

Ferry: Shuttled across Columbia River before Astoria Bridge opened

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On Tuesday, Vicki Walker, the director of the Department of State Lands, cited the emergency removal of the Tourist No. 2 as part of an update to the State Land Board on plans to seek \$40 million in the next state budget process to remove abandoned and derelict vessels from Oregon waterways. The department said a lack of dedicated funding has meant using money from the Common School Fund.

The state described the Tourist No. 2 as “an imminent threat to public health and safety.”

“Not taking action to remove this hazard from the water is not an option,” Walker said in a statement. “But Oregon’s schoolchildren are paying yet again to clean up a mess created by an irresponsible vessel owner. The department will take every action to recoup the more than \$1 million this cleanup will cost.”

In Astoria, the response has been complicated.

Christian Lint, the owner of the Tourist No. 2, is disputing ownership. He considers himself the caretaker after a group of locals abandoned plans to purchase and restore the vessel.

He claims he did everything in his power to protect the ferry and keep it afloat, but said his pleas for help were ignored.

“But they got to do what they got to do,” Lint told *The Astorian*. “They didn’t do anything for two years when I begged for help. So I’m sure they’ll be very quick to punish me for their ineptness.”

Lint said he is “so sad, so sorry. But you know what? It is a burden off my chest. And they can now come to the plate and do something. Thank goodness. What a shame. What a shame.”

‘Extremely complex’

The state is contracting with Global Diving & Salvage, the Seattle-based company that led cleanup efforts with the U.S. Coast Guard, to handle removal of the ferry. The company recovered about 525 gallons of diesel with sorbents and active pumping. Five cubic yards of hazardous material were also recovered.

The cause of the incident is still under investigation.

Ali Ryan Hansen, a spokesperson for the Department of State Lands, said the state is still in early conversations with Global Diving & Salvage about the total cost, but an estimate at the low end is over \$1 million.

The Tourist No. 2 is in very poor condition, according to Hansen. “And that makes the removal extremely complex,” she said.

Global Diving & Salvage expects to have to crush the ferry in place and pull pieces from the water onto a barge. Barriers will be set out to capture any floating debris.

Full removal could take about two weeks, according to Hansen. The state is concerned that leaving the ferry in the water and at the mercy of the tides much longer could be dangerous. The ferry sank near a fuel dock and a navigation channel.

The condition of the ferry was exacerbated by sinking and being slammed up against steel pilings, but Hansen said divers also found extensive dry rot and evidence of previous damage that had likely weakened the hull.

Lint was not given permission to dock the ferry at the pilings near the Sixth Street viewing platform, in an area owned by the Department of State Lands. He was cited by the state last year, but did nothing to address the situation, according to the state.

“We are just paying close attention to the actions of this owner,” Hansen said.

‘Sole owner’

The Tourist No. 2, built in the 1920s, shuttled across the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington state before the Astoria Bridge opened in 1966.

Lint purchased the ferry after a fire in 2010 took the vessel out of service as the M/V Kirkland. He sailed the vessel to Astoria from Bremerton, Washington, in 2016 after a local group expressed interest in a restoration project.

The Astoria Ferry Group hoped to turn the ferry into an event space and take passengers on river cruises. But the nonprofit fell far short of fundraising goals for the expensive restoration.

The ferry, which had been docked at Pier 39, relocated near the Sixth Street viewing platform in 2020 and was up for sale.

Lint said the Astoria Ferry Group was in over their heads and abandoned the

project, leaving him with the responsibility. He believes the nonprofit is the owner. But he acknowledged that the title had not been transferred.

“You have to put yourself in my place,” Lint said. “You spend a lot of money, bring it down, you don’t get paid and then they default on the contract and just abandon it. What would you do?”

Cindy Price, an Astoria planning commissioner who has served on the City Council, helped lead the Astoria Ferry Group. She disputes Lint’s claim about the vessel’s ownership.

“The sole owner of the Tourist No. 2, since he purchased it (as the M/V Kirkland) from Argosy Cruises, Seattle, in 2010, is Christian Lint,” Price said in an email.

Lint said he feels let down.

“For two years, I’ve been flying into Portland, going down there, overseeing everything, maintaining that boat — 100% not my responsibility — but I did it because nobody else would take charge,” he said. “And I am livid.”

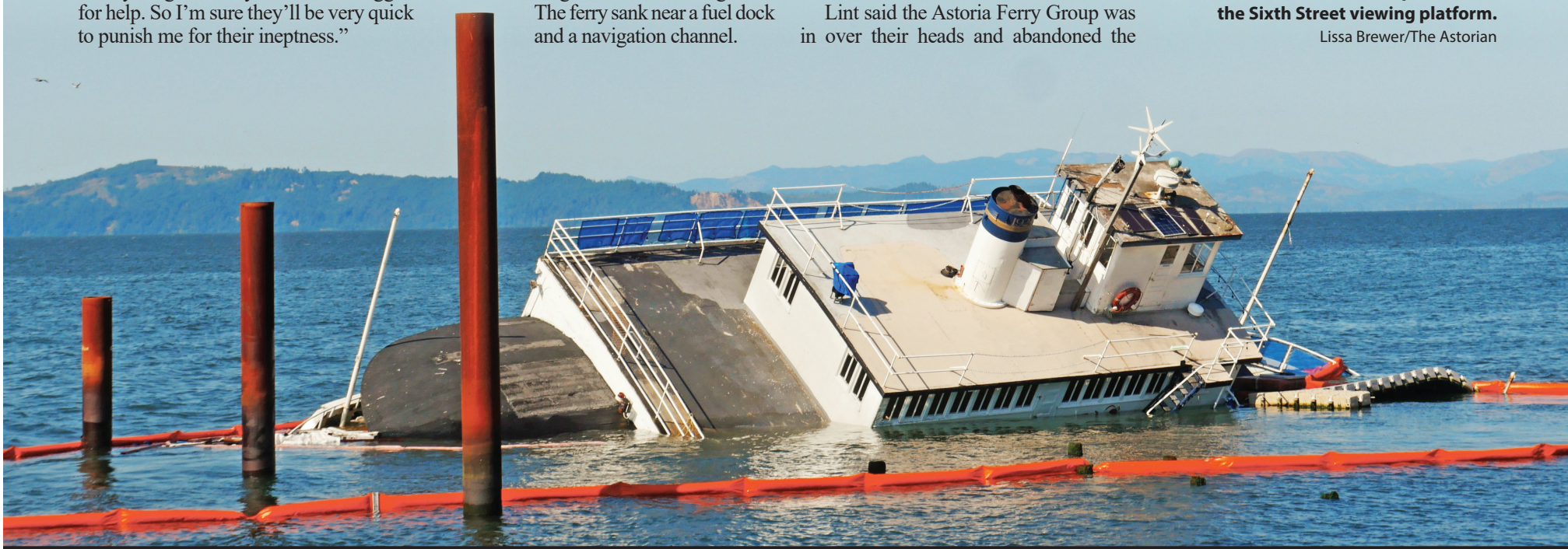
Lint would like to see any part of the ferry preserved.

“I’m so sad I and the city have lost this most precious icon of Astoria,” he said in a text message.

This story is part of a collaboration between The Astorian and Coast Community Radio.

The Tourist No. 2 capsized near the Sixth Street viewing platform.

Lissa Brewer/The Astorian



Plan: ‘The last-minute striking of so much text by legal counsel felt like a gut punch’

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He called on the Planning Commission to work harder to involve the public in land use decisions.

Cheryl Johnson, a member of the Northeast Citizen Advisory Committee, said that her committee and the rest “deserve time to read and consider and understand this drastically different draft.”

Nadia Gardner, the former chairwoman of the Planning Commission who

presided over the original approval of the community plans, suggested kicking the drafts back to the citizen advisory committees to make sure committee members are comfortable with what they’ve put their names to. The outcome of the legal review, she said, “certainly warrants that extra scrutiny and involvement of our community members.”

Chris Farrar, the chairman of the Planning Commission, said the commission recognized that a great

deal of changes had taken place in recent weeks, but that they were largely a matter of moving the policies to a more logical place in the document. “Now, that requires a little trust on everybody’s part that that was done with good fidelity,” he said.

He said the Planning Commission feels strongly that the work the citizen advisory committees put into the comprehensive plan hasn’t been ignored. “It’s being massaged and put into

a format that is more appropriate for the final document,” he said.

The Planning Commission also approved the comprehensive plan’s land use goals at Tuesday’s meeting. Only Farrar voted against recommending the goals to the Board of Commissioners.

He objected to a Goal 1 policy: “In order to provide increased transparency and opportunities for public involvement in the land use planning process, the county should review options for

redrawing the planning area boundaries in order to create boundaries that are coterminous with the Board of Commissioners district boundaries.”

Planning areas, Farrar believes, are better defined by the natural environment — topography, geographic features and so on — than by political boundaries that can shift with the census every decade.

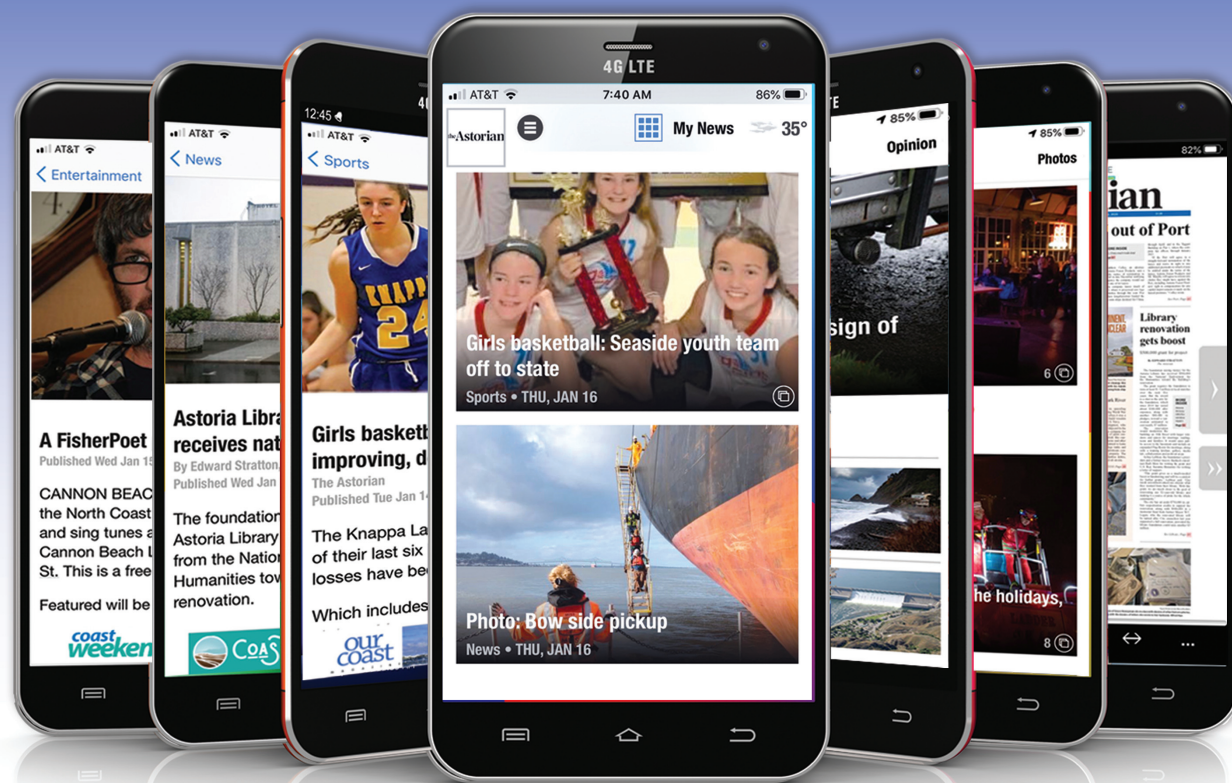
The Board of Commissioners will look at the entire comprehensive plan — both

the community plans and land use goals — at meetings in September. Written comments from the public are due at the end of August.

“It’s, I think, understood by all that this process got a little bit rushed at this particular point, but that there is still time to get your comments in order and in to the Board of Commissioners before they make their final vote on whether to accept these plans for the county,” Farrar said. “So I encourage people to do that.”

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