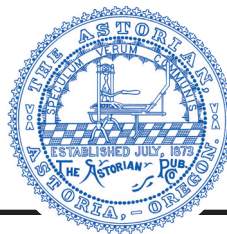


OPINION



the Astorian

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GUEST COLUMN

A regressive step for a progressive community

Prior to 2019, for 25 years, Oregon prohibited the construction of essential facilities such as police and fire stations, schools, medical facilities and jails within the tsunami zones.

This came after the devastating earthquakes and tsunamis in Indonesia and Japan, and detailed studies done in Oregon, including a pioneering effort in Cannon Beach that demonstrated the number and range of tsunamis on the Oregon Coast.

Over the objection of emergency preparedness professionals, committees and scientists, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3309 in 2019. This allows essential facilities to be built in the tsunami zone without restrictions.

The Cannon Beach City Council has apparently decided to build the new \$16 million City Hall at the present location on Gower Street — one of the most vulnerable locations in the city. Gower Street's low elevation invites the full impact of a tsunami to rush eastward, crushing everything in its way. It is also on liquifiable soil, which amplifies the damage to buildings from earthquakes.

There is no way to protect the police station or emergency operations center from the force of this wave at Gower Street. Scientists have determined that 19 out of the last 19 tsunamis generated by magnitude 9 earthquakes over the last 10,000 years have washed over this area with waves of 20 feet or more. That is 100% probability.

By comparison, the Elk Land Drive site has been inundated five times in the last 10,000 years. It's only a little bit higher, but it is far less likely to be inundated.

One idea is to put the police and emergency operations center facilities at the Southwind site, and a smaller administrative office at Elk Land Drive. The separation of administrative and police and fire facilities in different but safer locations is a smart, prudent and resilient strategy. It puts eggs in different baskets, and creates official communication and leadership nodes at the midpoint and south ends of the city.

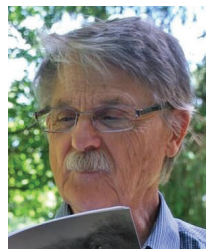


Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Cannon Beach has plans for a new City Hall and police station.



MIKE MORGAN



RAINMAR BARTL



PATRICK CORCORAN



TOM HORNING

We applaud the Seaside School District for their extraordinary effort to keep children safe by building the new school complex above the tsunami zone, as well as the city emergency services departments for the recent deci-

sion to move the emergency center above that level as well.

The City Council may feel that they have a mandate to build a new City Hall at Gower Street. We invite the Cannon Beach City Council to rethink its deci-

sion to build a new City Hall in such a vulnerable location just because they can.

Cannon Beach has a reputation of taking the Cascadia Subduction Zone threat seriously. Rebuilding City Hall at its present location would be a regressive step in a progressive community.

Mike Morgan is a former mayor of Cannon Beach. Rainmar Bartl is a former city planner in Cannon Beach. Patrick Corcoran is a retired Oregon State University coastal hazards educator. Tom Horning is an engineering geologist who serves on the Seaside City Council.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Take exception

Itake exception to comments made by Dixie Gainer regarding Gov. Kate Brown in the letter "Object strongly" (March 3).

Firstly, she objects to the Legislature granting themselves a pay raise, justified by saying they are doing a terrible job. She offers no examples of the "terrible" job the Legislature is doing.

Second, she claims Gov. Brown is doing a terrible job and, yet again, offers no facts to support this claim.

Thirdly, she mentions job, home and business losses due to COVID-19 restrictions, while Oregon has had some of the lowest numbers of cases and deaths. This seems to support the governor's controls.

If we're to have an open discussion in a public forum, facts and data are a basic part of that.

RICHARD McINTOSH
Astoria

Serious thought

As a member of Gearhart's Community Emergency Response Team and a retired physician assistant, one of my operating beliefs is to be as prepared as I am able for emergencies.

Toward that end, I have extra food, a go-bag in my car, medical supplies and have become a ham radio operator. Having done some mountaineering in my younger years, I also realize that a person must rely on themselves first in an emergency. It is only afterward that they can hope for some help from professionals.

We in Gearhart are underprepared for what will most likely be an event of catastrophic proportions. Our present firehouse will probably be rubble, and most certainly be underwater should we have even a medium grade earthquake and tsunami. The equipment will be ruined.

In my mind, this is not being prepared. It is crazy and shortsighted. I would urge all Gearhart residents to give this serious thought. Our city is growing quickly, with many more residents who may require help in the near future.

A new firehouse in a safer location is necessary. Please join me in voting to make this happen.

SHARON KLOEPFER
Gearhart



LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian. Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship. All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month. Letters written in response

to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

Boils down

Regarding the Heritage Square dilemma: I have been diligently following the debate going on in The Astorian for several weeks now, reading many articles and the recent interview of Neal Rotman, housing services manager at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare (Feb. 26).

The debate centers on whether or not Heritage Square is the best site to provide low-cost housing, including a mental health component and limited parking.

I see the arguments from both sides. There is no question additional housing is needed for those making 30% of the area median income and, hopefully, to

reduce the homeless problem.

On the other hand, it will have a negative impact on the Astoria Sunday Market and do nothing to improve the shortage of public parking in downtown Astoria.

From my perspective, it boils down to the fact that Astoria is hemmed in on all sides and has very little buildable land. Surely the community is creative enough to come up with a solution that achieves the most important goals of both sides.

At one point, as I recall, consideration was given to building low-income housing on land along Youngs River. It was rejected because it was thought this would remove the residents from work opportunities or services they needed.

What if residents had free hourly transportation to downtown Astoria? Of course, the cost of providing this service would need to be factored into the overall cost of the project, but that might be reasonable if it helps achieve important goals of both sides.

CAROLYN EADY
Astoria