

Council to leave dune-grading ordinance as is

No change while city develops sand management plan

By Dani Palmer
Cannon Beach Gazette

On Tuesday, Nov. 3, the City Council voted to table an amendment to city code that would forbid foredune grading until Cannon Beach's sand management plan is complete in 18 to 24 months. It was a win — for now — for homeowners who say they have the right to grade.

Planning Commission members voted to recommend the amendment to the Oceanfront Management Overlay Zone on Oct. 22. Commissioner Lisa Kerr said the city's sand management study may conclude that leaving the dunes alone is best, or that grading is the right choice.

Homeowners say the proposed prohibition equates a moratorium violating state guidelines. Dean Alterman, Breakers Point Homeowners Association's attorney, offered alternatives, including a "spacing out of impact."

"If the two years becomes three or four or five or never, if a future City Council decides it wants to do something else, that leaves the Breakers Point homeowners in a very bad position with the sand that's coming in," he said.

Breakers Point homeowner Frank Patrick said the prohibition would prevent homeowners from their right to public access. He cited an already inaccessible access for emergency vehicles on the property.

Foredune grading, affecting Breakers Point and the presidential streets in Cannon Beach, is done to maintain views or prevent inundation.

With the prohibition set to potentially become reality Tuesday evening, City Planner Mark Barnes said he received an application for

foredune grading earlier in the day. Breakers Point was recently granted permission to grade 13,700-cubic-yards of sand and indicated plans to seek permits for more in the near future.

Friends of the Dunes' Clay Newton said he interpreted homeowners' reaction as fear. "None of us know what that new plan will say," he said.

Without knowing the impact of the grading, Newton said he wants a regulated process before anymore steps are taken to grade dunes.

"The folks that are the proponents of this are the friends of the dunes," said Breakers Point homeowner Ed Stone. "Myself and the rest of the owners at Breakers Point are the neighbors of the dunes and they're causing us monumental problems."

He noted his dune has grown about 100 yards horizontally and 52 feet vertically. When he moved into his upstairs condo on Ecola Creek, he could see the beach. Now he can't.

Breakers Point homeowners say the invasive European beach grass is collecting sand, allowing the dunes to build up.

"That blasted grass has gotten out of control," Patrick



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Foredunes near Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach.

said, and the dunes will grow another 15 feet in the time it takes to complete the sand management plan.

Breakers Point Homeowners Association Property Manager Bruce Francis said he didn't understand why the Planning Commission even felt the need to amend the ordinance. To acquire a permit for dune grading would take as long as the city needs to finish the sand management plan.

Councilor Mike Benefield said the current Land Use Board of Appeals approved sand management plan is out of date and Cannon Beach needs "a breather" while it's

updated. He noted a gentleman's agreement to not dune grade was ignored in the past.

"I'm not opposed to grading," he said. "I'm just opposed to doing something without knowing what its effect is going to be."

Councilor Wendy Higgins said the city does need a completed study, but added that allowing the sand to further build will only make the situation worse.

The council voted 3-2 to table the discussion. Higgins, Councilor George Vetter and Mayor Sam Steidel voted yes. Councilors Benefield and Melissa Cadwallader voted no.

Astoria couple wants to open pot shop in CB

Pot from Page 1A

to approve any attempt to ban businesses under House Bill 3400. Cannon Beach residents showed their support for Measure 91 in the 2014 General Election, 453-264 in Precinct 20.

Chapman got involved with drug policy during his time at the University of Oregon and worked on multiple campaigns to legalize marijuana. Then he formed his consulting company to help develop regulations at the city and state levels.

For the last year or so, he said, he and his family have considered Cannon Beach a good place to locate. They like the atmosphere and nearby Seaside and Manzanita already have dispensaries.

"I feel apart of the community," Chapman said, as he's been surfing and renting beach houses in Cannon Beach for several years. He added that they are excited to potentially become a part of the community and give back.

But there are those who oppose marijuana business, like Cannon Beach resident

Marlene Laws, who testified at the City Council meeting.

"I would hope common sense prevails and not the love of money," she said.

If it allows marijuana dispensaries, Cannon Beach could tax the businesses.

With plans to soon attend a real estate course focused on the impacts of marijuana business, citizen Robin Risley said there's still much to learn "before making an important decision."

Doris Stephens added marijuana could make Cannon Beach less attractive.

Chapman said he believes it could bring additional tourism with an "emerging cannabis industry."

"It would not be an eyesore by any means," he said, adding they are looking at a couple of locations now. He noted one business owner has already given them approval. The ball is in the city's court.

"I know there are concerns, but there are also remedies" to those such as security systems for safety and filtration systems for odors, Chapman said. "Public safety is the number one step."



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