



Mary Jo Hutchinson protested the ruling in Astoria.

Alexis Weisend/The Astorian

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\$1.50

Buyer emerges for business park

A \$1.3M deal in Warrenton

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

The North Coast Business Park, a tract in Warrenton long in search of a future, may have found a developer.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday approved the sale of the property to Atlin Investments Inc., a Seattle-based company that developed the nearby Costco site.

The company was the sole responder to a request for proposals that the county floated between January and March.

The sale price of the 130-acre property is \$1.3 million, with an earnest payment of \$60,000. The property is near U.S. Highway 101, just north of S.E. Ensign Lane. S.E. 19th Street cuts through it.

A contingency period of 180 days begins once the sale agreement is signed. Atlin will have six options to extend the contingency period for 90 days. For each extension, Atlin must pay a non-refundable \$10,000, though that will count toward the purchase price once the sale goes through, Monica Steele, the assistant county manager, said.

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Commissioners vote to recognize vacation rentals

Decision formalizes a long-standing use

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners approved an ordinance on Wednesday to recognize vacation rentals as an allowable use in 16 zones in unincorporated areas.

The decision adds vacation rentals to the county's development code, formally accepting a long-standing activity.

The board voted unanimously to hold the second reading of the ordinance, although Commissioner Pamela Wev had earlier voted against holding the first reading.

Recently, Wev had pushed for a tailored approach. Her view aligned with a Planning Commission recommendation to ban vacation rentals in residential zones and permit them in commercial and multifamily residential zones — a move that the county's Department of Assessment and Taxation said

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Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Astoria is looking to make it easier to build multifamily housing.

Facing a state deadline, Astoria looks at code changes to encourage more housing

The changes are intended to reduce barriers to construction

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

The Astoria Planning Commission on Tuesday will review a number of development code amendments designed to remove barriers for new housing construction.

The amendments are in response to changes in state law intended to increase housing affordability and availability across Oregon.

Since Astoria's population tipped over 10,000, the city must comply with rules set for medium-sized cities, which includes allowing duplexes on residential lots that allow single-family homes. The city must also expand opportunities for lot divisions for middle housing, which enables units in duplexes and triplexes to be sold individually.

Astoria has until the end of the year to adopt the changes, otherwise the state code will automatically take effect. The city is also using the opportunity to incorporate recommendations made in Clatsop County's 2019 housing study.

While housing has remained one of the most pressing policy challenges on the North Coast, little progress has been made since the county's study. The city has said allowing more middle housing will not necessarily lead to new construction, citing other cities and states that have made similar changes but have seen few new projects.

Megan Leatherman, Astoria's community development director, said the



Mailboxes are shown for multifamily housing units in Astoria.

amendments incorporate community feedback from stakeholder meetings and four listening sessions the city has held since April.

"I think there's general support for housing, it's just that we don't want the residential character or the general character of Astoria to be impacted by providing more housing options," she said. "And that's possible, it's just that we have to get into the details and weeds to make sure we're applying the standards in a way that maintains the character. And that's what this code is trying to do."

Since there is little space left in Astoria to build, Leatherman said the city looked at how the code could encourage infill.

"More like how can existing homes be retrofitted to accomplish more dwellings, more units?" she said.

Among the code amendments the Planning Commission will review is making multifamily homes, which include three dwellings or more, permitted outright in medium- and high-density residential areas instead of conditional. Duplexes will be allowed everywhere single-family homes are allowed.

Leatherman said there was public support for encouraging cottage clusters, which usually have shared open space. The city is proposing to make the developments permitted outright in residential areas and allow them in neighborhood commercial areas.

Cottage clusters would still have to meet certain standards, but they would be simpler to develop, Leatherman said.

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Newman remembered as an influential chef

Restaurant owner died in car crash

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

John Newman, the owner of Newmans at 988 in Cannon Beach, was remembered by friends and family as an influential chef and mentor with a generous spirit.

Newman, 58, of Pacific City, died in a car crash in Tillamook County. He was driving west on Oregon Highway 130, went off the road and struck a utility pole. His vehicle went into a river near Little Nestucca County Park, according to Oregon State Police. The submerged vehicle was reported on Monday.

Bob Neroni, who owns EVOO,



John Newman, the owner of Newmans at 988, has died.

a recreational cooking school and restaurant in Cannon Beach, with his wife said, "We're all kind of in a mortified, surreal state right now. Just can't believe it."

The Astorian named Newman's fine dining eatery, which served French and Italian cuisine, "Restaurant of the Year" for 2006, the year

the midtown establishment opened. Before that, Newman was the executive chef at the Stephanie Inn in Cannon Beach.

Chris Holen, the chef and owner of Nekst Event and former owner of Baked Alaska in Astoria, called

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Brown appoints Wintermute as Circuit Court judge

Defense attorney to replace Matyas

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

Gov. Kate Brown has appointed Kirk Wintermute, an Astoria defense attorney, as a judge for the Clatsop County Circuit Court.

Wintermute will replace Judge Cindee Matyas, who plans to retire this month after more than 15 years on the bench.

"I'm honored to follow Judge Matyas, and I'm looking forward to a new challenge," he said.

A start date for his judgeship still needs to be determined, he said. He will serve out the

remainder of Matyas' third, six-year term. The next election for the post takes place in 2024.

Wintermute will also need to wind down his practice at Kaino & Wintermute in Astoria.

"Kirk is an excellent lawyer," Judge Dawn McIntosh, the presiding judge of the Circuit Court, said. "He's smart as a whip. He's one of the best defense lawyers we've got. I'm sorry to lose him from that, but he's going to be a great addition to the bench."

McIntosh said that she and fellow Judge Beau Peterson are "both really excited, and I think Cindee was too."

Wintermute is involved in Matyas' mental health treatment



Kirk Wintermute

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