



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Lawn chairs face Gull Rock in Cove Beach, where vacation rentals are popular.

As moratorium ends, county looks at new rules for vacation rentals

Standards could help ease tensions in neighborhoods

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Clatsop County is evaluating new rules on vacation rentals as a moratorium on permits is set to expire this month.

At a public hearing on Wednesday, county commissioners will consider amending the development code to allow vacation rentals in more than a dozen zones where they are not an explicitly permitted use but where many still operate. The board will also weigh several proposed code revisions that address standards for operating short-term rental units.

Such standards could include requiring property owners to post good-neighbor flyers listing rules around quiet hours, speed limits, parking, litter, trespassing, pets, drones, fires, fireworks and other points of contention, according to the county staff report. Owners would also have to post emergency information about wildfires, tsunamis, landslides and power outages.

The new rules would forbid own-

ers from transferring permits to new owners, who would need fresh permits and unit inspections. Permits would expire after two years instead of five. The number of visitors per unit would be determined by septic capacity, or restricted to two people per sleeping area — up to 14 people total.

A local agent or property representative would be required to respond to complaints, which would be tiered according to severity.

The new standards would exist separately from standards for Arch Cape, an unincorporated community where short-term rentals have been an allowable use since the early 2000s. The board will vote on whether to move the Arch Cape standards from the development code to the county code.

The board meeting comes two weeks before a county moratorium on issuing new short-term rental permits is scheduled to expire.

Pushback

Cities and counties along the Oregon Coast have struggled to balance the growth of tourism with the challenges of regulating short-term rentals that can disrupt residential neighborhoods. The lodging taxes and economic benefits can often be overshadowed by excessive noise, parking problems and trash at rentals of 30 or fewer days.

In the unincorporated areas of Clatsop County in recent years, the proliferation of vacation rentals — a trend intensified by Airbnb and Vrbo — has led to pushback, particularly from residents in South County's Cove Beach neighborhood.

The topic reveals tension between rental owners — some of whom manage units that predate the recent vacation rental explosion — and residents who seek to preserve the quiet spirit of neighborhoods that they fear will be overrun by commercial enterprises.

The pressure to restrict vacation rentals also stems from the county-wide housing crunch. A housing study released in 2019 found that much of the local housing stock is tied up by second homes and short-term rentals.

“The growth of short-term rental activity, made easier by new website and app platforms, is likely exacerbating the perceived housing shortage and lack of affordability,” the report found. “While the Oregon Coast has always had vacation rental activity, these technologies have facilitated the management of vacation housing for income generation.”

In 2018, the county passed an ordinance to handle health and safety concerns, regulating the previously unregulated ventures.

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HOUSING

County offers surplus property

Fifteen parcels are identified

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

In an effort to support new housing and social services, Clatsop County has identified surplus land that can be developed by cities and nonprofits.

The county on Friday issued a request for expressions of interest on 15 properties in Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside that can be used for low-income housing, social services and child care. Parties will have until May 13 to submit their ideas.

“Offering potentially buildable surplus land is one way the county can tangibly support affordable housing needs within cities,” County Manager Don Bohn said in a statement. “We look forward to collaborating with our city and nonprofit partners in an effort to move the needle.”

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Warrenton fills city manager position

Burgener to replace Engbretson in role

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

WARRENTON — Pending contract negotiations, the city will have a new manager.

The City Commission voted unanimously on Friday to offer the position to Ben Burgener, the city manager in Stanfield in Umatilla County. Burgener was announced as a finalist for the role in late March.

“He will bring great energy and ideas to the city and I’m looking forward to working with him to take Warrenton to the next level,” Mayor Henry Balensifer said in a statement.

The city will begin contract negotiations with Burgener and a timeline for his arrival will be announced at a later date.

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Ben Burgener

Longtime salon owner steps away

Her colleague will take the reins

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

WARRENTON — When Cheryl Matson started with Third Dimension Cuts, she and her co-workers were wearing masks. The year was 1980 and the eruption of Mount St. Helens saw many people across the Northwest resort to masks to prevent ingesting ash.

Over four decades later, with



the coronavirus pandemic bringing masks back, Matson figured it was a good indicator that it was time to retire.

“I feel like I’ve come full circle,” she said with a laugh.

Matson never left Third Dimension. After working 12 years with the corporate division, she decided to become an owner within the franchise in the 1990s, eventually taking over the salon at Youngs Bay Plaza in 1999.

Third Dimension has been in

Warrenton for even longer, originally located in Fred Meyer.

Matson is stepping away at the end of April.

Wanting to keep ownership within the business, Matson will look to longtime employee Stephanie Carlson to take the reins.

Carlson spent several years as the receptionist at the salon, and after going to beauty school, she returned to Third Dimension, working as a hair stylist for the past five years.

“It’s really huge to be able to keep the doors open and have everybody feel comfortable that it is going to be the same and continue,” Matson said. “... She has been in it, doing it, feeling it and

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Cheryl Matson, right, is passing along her salon to Stephanie Carlson.

