

## Pac. Seafood's plan for worker dorms approved

By CINDY YINGST  
The Columbia Press

Pacific Seafood's plans to build housing for its employees got a green light Tuesday night.

Warrenton City Commissioners approved a development code amendment that allows the company to convert a metal fabrication building into bunkhouse-style housing to meet the needs of seasonal employees working at the seafood processing plant. Commissioner Mark Baldwin, a contractor, abstained from the vote because he has worked and may work again for the company.

The proposal has been controversial because it is next to longstanding residential areas and the property is in the city's Industrial Water-Dependent Shorelands zone, over which the state has some jurisdiction. Some residents have feared the transient nature of the seafood workers could mean increased crime.

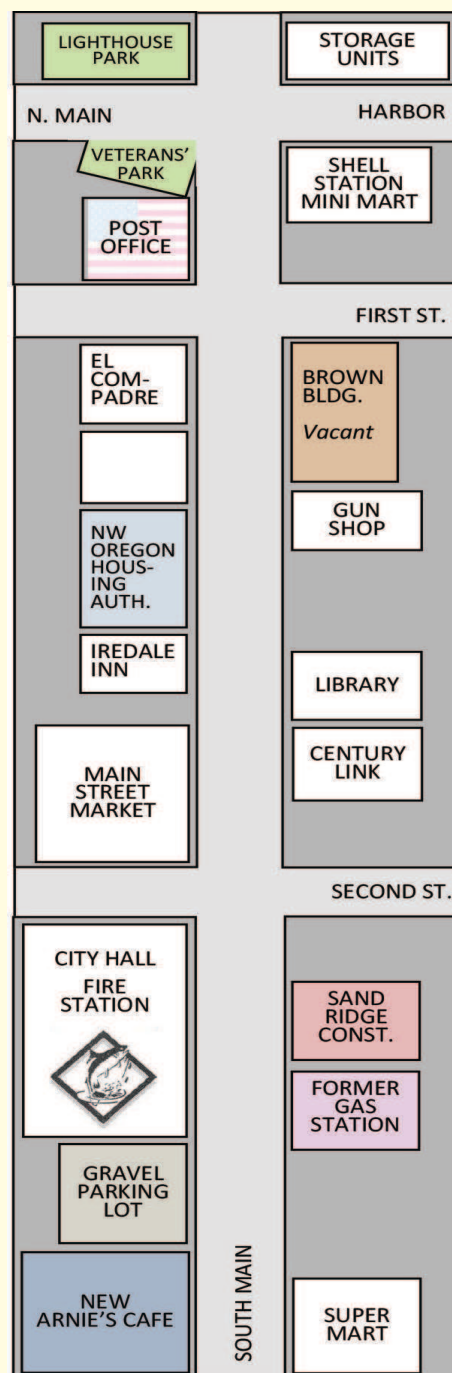
The vote came after public hearings held by both the Planning Commission and the City Commission, and a town hall meeting that allowed residents an opportunity to talk about their concerns and ask questions.

Residents also were given an opportunity to submit letters for the public record.

"To have people living next door that have no connection or involvement with the community other than to hold down an insufficient-paying job, making it impossible for them to properly support their families with independent living choices is not acceptable," wrote Roberta DeLemos, who lives on Northwest 17th Place.

"Frank Dulcich (the company's

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## Fresh ideas for a stale downtown

By CINDY YINGST  
The Columbia Press

A coffee shop here. A bakery there. Perhaps a brewpub on the corner.

These are the dreams and ideas being bandied about as a group of citizens envisions a plan for downtown Warrenton.

It is a downtown with great potential and a recent history of falling short of that potential.

"The idea is to ... get positive change in Warrenton through citizens just getting together and putting their heads together," said Kelsey Balensifer, who is volunteering with other citizens to improve downtown. She works for the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce and is married to Mayor Henry Balensifer.

Last spring, Warrenton applied for and won a grant from Rural Development Initiatives, a 27-year-old nonprofit organization devoted to helping Oregon's small communities improve economic vitality.

RDI has worked with more than 80 Oregon communities through a program called "Economic Vitality Roadmap Services."

The organization is helping Warrenton leaders draft plans for downtown, develop a new image, improve Hammond's commercial district and capitalize on the city's two marinas.

Balensifer has participated in several downtown walking tours, which have helped the group visualize the

possibilities.

- The city is working with a landscape architect to landscape the four-way stop and build a plaza/community square in front of the post office.

- The brown building at the corner of Main Avenue and First Street presents a wealth of opportunities.

"I think it would bring life into downtown for sure," said Jennifer Cahoon, assistant to building owner Russell Maize, who is out of state. "It's smack dab in the middle of town."

The top floor apartments are rented, but the ground floor has been vacant since a thrift store moved out a couple years ago. It could house nearly any commercial venture, Cahoon said.

City Commissioner Rick Newton recently had posters made of old photos from Warrenton's past. They're hanging in the windows to remind residents of the once-thriving historical downtown and to give them a reason to pause and linger.

- **Arnie's Café** recently announced plans to move into the vacant Napa Auto building. With only a gravel lot separating it from City Hall and a block from several apartment projects, it promises to increase foot traffic downtown when it opens later this year.

- **Sand Ridge Construction** is making improvements at the former

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