she said at a meeting Tuesday. “Since we can’t actually create a moratorium — that’s the City Council’s job — I wanted to officially say, ‘Here you go. We want you to do this.’”

Her motion went without a second.

In late November, the Planning Commission and City Council met in a joint workshop on short-term rentals. Topics included a potential moratorium on conditional use permits for

vacation rentals, designed to give the council time to study the impact of short-term rentals on affordable housing and city infrastructure.

Concerns have been raised about planning ahead for the cost that would be incurred should the city decide to place a moratorium on vacation rentals and study the effects of existing regulations or placing limits.

“We as a Planning Commission appeared to be in agreement following the joint meeting that the current VRD (vacation rental dwelling) vs. long-term rental situation, or housing in general, bears



See Moratorium, Page A6

Seaside is weighing a moratorium on vacation rentals.

VRBO

