

Middle school construction plans approved

The Columbia Press

Warrenton planning commissioners have approved the school district's future school complex, keeping with the district's plans to break ground on a new middle school in May and open for classes there in fall 2021.

The 57-acre complex is south of Walmart and will be accessed by a new street off Dolphin Road named Warrior Way. Eventually, the site will hold three separate campuses – elementary, middle school and high school.

The three-hour public hearing on March 12 covered traffic, roads, landscaping, parking, grading, erosion control, wetlands, and stormwater management.

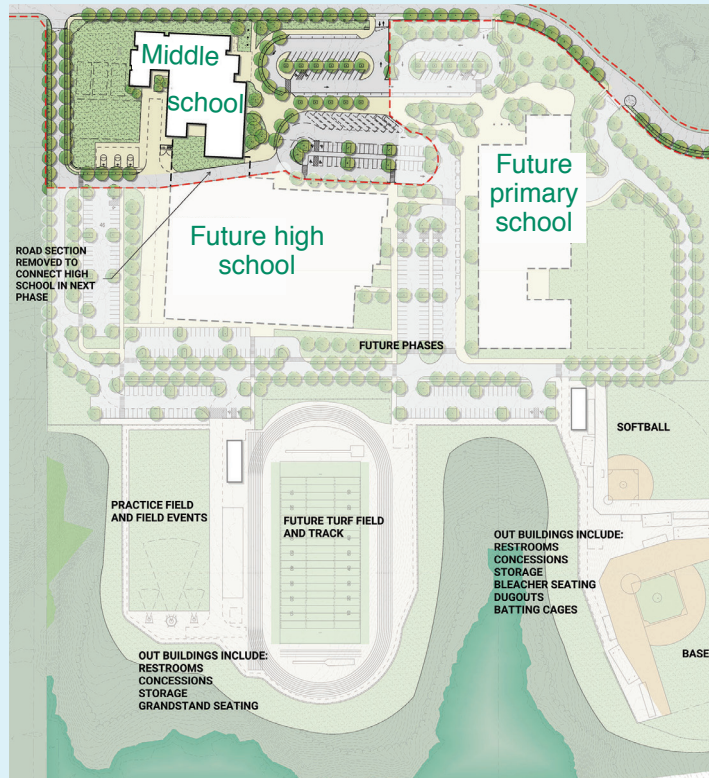
"There was a lot of information," said Kevin Cronin, the city's Community Development director. "It's the largest application I've seen in Warrenton."

The district chose to send the project through the approval process as one large



development so that all the major systems don't have to come back as each campus is constructed.

The first step in that process was to have the city allow master-planned developments by adding them into the development code.



In November 2018, voters approved a \$38.5 million bond measure to finance the new campus complex and make other improvements, including the career technical center at the high school. Taxpayers will repay the bonds over the next three decades through property taxes.

Middle schoolers currently attend Warrenton Grade School. Moving them to the new campus frees up space at the crowded grade school, which abuts a tsunami inundation zone that prevents any expansion there.

The next step for the new middle school campus is a review of engineering plans and building permits before grading and fill work begins.

A new world Coronavirus strain is changing us locally, regionally

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Spring is associated with nature and human renewal, daffodils blooming and robins feasting on the first mowed lawn of the year.

Yet we'll look back on Spring 2020 as the point when our lives changed.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic last week. And, by the time you read this, there will be more change, more disruption, more panic and pain.

Nothing is as it was.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown issued back-to-back-to-back executive orders, cancelling all events of 250 or more, then closing the schools, then shutting down bars and eateries.

Wall Street tumbled and a panicked populace decimated store shelves, hoarding toilet paper, cleaning supplies and food.

Most travel ceased and only essential services seem to be open for business. Every cog in the economic wheel has paused.

Church services, weddings, and visits to grandma's house or the rest home are no more. And it will get worse before it gets better.

Statisticians, epidemiologists and other scientists predict at least two weeks from the imposition of last weekend's closures and stay-at-home orders before the numbers of dead and sick stop climbing.

As of 5 p.m. Wednesday – shortly before this newspaper was sent to the printer – there were 215,000 confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide. There have been 8,732 total deaths and 83,313 people who have recovered.

Two county commission seats, two measures on local ballot

The Columbia Press

Voters in some areas will get to select two new members or return incumbents to the Clatsop County Commission during the May 19 primary election.

All voters in the county will decide whether to approve continuing for five years the property tax for Clatsop County Fairgrounds operations. Measure 4-203 would levy 0.07 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on property owners, raising about \$500,000 per year for the fairgrounds.

A second measure will be on the ballot of those living within the Can-

non Beach Fire District. Measure 4-204 would pay for staffing and operations by assessing property owners there 0.35 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. If approved, the measure would bring about \$425,000 into the agency's coffers per year.

Those living within District 2, which includes Gearhart, Clatsop Plains and portions of Seaside and Warrenton, will choose between incumbent Sarah Nebeker and John Toyooka, both residents of



Nebeker



Toyooka

Gearhart.

Nebeker, first elected in 2012 and re-elected in 2016, serves on the Arts Council, Columbia River Estuary Task Force, Human Services Advisory Council and Public Safety Coordinating Council. She previously served on the Gearhart Planning Commission.

Her opponent, Toyooka, is a manager at Lum's Auto Center and served in the Marine Corps. He has no prior government experience.

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