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HERITAGE SQUARE

Housing project moves forward

A 4-1 vote by the City Council

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

A proposal for workforce housing at Heritage Square that would include units for people undergoing mental health treatment has advanced.

City councilors, acting as the Astoria Development Commission, voted 4 to 1 Tuesday night to recommend the city enter into an exclusive negotiating agreement with Portland-based developer, Edlen & Co.

Edlen & Co. and Related, another Portland-based developer, pitched their ideas for the downtown block near City Hall after the city requested expressions of interest last fall.

A group of city leaders and stakeholders, appointed by Mayor Bruce Jones, recommended city councilors move forward with the Edlen & Co. proposal after conducting private interviews with the two teams earlier this month.

"I don't see the Heritage Square project being able to solve the full spectrum of housing needs," Jones said. "This is an opportunity for our local government to make a significant dent in the lower end of the workforce housing spectrum, as well

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Port to study tide gate at airport

High water levels a challenge

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

A tide gate that has plagued the Astoria Regional Airport for a number of years will get a closer look by the Port of Astoria thanks to a grant from Business Oregon.

The \$99,600 grant will allow the Port to perform a site assessment and a wetlands delineation, as well as several other tasks, on the Vera Slough tide gate. The Port had been working with Warrenton and Clatsop County to determine how the tide gate could be adjusted, or revamped, in order to lower water levels at the airport in Warrenton.

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People walk along an intertidal zone at Hug Point.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Study finds coastal ecosystem under stress

Weaknesses appear as temperatures rise due to climate change

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

A sign of climate change has gone unseen — and underfoot — on the Oregon Coast.

A recent study from a team of scientists at Oregon State University found that, for at least the past decade, seaweed, barnacles, mussels, anemones and other species that make up the ecosystem on rocky coastlines have weakened as temperatures rise.

"To the untrained eye, you wouldn't actually be able to see this," said Sarah Gravem, a postdoctoral researcher and co-author of the study. "But what it's showing us is that there are symptoms of climate change that are not that apparent, unless you start really experimenting and tracking things in detail over long periods of time."

Between 2011 and 2019, the team monitored several plots in Cape Foulweather, Cape Perpetua and Cape Blanco. They found that natural variation increased, a sign of instability and an indication that an ecosystem may change.

The experimental approach they took brought more startling results, though, in an ecosystem that had previously appeared resistant to stress.

Assuming the role of a hypothetical storm, heat wave or disease, the team cleared another small plot at each site — every year — for nearly a decade. They removed all visible species, including mussels, barnacles and sea stars. Then, they tracked how quickly the site could recover.

Over time, the plots' ability to bounce back slowed, and its variation increased.



Barnacles and mussels cover the rocks of the intertidal zone at Hug Point.

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Sarah Gravem | a postdoctoral researcher and co-author of the study

This showed that in the last decade, the intertidal zones have become less resilient and more vulnerable to disruptive events.

The plots became more vacant over time.

Bruce Menge, the lead author on the study, is particularly concerned with the decline of mussels, which support hundreds of other species. Though their

total disappearance is not imminent, their revealed vulnerability has long-term implications.

"The main appeal of rocky shores to the average person is probably just as a cool place to go and look at really colorful and abundant organisms. That would pretty much disappear. It would

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The Columbian Theater has new owners.

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Popular theater, lounge and cafe changes hands

Astoria Brewing owners take on the Columbian

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

Since buying the Riviera Building in 1997, Uriah Hulsey and Jeanine Fairchild have turned it into an eclectic gathering place for locals, offering everything from homestyle breakfast to a night on the town.

After decades of running the show, the couple has decided to step away.

Hulsey and Fairchild are sell-

ing the downtown complex that includes the Columbian Theater, the Voodoo Room, the Columbian Cafe and the adjacent storefront that was previously Metal Head.

Karen and Stephen Allen, who own the neighboring Astoria Brewing Co. and several other businesses in town, are buying the property.

They plan on keeping the decor and aesthetic, but are considering renaming it after the Riviera Building. If they do, they hope to restore the building's neon sign as shown in century-old photos.

Hulsey's connection to the

building goes back to 1980, when he took over operations for the cafe. Looking back on his time as the owner, he said he is proud to have brought additional jobs and a community space to Astoria.

"Those things were important because Astoria was going through a real hard time in the '80s and we were able to make it through," he said.

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