

School board approves \$6.3 million property purchase

By CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

The Warrenton-Hammond School District will pay \$6.3 million for property south of Walmart on which it will build a new middle school campus.

After meeting in executive session last week, the board of directors announced it had come to terms with Warrenton Fiber Company for 58-acres east of Dolphin Avenue.

The purchase was approved unanimously with the board's newest member, Neal Bond, making the motion.

"It's a great night to be a Warrior," board President Debbie Morrow said after the meeting. "This was three years in the making."

Escrow on the property is expected to close in April.

Acquiring the property is the first step in a long process. Eventually the site will be a K-12 master campus developed in three phases. The first phase – a middle school for grades six, seven and eight -- will be funded by proceeds from the bond passed by voters in November.

"We've got the least amount of money," board member Dan Jackson said, comparing the district's bond election to those in Astoria and Seaside. "And we're getting a new facility that's our starting point."

Construction of the first phase is expected to take 30 to 36 months.

"The Nygaard family and Warrenton Fiber Company are very excited to be able to be a part of this," John M. Nygaard said. "It will really improve education in our area and it's a great opportunity for the whole community."

The company is the in process of platting the Roosevelt Subdivision, a 74-home project that will go on vacant land between the Forest Rim neighborhood and the new middle school.



"That's probably the biggest task and we hope to have it done by April," Nygaard said. "What's left is what the school ultimately ends up buying."

The district had the property appraised and offered \$109,000 per acre. It was among the last large parcels of land outside the tsunami inundation zone and within the district's boundaries

"We thought the appraisal was very good and we went along with it," Nygaard said. "It was a very easy thing to do."

He praised Superintendent Mark Jeffery, Business Manager Mike Moha and legal counsel Kelly Hossaini as "a really great team to work with."

Taxpayers will repay the bonds -- used to both pur-

chase the property and build the school -- over the next three decades through their property taxes.

The school district's two campuses, Warrenton Grade School and Warrenton High School, both are within or close to the tsunami inundation zone. Further expansion of either campus has been forbidden because of the potential safety issue during a catastrophic event.

Meanwhile, an increasing student population has especially crowded the halls of the grade school. Moving the middle schoolers to the new location first will free up space there.

The district plans to develop a website that will show progress made at the site with drone pictures.

Clamming reopens on Clatsop beaches

Razor clamming reopens today, March 1, on beaches from Tillamook Head in Seaside to the mouth of the Columbia River.

The beaches had been closed to give undersize clams and a chance to grow after fall surveys found mostly small clams with shell lengths between 2 and 3 inches.

"The small razor clams on Clatsop (beaches) we observed this fall have grown at a rate we anticipated," said shellfish biologist Matt Hunt-

er of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"Currently, the dominant size of clams is between 3 1/2 and 3 3/4 inches with few larger clams available," he said. "As spring progresses and we get longer days, more food will be available and the clams will continue to grow."

The beach from Seaside to Warrenton is Oregon's most popular area for razor clamming with 5,000 to 6,000 people out on a good low tide.

Man cited for causing oil spill at Carruthers Park

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A Hammond man was cited for causing an oil spill at Carruthers Park.

The park host, who lives on site, called police about 8:30 a.m. Sunday when he woke to find a 400- to 500-square-foot spill in the parking lot near the dog park.

A large oil barrel was split open, lying on the asphalt in the park's east entrance and oil was trailing toward a storm drain with the words "outflows to stream" printed on it, according to a police report.

The park host had disposed of the barrel, which had about a third of the contents still inside, and the officer was able to retrieve it.

"The container was either disposed of intentionally at that location or had possibly fallen from a moving ve-

hicle, which I believed was possible due to the large crack," the officer wrote in a police report.

A hazardous materials team from the U.S. Coast Guard's National Response Center was notified to determine the extent of the environmental hazard and the city's Public Works staff contained the spill.

A man who witnessed the barrel falling from a truck and recognized the truck's driver contacted police later that day.

Gregory Scott Adams, 37, owner of and a resident at South Jetty Inn, was cited for criminal placing of offensive substances in water, highways or property.

He reportedly told an officer that the oil was industrial waste from his shop and he was using the inn's pickup, which has no tailgate, to take it for disposal.

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