

Proposal to pave streets causes dust-up

Councilors, residents worry about maintaining Cannon Beach's 'character'

By Nancy McCarthy
The Daily Astorian

A mild dust-up over a proposal to pave some of Cannon Beach's gravel streets occurred between city councilors during a work session Jan 3.

Another work session will occur to discuss the proposal, and a public hearing will be scheduled before any action is taken on it, the council promised.

Public Works Director Dan Grassick hopes to en-

courage property owners along the city's abundant gravel streets to pave those that present ongoing maintenance problems by having the city pay 15 percent of the cost of asphalt on projects initiated by local neighborhoods. Projects initiated by the city would be paid for by the city, Grassick told the council.

The proposal also calls for approval by 51 percent of the neighborhood's property owners in projects initiated by the neighbors before a local street is paved. Residents would be notified of a proposed street project by direct mail; those not responding within two weeks would be considered in agreement with the project. Payments from property owners would be due 30 days after the project is completed, and those who fail to pay would have a lien filed against their property.

Before the project begins, the public works department would conduct a neighborhood meeting to go over designs, cost estimates and schedule.

Grassick said he was aiming at streets such as the steep slope on North Laurel Street between Fifth and Sixth streets, a small portion of Pacific Way below the "S" curves or Viewpoint Terrace, where washouts commonly occur after heavy rains and maintenance costs are high. Other gravel roads in town that are level and have relatively few problems probably wouldn't be targeted for

city-initiated projects, he said.

But Mayor Sam Steidel and Councilor Mike Benefield opposed the proposal. They repeated what several residents said in letters sent to the city: Paved streets could destroy Cannon Beach's character.

"I have a lot of problems with this," Steidel said. "There are too many second homeowners who you wouldn't know if they got contacted."

Instead of a simple majority of property owners, a two-thirds majority would be better, Steidel and Benefield said. The city's design

review board also should be involved to give the community a chance to discuss the proposed paving of a local street, the mayor added.

"This has the potential of creating a lot of animosity," said Benefield, who read the "vision statement" attached to the city's comprehensive plan. The statement mentions the city's gravel streets and talks about a "modest level of growth" without disrupting the character of Cannon Beach or its "relaxed pace of life."

"It raises a whole bunch of problems that I don't see," Benefield said. "Who's ask-

ing for this except the city?"

However, Councilor George Vetter, said he enjoys living on a paved street. "I don't see that having a street paved affects the town's character," he said.

Councilor Melissa Cadwallader expressed concern that paving a street would require widening it or removing some of the neighborhood's landscaping and changing many of the narrow, winding neighborhood streets into flat thoroughfares.

However, Grassick said the "existing conditions" would be maintained, even if that meant winding around a tree and maintaining a 12-foot wide road.

Grassick added that few residents have asked that the city consider paving their roads. "Only two people have come to see me in two years," he said.



'This has the potential of creating a lot of animosity'

Councilor Mike Benefield

Food Pantry plans to open Jan. 28

The Cannon Beach Food Pantry plans to open in its new location, the former library portable at the Cannon Beach Elementary School property, Jan. 28.

The pantry will operate at its usual hours of 3 to 5 p.m., said Molly Edison, food pantry manager.

Moving day is Jan. 24, and volunteers are welcome to help the pantry move its food, shelving, tables, rolling carts, freezers, refrigerators and other items into their

"new digs." The volunteer movers — including the Cannon Beach police and fire departments, as well as Coaster Construction — will meet at the Cannon Beach Bible Church, 264 Hills Lane, at 9 a.m. that day, Edison said.

"Anybody who wants to help us, we're more than happy to accept them," she said.

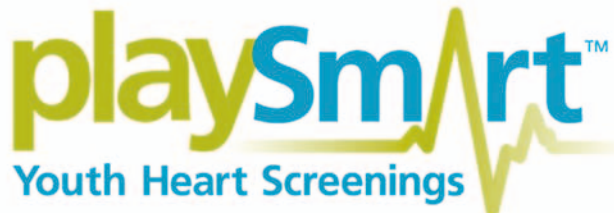
"I think it's going to be a good move for us, so, hopefully, we will be in business on the 28th," she added.



MARNIE BEAMER PHOTO

Arch Cape residents and visitors prepare to celebrate New Year's Day with the Polar Bear Plunge. This year, about 50 people took a quick, brisk dip in the ocean near south Arch Cape, just as they have for the past 50 years. A collection of photos and news items commemorating the half-century of plunging will be published in 2015. Those interested in learning more can contact Linda Murray at murraylapp@charter.net.

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