

## Business park: ‘This has been an issue’ for years

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Meanwhile, boxes must be checked.

Atlin’s project description says the company must negotiate a development agreement with Warrenton, and another agreement with the state Department of Transportation to address curbs and access points. The company must get a wetland fill mitigation program approved by the Department of State Lands and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. And, once Warrenton accepts a design, the company must determine the cost of infrastructure.

The company estimates that the whole project will be finished in about a decade.

The park is “a unique opportunity in that it is the last major parcel of land in Clatsop County that is potentially developable that has access to the major highways and the airport,” Atlin wrote in its proposal.

The deal with Atlin may mark the end of a 30-year saga to find a suitor for the sprawling, difficult land, which is plagued by soil and wetlands challenges.

Potential uses include warehousing, manufacturing, flex space, automotive services, self-storage that includes space to store RVs and boats, and a place to sell wholesale forest products, according to the proposal.

“There is no one type of



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

**Clatsop County has found a buyer for the North Coast Business Park in Warrenton.**

user or theme for the North Coast Industrial Park as we anticipate interest from a wide spectrum of users ranging from local, regional, to national businesses,” the proposal says.

The maximum area that can be developed is about 67 acres, the company wrote, adding that “the more likely amount is 50 to 60 acres depending on the availability of off-site wetland fill credits and mitigation areas.”

Atlin estimates that greenbelt or wetlands will compose about half of the site.

Commissioner Lianne Thompson noted the strug-

gle to fulfill the promise of the North Coast Business Park.

“This has been a gnarly issue” — she paused — “not quite 100 years, but doesn’t it seem as though it has been?”

Sections of the land were cleared and graded in the 1960s for an aluminum plant that never materialized, the county said in its request for proposals. The county bought the acreage in 1991. Since then, proposals for commercial development have come and gone. The land has sat undeveloped, attracting homeless camps. The county has discussed

getting rid of the property.

In 2018, a proposal envisioned a data center and technology incubator, but an agreement collapsed amid repeated extensions.

The business park was briefly a suggested site for a relocated county public works facility. County leaders said they preferred the occupant to be on the tax rolls.

“This has been an issue that people have been dealing with for years, and we’re so glad to be moving forward and making progress,” Commissioner Mark Kujala, the commission’s chairman, said.

## Chef: ‘His soul was just bigger than life’

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Newman one of the most influential chefs on the Oregon Coast in a generation.

“Every chef worth his salt in Clatsop County has been touched by John Newman at one point or another,” Holen said.

Newman’s wife, Sandy, said in a message that he was the love of her life. They met in college on California’s central coast and would have celebrated 30 years of marriage in October, she said.

On Tuesday night, Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel remembered Newman at a City Council meeting.

“John Newman was a cherished restaurateur who actually helped develop, to me, the quality of restaurants that we have in town because he cooked at several of them throughout his career here, created his own and beyond,” Steidel said.

Geoff Gunn, the executive chef and general manager of Bridgewater Bistro in Astoria, has been talking with area chefs in the wake of Newman’s death.

“We thought that he would just outlast everyone,” Gunn said. “His soul was just bigger than life, and it’s a huge hit to the community and the culinary world.”

In his profession, Newman was remembered as ambitious yet humble. Insofar as he competed with his fellow chefs, he did so with affection.

And Newman respected their work.

Peter Roscoe, the founder of Fulio’s in Astoria, said, “If he was going to borrow a recipe, he wouldn’t just do it. He’d call up and say, ‘Hey,

*‘HE COULD TAKE A MONKEY INTO HIS KITCHEN AND TRAIN THEM TO MAKE AMAZING FOOD LIKE HE DID.’*

**Jonathan Hoffman** | owner of The Nest Bakery in Warrenton and Dough Dough Bakery in Seaside

I’m thinking of putting this on the menu — is it OK with you?” Of course it always was.”

Neroni said Newman was “always there as a resource and just always gave. He was not just an incredible culinarian, but just an incredible individual.”

Newman learned his craft globally. An alum of New York’s Culinary Institute of America, he also studied on Oahu in Hawaii and worked in Europe, according to his restaurant’s website.

On the North Coast, Newman became a mentor for young chefs, opening doors for people pursuing careers in the restaurant industry.

Newman once asked Holen to join him as a cook at the James Beard House in New York City. For a chef to be invited to ply his or her trade at that house, which Newman did several times, is “one of the biggest honors you can have,” Holen said.

“It was John’s way of presenting what the Northwest has to offer to the world on the biggest culinary stage in the country,” Holen said, “and it was a really big deal for us.”

As a board member of United Way of Clatsop County, Newman helped found the Iron Chef Goes Coastal competition, a fund-

raiser that raised many thousands of dollars annually for the nonprofit, which serves struggling individuals and families. He won the competition several times.

Newman served as a chef and culinary consultant at Cannon Beach Conference Center and as an instructor at Tongue Point Job Corps Center and Seaside High School. Under his tutelage, his Seaside students cooked competitively on the national level.

Newman’s friend, John Sowa, the executive chef at Silver Salmon Grille and former Cannon Beach restaurateur, was impressed by how Newman — with his business, teaching and other activities — extended himself in the community.

“I couldn’t figure out how he could do as much as he did in a given day, and still go surfing,” Sowa said.

Newman was indeed a passionate surfer. “We’d always say, ‘Oh, where’s John?’” Gunn said. A common answer: “He’s at a ‘board’ meeting.”

Newman’s older brother, Matt Newman, who lives in Chicago, recalled growing up in a family with six children in the 1960s. He said his parents got divorced and that their mother, an artist, traveled for her work. Matt Newman said his brother overcame a tricky childhood,

moving through numerous new schools and with little money.

“To me, the fact that he has just a humble and positive demeanor in spite of the challenging obstacles is truly amazing,” he said. “You know, so many people break and they don’t get up from those situations.”

Matt Newman didn’t realize the extent of his brother’s influence until reading online comments after his death.

Jonathan Hoffman, the owner of The Nest Bakery in Warrenton and Dough Dough Bakery in Seaside, said Newman could take people that no other establishment wanted or thought they could use, people who got overlooked by the industry, and turn them into professionals.

“He could take a monkey into his kitchen and train them to make amazing food like he did,” Hoffman said.

The number of people he did that with, who are still in the community doing what Newman taught them, is part of his legacy. The next person who will fill that role will be difficult to find, Hoffman said.

When Gunn was living in Hillsboro and decided to relocate to the coast, he called Newman, whom he had met at a cooking competition. Newman got Gunn an interview with Martin Hospitality, which owns the Stephanie Inn.

“I always told him he was the best chef that I’ve ever known,” Gunn said. “And then he would look at me and say, ‘No, no, no — you’re the best chef that I’ve ever known.’”

Nicole Bales contributed to this report.

## Rentals: Opponents of the ordinance worry that rentals of 30 or fewer days will continue to multiply

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would make half a million dollars in lodging taxes disappear.

Wev changed her mind because of an amendment to the ordinance: Commissioners directed county staff to devise a plan to explore capping the number of short-term rentals in certain zones. That plan is expected to come before the commissioners in about five weeks.

“I think we owe all of the people who have spent so many hours on this issue — I think we owe them a firm commitment to doing that cap,” she said.

Opponents of the ordinance worry that rentals of 30 or fewer days will continue to multiply, displacing long-term residents and eroding neighborhood livability. Limiting the number of vacation rentals in an area could help preserve residential character. In Cove Beach, the community that kicked off the discussion about vacation rentals in 2019, rentals compose about a third of homes.

More than 170 vacation rentals operate in the county’s unincorporated areas. Until Wednesday’s vote, their use went unmentioned in the development code except in Arch Cape, where vacation rentals have been allowed since the early 2000s.

“What we are doing is addressing in law what has been a matter of fact since long before any of us were here,” Commissioner Lianne Thompson, who lives in Cove Beach, said on Wednesday.

The vote makes vacation rentals an outright use — no public hearing or public notice required before the county issues a permit.

The ordinance also applies to Gearhart’s unincorporated urban growth boundary, an area not covered by that city’s vacation rental rules.

The vote to make vacation rentals an explicit use is the latest in a recent series of commission decisions regarding the enterprises, which have become a sore spot in many Oregon Coast communities. Advertised on online platforms, rentals offer scenic getaways and bring in money for owners and local economies. But neighborhoods suffer them differently depending on density, the ability to enforce rules and other factors.

Since last summer, while county staff and commissioners worked to address the issue, the county has been under a

twice-extended moratorium on vacation rental licenses. The freeze is set to expire in late August.

Clatsop County views vacation rentals as business activities alongside others — such as bed-and-breakfasts, RV parks, primitive campgrounds, dog kennels and golf courses — permitted in residential zones.

The most vocal opponents live in the Cove Beach neighborhood, where several residents had hoped the county would prohibit vacation rentals in residential zones and phase out existing ones as permits expire.

Some commissioners have warned that lawsuits could be filed against the county if the board voted to eliminate existing vacation rentals.

The idea of limiting the ventures came up repeatedly on Wednesday, as opponents of the ordinance sought a compromise with a board whose majority had already decided to vote “yes.”

Thompson said she sees the wisdom in placing a cap on the number allowed in certain areas. Doing so would require amending the operating standards for vacation rentals.

In April, commissioners updated the operating standards for zones outside of Arch Cape to address renter behavior and other pressure points. Owners must post a good-neighbor flyer listing rules around things like quiet hours, littering, pets, fires, fireworks, parking, speed limits and trespassing.

Commissioner John Toyooka said enforcement of these rules is the major concern that comes up in his exchanges with residents.

Other, more existential concerns have been aired over about two dozen public meetings. Karynn Fish, of Cove Beach, said on Wednesday that she fears her family will one day be evicted so the property can be converted into a vacation rental.

“Your actions today will likely determine whether my family or any other family in the future is able to lease our home in the years to come,” Fish told the commissioners.

Commissioner Courtney Bangs, who represents the county’s eastern portion, said she is not a fan of the negative impacts of tourism. She views the issue through the lens of property rights.

“Property rights mean a lot to me and to my constituents,” she said. “I can’t cherry pick when property rights are important and when they’re not.”

## Code changes: Address concerns the city has heard from residents

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The Planning Commission will also consider prohibiting homestay lodging in low-density residential areas. Currently, homeowners in those areas can apply for licenses to rent bedrooms in their homes to tourists.

Leatherman said the amendment is in line with recommendations made in the county housing study and addresses concerns the city has heard from residents.

However, she said some stakeholders in the business community said they prefer people have the opportunity to use homestay lodging as a way to subsidize

the cost of buying a home.

Another amendment that will be considered is making hotels in commercial zones along the Columbia River and Port of Astoria conditional use instead of permitted outright. The change would allow the public to have the opportunity to weigh in prior to a building permit being issued.

“I think it makes more sense for this community that we involve the public in the hotel constructions,” Leatherman said, adding that it is standard in other cities.

The Planning Commission will review and weigh in on all the proposed amendments prior to review by the City Council.

## Judge: ‘It’ll be fun having a new judge on board’

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court, serving as an attorney and advocate for defendants who go through the program. Matyas started the treatment court in 2009 to help offenders suffering from chronic mental health issues, often amplified by substance abuse, from becoming trapped in the criminal justice system.

“He brings to the table a lot of (Matyas’) experience with behavioral health,” McIntosh said.

An alum of the University of Oregon School of Law, Wintermute serves as a

judge pro tem for the city’s Municipal Court.

In addition, Wintermute is the board president of LiFEBoat Services, a nonprofit that serves the local homeless population, and the National Alliance on Mental Health’s local chapter.

Other candidates for the vacancy were Senior Deputy District Attorney Scott McCracken and Seaside attorney A.J. Wahl.

McIntosh said she told the governor’s office: “You couldn’t have had a better pool to pick from.”

“Any one of the three

could have done the job,” McIntosh said. “But, I gotta tell ya, I think Kirk is a great choice. He’s also a really nice guy. People like him. The staff loves him. I think everybody’s going to be excited to work with him.”

She added: “We’ll miss Cindee, though. We’re going to miss her. But it’ll be fun having a new judge on board.”

The governor has also appointed Denise Espinoza Keppinger, a deputy district attorney in the Columbia County District Attorney’s Office, to that county’s Circuit Court.

“Both of these talented individuals bring deep legal experience to the bench, as well as important perspectives on the different ways the justice system can work to protect the community, while at the same time supporting our most vulnerable Oregonians,” Brown said in a statement. “I am excited to see the contributions they will make to the Clatsop and Columbia county circuit courts.”

Wintermute said he feels honored to serve his community. “It’s where I grew up,” he said, “and it’s where I want to be.”