



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The state hopes to remove the Tourist No. 2 from the Columbia River by early September.

Ferry: No damage to Sixth Street viewing platform

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said the ferry will be crushed in place, pulled from the water and set on a barge. Barriers will catch floating debris.

Hansen said the state anticipates the emergency removal will be completed by Sept. 5.

The pieces of the ferry will be

taken to land and disposed.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, Mayor Bruce Jones thanked the state for acting promptly to remove the vessel.

“A sad ending to a historic vessel, but unfortunately, her fate was sealed many years ago when the extensive, expensive hull maintenance that old wooden boats require

was not performed regularly,” he said.

Earlier this month, the state announced it would seize the Tourist No. 2 and pursue enforcement action against the ferry’s owner to try to recover some of the costs.

Hansen said the estimated cost of removal is over \$1 million, which the state anticipates will increase.

After the ferry partially sank, cleaning up the subsequent fuel spill took priority.

Global Diving & Salvage led cleanup efforts with the U.S. Coast Guard and recovered about 525 gallons of diesel and 5 cubic yards of hazardous material.

Earlier this week, the city temporarily closed the Sixth Street

viewing platform after the ferry shifted and came to a rest against the base of the platform.

Astoria officials said the platform was closed as a precaution while the city ensured no damage was caused and no hazards were present.

The city said Thursday that it did not observe any damage to the platform.

Land: Eight surplus properties in Astoria

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Two surplus lots in Seaside present wetlands challenges. In its expressions of interest, the city said the properties could be converted into green space or exchanged for other land that is a better fit for housing and social services.

Eight surplus properties are in Astoria, and three are in Warrenton.

Seaside City Councilor Steve Wright, who is running for mayor in the November election, was in the audience as county commissioners discussed the transfer. Mark Kujala, the board chairman, asked him if he had anything to add.

“Not really,” Wright said, “other than, when you say ‘yes,’ I’ll say ‘thank you.’”



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Seaside could pursue affordable housing on land north of the former high school.

Outbreak: Care home is under a corrective action plan

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A routine state relicensure survey at Avamere in late June revealed numerous deficiencies in administrative oversight that posed a risk of harm to residents.

The care home is under a corrective action plan.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cautioned early in the pandemic that care homes, with communal living and close quarters, were

especially vulnerable to COVID-19 outbreaks. Residents’ age-related underlying health conditions render them vulnerable to severe, possibly fatal infections.

Earlier this year, Avamere experienced an out-

break of 10 virus cases, and Neawanna By The Sea had an outbreak of eight virus cases, according to the health authority.

Last summer, Neawanna had an outbreak of four virus cases that included a death.

Gray: Plans to tour district, make his case for a third party

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He is inspired by Australia’s “teal independents” — a cohort of candidates from different parties that has made addressing climate change a top priority.

“I’ve devoted the last six months of my life to this campaign, and — for the most part — it’s been a lot of fun,” he said in a statement. “I’ve met hundreds of people, and gotten to know some of them pretty well. I’ve learned a lot about what Oregonians — especially on the North Coast — are concerned about. And I’m delighted to say that the climate crisis has finally broken through as a major issue with many citizens.”

He made many mistakes

of a first-time candidate, he said.

His decision to run came fairly late — in February. Without party infrastructure, he said, he had to assemble a team from scratch.

His biggest problem, he said, was finding a campaign manager — a role he essentially ended up filling himself, while doing the candidate work of gathering signatures, writing position papers and other tasks, he said.

A campaign needed to be “firing on all cylinders” by Labor Day, he said. “Otherwise, you’re just wasting your own time — and the time and money of the people who support you.”

Gray’s initial goal was to run in 2022 and, if he lost, run again in 2024, having

established name recognition and credibility for his cause. He said his plan to run again in two years has not changed. He said he would start searching for a campaign manager this winter and have a full-scale operation — website, funding, volunteers and so on — in place for the next campaign.

Gray hails from Virginia, where he served as secretary of the commonwealth under Gov. John Dalton from 1978 to 1981. He taught history in the state’s high schools, wrote a local newspaper column

and toured as a professional actor. On the North Coast, he has appeared in community theater productions.

After November’s election, he plans to tour the district, and the state, to make his case for a third party, he said.

Gray’s party does not have a name, he said, but he believes he has found a symbol: the hummingbird.

“We’ll be small — at least to start with — but we’ll be active, aggressive, agile, audacious — and green,” he said.

Flagged: ‘Supremely inappropriate and unprofessional’

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City staff said Newton, who is white, used a racial slur — the N-word — in a statement about rap lyrics and culture. City staff said the slur was not directed at anyone or intended as disparaging, but that it was “nonetheless unnecessary and unprofessional.”

Later in the interaction, city staff wrote, Newton suggested in a “jokingly manner” that an employee was looking at pornography on the computer.

After Newton left, city staff wrote, staff conferred and agreed that the interaction was “supremely inappropriate and unprofessional.”

“I want it known that my words absolutely were not intended to offend any of the city employees,” Newton said in an email to The Astorian. “... I was the only Warrenton city commissioner to attend the diversity class sponsored by our library; I attended to try to understand peoples problems so I might be of assistance in the future.

“I tease people I like, and I like most of our city employees ... I promise to you, I will not do either

thing again.”

Last year, Newton was asked to resign by fellow commissioners following a controversy with infill that Newton accepted on his property. The infill dispute also led to a state ethics investigation into Newton’s actions, which ended with a letter of education in May.

The same three — Mayor Henry Balensifer, Commissioner Mark Baldwin and Commissioner Gerald Poe — asked Newton to step down again in April when he lashed out at Balensifer during a meeting.

Newton, a former NAPA Auto Parts store owner, has announced plans to run for mayor against Balensifer in the November election instead of seeking a third, four-year term on the City Commission.

On Thursday, Newton said via text that he’s unsure if he still plans to run for mayor, but added he “absolutely will not serve another term under Mayor Henry.”

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