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Workers have started to remove the Tourist No. 2.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

## County transfers land to Seaside

### Surplus property could provide housing

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

A pair of adjoining lots in north Seaside could become the site of affordable housing or social services facilities.

On Wednesday, the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners authorized the transfer of a combined 1.85 acres of surplus county land to the city.

The property transfer was signed on Thursday, Patty Jo Angelini, a county public affairs officer, said in an email.

In April, the county put up 15 properties in Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside for expressions of interest from cities, districts and nonprofits seeking to develop housing, child care or social services.

The transfer of the two tax lots marks the first in this undertaking.

The North Coast faces a scarcity of housing at all income levels. The county's 2019 housing study predicted a need for more than 1,500 new housing units to meet demand in the years ahead.

The county is handing the property over — for free — through a quitclaim deed. If Seaside or future owner fails to use the land for housing, child care or social services, the land will revert back to county ownership.

A zone change may be required to use the parcels for housing, Jon Rahl, the assistant city manager, noted in a letter to the county. However, a new state law requiring local governments to permit types of affordable housing development on nonresidentially zoned land could make a rezone unnecessary, the letter said.

The site, located near the old Seaside High School, could yield 18 affordable housing units, the letter said.

The remaining 13 surplus properties the county offered up are still available. Although agencies are taking a look, no other transfers have been requested, Angelini said.

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## State starts to dismantle historic ferry Tourist No. 2

### Vessel will be crushed in place

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

The state has started work to dismantle and remove the Tourist No. 2, a historic ferry that partially sank at a floating dock on the Columbia River in late July.

Global Diving & Salvage, a Seattle-based company the state contracted to deconstruct the vessel, has moved equipment into the area near the Sixth Street viewing platform.

Ali Ryan Hansen, a spokesperson for the Department of State Lands,

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The Tourist No. 2 capsized and partially sank in late July.

## Gray withdraws from state House campaign

### Cannon Beach man qualified as nonaffiliated

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

Frederick “Rick” T. Gray Jr., the nonaffiliated state House District 32 candidate who hoped his run contained the seed of an eventual third party, has withdrawn from the race.

The Cannon Beach resident said on Wednesday he believed he could not build a competitive campaign in time for the November election.

Gray had gathered enough signatures in July to qualify for the ballot.

“It’s hard to find the people to run a successful campaign. It’s hard to get on the ballot by the signature method. It’s hard to persuade the media that you’re credible. Everything builds on everything else, and you’re just running to catch up,” Gray said in an email.

He would have competed against Republican Cyrus Javadi, a dentist from Tilla-

mook, and Democrat Logan Laity, a community organizer also from Tillamook.

The North Coast district’s state representative, Suzanne Weber, a Tillamook Republican, is giving up her seat to run for state Senate District 16. The Senate seat’s long-time occupant, Betsy Johnson, resigned last year to campaign for governor, quitting the Democratic Party and, like Gray, going the nonaffiliated route.

Gray had been endorsed by Deborah Boone, a Democrat who represented the House district for 14 years.

His goal was to show that a political party that does not cater to the two major parties’ extremes — the anti-democracy movement on the left — could bring moderates together and appeal to a large swath of the electorate.

A centrist, political party, Gray believes, could tackle an urgent moral issue: preventing ecological disaster and building a sustainable economy.

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‘Rick Gray



## SEASIDE CARE HOMES

## Virus outbreak, death, disclosed

### Details in state’s biweekly report

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

The Oregon Health Authority has disclosed a coronavirus outbreak at one Seaside care home and a virus death at another.

In Wednesday’s biweekly report tracking COVID-19 outbreaks at care homes, the health authority reported that Neawanna By The Sea experienced an outbreak among 10 people.

The virus cases were among five residents and five staff, according to Shawna Weist, the facility’s executive director.

All five residents had been vaccinated against the virus,



The Oregon Health Authority continues to publicly disclose COVID-19 outbreaks at care homes in biweekly reports.

Weist said.

Of the infected staff, three had been fully vaccinated, one had received the initial series, and one had a vaccine exemption, she said.

The outbreak was first reported on Aug. 8. Weist said

that the last round of tests had cleared everyone who had the virus.

“We’ve kept it pretty contained, considering we have about 30 staff and about 60 residents,” she said.

She said no one was hospitalized as a result of the outbreak.

“This week, all of our tests are coming back negative,” Weist said.

At Avamere at Seaside, a second death has been attributed to an outbreak of 14 people first reported to the state on June 27, the health authority disclosed.

A leader at Avamere’s Wilsonville-based headquarters could not be reached to provide more information.

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## City Commission flags commissioner

### Newton said he did not intend to offend after inappropriate comments

By ETHAN MYERS  
*The Astorian*

WARRENTON — City Commissioner Rick Newton will receive a letter of education after city staff complained that he used

a racial slur and joked about pornography during a rambling dialogue at City Hall this month.

After an executive session on Tuesday night, the City Commission voted to appoint Commissioner Tom Dyer to work with the city attorney to draft the letter to Newton.

The City Commission did not publicly discuss the details of Newton’s behavior, but The Astorian obtained city staff’s written

account of the interaction.

In a discussion that began on sign permits, city staff wrote, Newton “rambled into the topic of feminism and racism.”

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