

Port: Consultant recommended a partnership

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Steve Barkemeyer, a former boatyard manager for the Port who retired last year, criticized the Port for what he described as poor vision and claimed the agency is repeating past mistakes. Barkemeyer recommended the Port buy an 800-ton lift. He said sticking with a smaller lift would reduce the boatyard's potential.

Talk of the Port eyeing a larger boat lift sparked a strong reaction last year from Bob Dorn, the CEO of Hyak Maritime, who is pursuing a 1,500-ton mobile lift at Tongue Point.

"With Dorn ... having that capability up there, I think it's prudent to watch what Bob does for a while before you stick all your apples in a bigger lift, take care of what you have with the (88-ton lift) and make the yard work with what you've got," Shoemaker said.

East Mooring Basin

In September, a portion of the causeway at the East Mooring Basin collapsed into the Columbia River, knocking out power for boats and navigation lights. The span was used by fishermen and other boat owners to access their vessels.

The causeway, which was closed to the public in 2018 due to a severely rotting substructure, served as a reminder of the Port's struggle with deferred maintenance and aging infrastructure. Some materials to fix part of the causeway were purchased in 2019, but layoffs to the maintenance staff during the coronavirus pandemic delayed the repair.

While the debris was pulled out of the water, the defective causeway remains, as funding the remainder of the repair has been a challenge.

The Uppertown basin is in need of other improvements, as well. The infrastructure is not sustainable for the long term, Isom said.

Survey results from BST's study showed that while nearly half of the respondents were poten-



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The Port wants to expand its boatyard on Pier 3.

tially interested in moorage at the basin, many cited the need for more docks, better maintenance and sea lion control. Strong currents and dredging needs also present challenges.

The consultant laid out several options for improvements, including the addition of more floats, but ultimately found that the estimated revenue from the basin would not cover the cost of the project.

"The struggle that we have with (the East Mooring Basin) ... is that coming up with a model that makes sense from the revenue side is really hard to make because the infrastructure costs are so great that it's hard to make it pencil out," Matt McGrath, the Port's deputy director, said. "When we're talking about long-term plans for the East Mooring Basin, if we're going to be looking at the causeway, then really we need to be pushing on the grant side to get near 100% funding to get any of that done."

The consultant recommended that the Port pursue a public or private partnership while potentially exploring other uses in order to help cover the costs of improving the basin.

"It seems to me it's problematic to expect anybody to want to grant us funds for something that can't even pay for itself," Com-

missioner Dirk Rohne said. "I don't know, it seems like some partnership is the only (option) — or sale or dispersal of this asset. If that's what we need to do then that's what we should look at."

Isom cautioned against rushing into a decision.

"Long term, when you look at assets like the East Mooring Basin, I do think that we want to be careful with any decision we make there, especially something that's long term and binding, whether we consider selling off assets or entering into long-term partnerships, we need to make sure that makes sense for the Port, not only now but going into the future," he said.

At a Port finance committee meeting last week, Shane Jensen, the agency's grant consultant, gave an update on the pursuit of funding for the East Mooring Basin.

Through Connect Oregon, the state's funding program for nonhighway transportation projects, the Port was looking for \$8 million to help fund rehabilitation.

The Port missed out on the grant. In a ranking by the final review committee, the Port's project finished 30th out of 49 proposals, with the top 21 receiving funds.

Jensen noted several obstacles for the Port, primarily the lack of jobs cre-

ated by the basin and the high cost.

"In the application, I believe we did a good job of making that case and showing how the East Mooring Basin causeway is a part of a larger economic system — marine ecosystem if you will — that is connected up with the other marinas in the area with retail outlets," Jensen said. "... But when push comes to shove, the actual reconstruction of the causeway doesn't create a lot of jobs. It might, in the end, create one, maybe two jobs. So that was one of the weaknesses of the application."

Hyak Maritime received nearly \$14 million from Connect Oregon to help cover the cost of the lift project at Tongue Point.

While noting the Port's support for the Hyak Maritime project, Isom reiterated his frustrations with the process of pursuing grants in competition with private entities.

"Conceptually, I even take issue with how the process takes place where you have private and public interests competing for the same public grant monies," Isom said. "I think it's a bit of an apples to oranges comparison. To be honest, there are things we may have an advantage in, but there are others that I think the private industry can operate in a different way and chase dollars in ways we just can't."

Astoria distributes grants to organizations

The Astorian

The Astoria City Council on Monday distributed grant funding to more than a dozen organizations.

Each year the arts and cultural subcommittee makes recommendations to the budget committee on how to spend Promote Astoria funds based on applications and available funds. The city allocated \$68,816 for the fiscal year starting July.

The council distributed \$5,000 to the Astoria Arts and Movement Center, \$8,000 to the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association, \$10,000 to the Astor Tenor Guitar Foundation, \$7,500 to Astoria Visual Arts, \$6,000 to Cascadia Chamber Opera and \$5,000

to Ten Fifteen Productions.

The Astoria Regatta Association received \$27,316, which included \$12,316 in prior years funds that were not utilized and returned.

The council also distributed community organization and social services grants of \$80,590.

The council distributed \$5,000 to the Assistance League of the Columbia Pacific, \$10,000 to the Astoria Warming Center, \$10,000 to the Clatsop CASA program, \$15,000 to Clatsop Community Action's food program, \$15,000 to The Harbor, \$4,170 to North Coast Food Web, \$20,000 to the Astoria Senior Center, \$420 to Seaside Hall and \$1,000 to Restoration House Inc.

Astoria crafts waste allocations for breweries

The Astorian

The Astoria City Council approved a resolution Monday night formalizing the level of organic load that fermentation businesses can release into the city's wastewater treatment system.

The resolution is part of an ordinance the council adopted in May that formalized the city's industrial pretreatment program.

The city began working with Fort George Brewery and Buoy Beer Co. — the two largest breweries in the city — about two years ago to develop the program. Over the years, the increased levels of high concentration waste from

the breweries has strained the system.

The program requires all breweries, cideries and distilleries to have industrial discharge permits that set the limits on the sewage the businesses can release into the city's treatment lagoons.

The vast majority of the organic load allocation was reserved for Fort George and Buoy Beer. New breweries will be required to treat wastewater to the level of a residential user before it enters the lagoons.

In the coming weeks, the City Council will review a resolution that will detail a new rate structure that will classify different users based on concentration of wastewater.

Camping: Draft map 'still a work in progress'

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people to go to instead.

In lieu of not having adequate shelter space, jurisdictions can detail the time, place and manner someone can sleep outdoors.

The ordinance allows people to set up temporary camps overnight from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. with bedrolls or sleeping bags, tarps, or small tents.

City Manager Brett Estes said city staff expects to present a final proposal for the place component on July 18. The council would consider a resolution at a future meeting.

The City Council reviewed a draft map in May that showed proposed areas where camping would not be allowed. All other areas would be on the table, with certain exceptions.

"Staff have been working to refine that but it is still a work in progress," Estes said.

The City Council was supportive of excluding

camping in all city parks, city owned and maintained parking lots, public restrooms and primary residential zones. The council may, however, permit camping in certain locations within the excluded areas.

Sidewalks would also be off-limits unless there is enough room to leave 6 feet of space. The council was also in favor of prohibiting camping in doorways and adding buffers around excluded areas.

People would be allowed to sleep in commercial districts, some other publicly owned properties and rights of way.

There are also plans to include a temporary camping program to allow camping on private properties, with owner permission.

Churches, for example, could allow camping in parking lots after notifying the city. Homeowners could allow a tent in their backyard or one vehicle in their driveway.

Library: 'It's a place for people to convene'

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former mayor W.C. Logan's memorial fund. The city will also receive a \$500,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts if the bond is approved.

The City Council on Monday night unanimously supported placing a bond measure on the ballot following a presentation from Patinkin Research Strategies, which conducted a poll of 400 potential voters in May that found 55% would vote in favor of the bond.

Improvements beyond basic upgrades and repairs, such as program and technological enhancements, increased the support to more than 60%.

Mayor Bruce Jones called the poll results promising.

"I've been a strong supporter of this project ever since I first came to council," he said. "I just think that a modern library, not our 1968 library, but a modern library, is just a great thing for community. It's a place for people to convene, hear presentations, to hear music, to study, to do job applications, to do all kinds of learning and tutoring. A library could be a great community gathering space if it has the right amenities and the right functionality. And right now, our library just does not have that functionality."

"We are a great small city and a great small city ought to have a great library. This is an opportunity to do that."

Renovating the Brutalist building on 10th Street has been a City Council goal for years, but plans have been scaled back or scrapped because of cost.

Arline LaMear, a former



Emily Lindblom/The Astorian

The city has long sought to renovate the Astoria Library.

librarian, had made a new library a priority when she was elected mayor in 2014.

One idea was to expand the library into the formerly vacant Waldorf Hotel, but preservationists fought the move. The hotel has since been converted into the Merwyn Apartments.

The city also looked at building a new library at Heritage Square as part of a mixed-use residential and commercial development, but the City Council decided not to move forward.

In 2017, city councilors gave the green light to a renovation, contingent on the library foundation's ability to raise \$3.5 million toward the \$5 million cost. But fundraising efforts were not successful.

When the City Council set its goals in January, councilors unanimously decided to advance the library renovation by a bond measure if there was public support or use the existing funds available for a project.

"If the voters choose not to support the bond for the library, then we'll move forward on the \$2 million renovation using funds in hand,"

Jones said. "But in either case, this council will come to a final resolution and we're not going to punt it to the next council."

During public comment, Cindy Price, a former city councilor who serves on the Planning Commission, said she would like to see the City Council reaffirm the decision to renovate the library with the funds on hand.

Price was part of a 3-2 vote in 2016 against moving forward with a new library and housing project at Heritage Square. She was also a vocal opponent of efforts to build workforce housing with a mental health component at Heritage Square earlier this year.

"I'm just surprised to see this because the council in 2016 and 2017 — the 2017 council included Councilor (Tom) Brownson and Mayor Jones — made it very clear after going into a deep dive of many options that the library will be renovated in place with the money in hand," Price said. "And we gave the library foundation a number of delays for them to continue fundraising. Here it is now, what, five, six

years later, and there's only an additional half-million dollars.

"To me that speaks to the support, both community-wide and the foundation's, for making a larger renovation," she said. "Again, I'm very surprised given the current council's recent emphasis on housing, the need for housing. In fact, this current council — the way it talked about people who were not interested in Heritage Square — as if we were not interested in housing. To go forward this way is really interesting with inflation, that we are now going to be adding money to people's mortgage, which will be passed to renters when we're already in a kind of a desperate situation with housing."

City councilors pushed back on Price's comments.

"The council is always juggling a number of balls, initiatives in the air, and we did have a big push for housing," City Councilor Joan Herman said, noting that the city is collaborating with the county on housing as well as updating city code to encourage more types of housing.

"So I don't see this as either we work on housing or we work on getting the bond measure passed," she said. "They're both equally important. And again, one does not exclude the other."

City Councilor Brownson said that as the council gathers more information and things evolve, "we are capable of changing our minds about what we need to do and how we can go forward."

"It's never been that, 'It's not been a great idea to do it.' It's the 'how.' Well, let's see if the public supports this and gets us there."