



Lease of burned parcel prompts a return to fair rent commitment

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

City leaders agreed to release the owner of a building that burned at Warrenton Marina from paying the remainder of his lease, but declined Tuesday night to turn the lease over to someone else.

Jim Scarborough, a retired crab fisherman, held a 10-year lease on the city property where his 70- by 30-foot metal building was destroyed by fire Nov. 3. After the fire, the city learned Scarborough had been subleasing, a violation of the lease, to Pacific Future, an active fishing business.

The lot has been cleaned after the fire and the company that was subleasing it still has items stored on site.

Scarborough's rent to lease the city-owned property was \$120 per month at the time the lease was renewed in 2011 and it increases 2 percent annually, making both the rent and the annual increase

See 'Leases' on Page 7

Above: A .11-acre parcel at Warrenton Marina contains some stored items of a company subleasing the property.

Right: A Nov. 3 fire destroyed the metal-clad building and its contents.



Cindy Yingst/The Columbia Press



Jean Sleutel/for The Columbia Press

Crime statistics show increase in shoplifting

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Local shoplifting statistics have risen sharply since Walmart opened its doors in June.

But is the store attracting thieves or is the store really good at catching them?

It's a little of both, Warrenton Police Chief Matt Workman said.

His department is conducting a general study to track crimes involving locals and nonresidents, he told City Commissioners at a recent meeting.

Shoplifting is just one of the crimes that will get a closer look.

"We have had an increase in property crimes," Workman said. "With Walmart, it's not that it's a crime magnet. It's a new store with people (who've been caught shoplifting elsewhere) who haven't been trespassed there. They have a sophisticated security system."

Fred Meyer is considering upgrades to its security system since Walmart's has helped catch many crooks.

Surveillance cameras at the new store capture such clear images that they've helped police catch people suspected of floating bad checks and using stolen credit cards.

A quick comparison between Fred Meyer and Walmart showed Warrenton police receiving twice as many shoplifting calls at Walmart, Workman said. But, in addition to state-of-the-art security, the city's newest big-box store has twice as many people working in the security department, thus more opportunity to catch criminals.



Workman

Levees undergoing another round of certification

The Columbia Press

A new state effort to certify Warrenton's levee system found 300 potential issues, County Commissioner Mark Kujala told city leaders Tuesday.

Kujala has worked to get the city's levees certified and accredited since he first began serving on the City Commission, when he was mayor, and now as a county commissioner. He has spoken before state and federal legislators on the need to fund the work required to become certified,

such as core boring, sample analysis and geotechnical work, which comes with a huge price tag.

Certification is important because it affects insurance ratings for the city's property owners as well as the city's ability to remain in risk insurance pools with other government entities.

Last week, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spent four days walking the city's 10 miles of levees. The previous inspection was in 2010.



Kujala

"Since then, we've made tremendous progress removing vegetation, holding back the tree line," Kujala said. "The levees look real good in a lot of sections. We were more prepared this time around."

Numerous encroachments were found, including private fences, businesses built past their property lines, docks, landscaping, utility poles, gates, electrical boxes, even burrowing moles. One inspector walked the river side and the other worked the land side.

See 'Levees' on Page 4

See 'Crime' on Page 4