



»INSIDE

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## Seaside advances homeless camping ordinance

City still needs to identify specific sites

By R.J. MARX  
The Astorian

SEASIDE —The City Council has voted to advance a new ordinance that would map out places where vans or motor homes could be permitted to stay overnight.

The ordinance is designed to protect the safety of all residents — housed and homeless — and regulate the use of public and private property by establishing time, place and manner guidelines for homeless camping.

“While I do not hold myself out as any constitutional lawyer, it seems that this ordinance comports with the two cases, one out of Boise, Idaho, and the other out of Grants Pass,” City Attorney Dan Van Thiel said of court rulings related to homeless camping. “That is not to say that some innovative constitutional attorney cannot challenge this ordinance, but I am of the opinion that it should be implemented.”

See Ordinance, Page A6



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

LiFEBoat Services opened on Commercial Street last year.

## Tensions over homelessness make providing social services difficult downtown

### WARRENTON

## Commissioner again asked to resign

Newton lashes out against mayor

By ETHAN MYERS  
The Astorian

WARRENTON — After lashing out at the mayor, City Commissioner Rick Newton was again advised by several of his fellow commissioners to step down.

Tensions rose at a City Commission meeting Tuesday night after Newton made accusatory remarks toward Mayor Henry Balensifer regarding past issues handled by the commission. The mayor, Commissioner Gerald Poe and Commissioner Mark Baldwin reiterated their concerns about Newton’s actions and asked for his resignation.

The request comes just months after the same three commissioners asked Newton to step down following an infill controversy on his property.

“Wow. I would like to remind all the commissioners, not just one, but all of us, that this is a democracy and we’re all voted to be here ... For somebody to be so much more mighty than everyone

See Commissioner, Page A6

## LiFEBoat Services a focal point

By NICOLE BALES  
The Astorian

As Astoria tries to address quality of life concerns tied to homelessness, tensions between LiFEBoat Services, a social services provider, and several businesses continue to spill over downtown.

LiFEBoat, which opened on Commercial Street last August, is the umbrella organization for Beacon Clubhouse, a members-only center that provides mental health support and other services, and Filling Empty Bellies, a nonprofit that serves meals to anyone in need and connects homeless people with services.

The nonprofit has received frequent complaints and police calls from neighboring businesses and others over people gathering outside, trash left behind and behavioral issues. Many of the critics have taken to social media, posting pictures and videos of homeless people and documenting problematic behavior that has drawn disparaging, angry and sometimes threatening comments.

Over the past several months, LiFEBoat has taken steps to respond to the concerns by enforcing rules, working with police to ban people who cause disturbances, cleaning sidewalks and requiring people to bring their belongings inside while visiting.

Business owners and others have acknowledged the improvement. But

*‘YOU GOT PEOPLE FIGHTING OUTSIDE, YOU GOT PEOPLE SMOKING POT OUTSIDE, YOU GOT PEOPLE SMOKING CIGARETTES RIGHT OUT FRONT. I DON’T FEEL LIKE THAT IS A WARM ENVIRONMENT FOR ANYBODY TO WANT TO WALK INTO WHEN THEY’RE ALREADY DEALING WITH CRISIS.’*

Britney Brim | an employee with Caring for the Coast, a business that provides in-home care for the elderly and disabled

some do not believe the nonprofit should be located downtown.

“I am still wondering why LiFEBoat thinks it is kind to put the suffering and hard times of those they serve on display in the middle of downtown for all to see?” Gretchen Allen, the owner of a tax preparation service downtown, said on the Concerned Businesses/Citizens of downtown Astoria Facebook page. “It seems quite heartless and counter to the privacy and dignity of those they purport to serve? Why do they lie about reality? Is this serving or taking advantage of others for their own gratification?”

### ‘It worries me’

Allen was among a few dozen people who attended a meeting for business leaders on downtown livability last week at Fort George Brewery’s Lovell Showroom, where the location of LiFEBoat was a dominant theme.

The Astoria-Warrenton Area Cham-

ber of Commerce, the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association and Clatsop Economic Development Resources led the discussion in an effort to identify specific challenges and potential steps forward. The meeting was organized after some business owners said they have not felt heard.

Britney Brim, an employee with Caring for the Coast, a business that provides in-home care for the elderly and disabled, said the activity outside of LiFEBoat has affected daily operations. She said she has not been able to effectively communicate with LiFEBoat, so she took her concerns to the city.

“You got people fighting outside, you got people smoking pot outside, you got people smoking cigarettes right out front. I don’t feel like that is a warm environment for anybody to want to walk into when they’re already dealing with crisis,” Brim said.

See Tensions, Page A6



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden spoke at a virtual town hall for residents of Clatsop County on Tuesday from The Astorian’s newsroom.

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

## Wyden talks housing, mental health and salmon

### Oregon Democrat held virtual town hall

By ETHAN MYERS  
The Astorian

In Clatsop County’s stop on U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden’s yearly tour of town halls throughout Oregon, the topics ranged from affordable housing and mental health to fishing and salmon recovery.

The Oregon Democrat noted several investments in the community from federal spending packages, including \$1 million for a waterline project in Hammond and

nearly \$1 million toward establishing virtual intensive care at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria in partnership with Oregon Health & Science University Hospital.

Nancy Ferber, of Astoria, brought up the region’s struggle with a lack of affordable and workforce housing, asking what initiatives and projects the senator has worked on to help respond to the issue.

Wyden pointed to a number of steps, including the Decent, Affordable, Safe Housing For All Act, which seeks to create more housing options for individuals at

various income levels. The act would address the affordability challenge by strengthening the low-income housing tax credit, as well as creating a middle-income housing tax credit.

“At every level, we are trying to extend help — low income, middle income, homeless, busting red tape,” Wyden said at the virtual town hall, which was livestreamed

See Wyden, Page A2

