

Appeal puts Laurel Street development on hold

Jeff Nicholson property is now listed for sale

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

Less than two months after the Cannon Beach City Council approved the highly contested plan for 532 N. Laurel St., owned by Jeff Nicholson, the property was put on the market.

Cascade Sotheby's International Realty listed the property online April 20.

Nicholson said still wants to rebuild the old house and build two other homes on the property, but business circumstances dictated otherwise. He has "no immediate or long-term plans" for building a home on the northeast lot.

"My plans are what is wanted by the city, by the vast majority of the citizens, and is best for the city in that it follows to a tee the comprehensive plan," Nicholson said in an email. "My hope is that I can keep the project solvent while I deal with the frivolous appeal and ultimately prevail."

Ten people, including the Friends of Cannon Beach president Jeff Harrison, filed an appeal with the Oregon



Aerial view of 532 N. Laurel St. in Cannon Beach.

Land Use Board of Appeals on March 29 against Cannon Beach. The petitioners want to reverse the City Council's March approval, with conditions, of Nicholson's four-lot

residential development plan. A response from Cannon Beach must be submitted by May 11.

Nicholson said the appeal filed will "create financial

stress," particularly for the city, and further delay the project.

The best-case scenario is for the appeal to be heard and the judges make a ruling in



Property listed for sale at 532 N. Laurel St. is the subject of a Land Use Board of Appeals challenge.

five to six months, he said in an email.

"This makes for the building season to be wasted and for incredible costs to be had by holding the property and funding the legal expenses," Nicholson said.

Individuals "who will build a single, very large home" have shown interest in the property, he said.

The online listing states that the 0.57-acre Laurel Street property stands at an elevation of 76 feet and one can build up to 15,000 square feet of "generational estate with views of iconic Haystack Rock and mesmerizing sunsets," according to Zillow.

The council's March approval ended the third stage

for approving the development proposed by Nicholson, who bought the property in 2014 for \$900,000.

Nicholson's proposals were denied twice by the Planning Commission, gone through a Land Use Board of Appeals decision and earned tentative approval last year from the City Council.

Jeff Harrison, who represented the 70-member Friends of Cannon Beach, Harrison said at earlier hearings the City Council should have followed the Planning Commission's guidance in denying the "incomplete application" and the council's approval would "create a long list of significant dangerous precedents."

High response for citizen surveys in Cannon Beach

Results will soon be analyzed

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

The last surveys were delivered to City Hall by Cannon Beach residents Friday, April 29.

Along with input from the City Council and staff, the survey will play a major role in informing the city's strategic plan.

So far, the city has received a 40 percent response out of about 1,700 residents. City Manager Brant Kucera said this "very high" response rate is not expected to increase much more.

"It's exciting," Public Works Director Dan Grassick said, noting how a "vocal and passionate group" comes to city meetings but others do not come. "We always fight for public input."

But some residents wonder what it all means. They say the survey is vague and will fail to provide meaningful direction for the city's future.



LYRA FONTAINE/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

City Manager Brant Kucera said the survey would provide guidance for the city's upcoming strategic plan.

"In completing the survey for which the city of Cannon Beach is spending \$30,000, we found that its questions were designed to apply broadly to any city in the country," Rex Amos said in a letter to The Daily Astorian. "This expensive exercise is a poor substitute for good governing."

At a City Council meeting in early April, Vinnie Ferrau

said certain questions were straightforward and others were vague.

"If I am not in favor of current economic development and I choose 'poor,' will that be interpreted as not enough or too much?" Ferrau asked.

Kucera responded that "poor" would mean that the citizen is unhappy with the specific city services provided.

At the same meeting, Jan Siebert-Wahrmund said she was concerned that the questions were too vague to inform decisions on complex issues.

"The answers allowed don't give any indication of why a citizen votes one way or another," Siebert-Wahrmund said, adding that responses can be "misinterpreted" because of the vague questions and answers. "Our community needs and deserves real dialogue, which takes time and effort but is worth it."

Planning process

The surveys, mailed to residents about a month ago, will be analyzed soon. A preliminary report should be

available May 16, and in late May, city councilors and consultants will meet to review the survey responses that will "become a large part of the strategic planning," Kucera said.

The strategic plan is a two-year process that will also include plans for the next five and 10 years and will help guide future city policies and goals.

The plan is to be updated continually and reviewed each year as a "living document," Grassick said. "The goal for me is to take it and overlay it in public works to make sure I am prioritizing the right things. It's another road map for guiding each department through annual work plans."

For example, strategic planning would be taken into account when planning roads, providing water services or creating visitor amenities.

Assessing livability

Kucera has completed strategic plans involving citizen surveys for six communities. The National Citizen Survey has administered

more than 1,000 surveys of residents for local governments of various sizes.

"The survey gives an accurate reflection about how the community feels about the direction we're heading," Kucera said. "It can affirm we're heading in the right direction or show us areas we need to concentrate on more."

Areas of weakness can be prioritized in the strategic plan, he said.

"It is meant to gauge the public satisfaction rate with the city," Kucera said.

The survey includes many standard questions, but certain questions were tailored specifically to the community. Cannon Beach is unique in that it is a coastal town with tourist activity in a remote location, Grassick said.

Citizens could also write comments.

Kucera said he hopes the surveys, by asking citizens for their honest opinions, help to "build trust" in the government. "We are asking all residents to have an equal voice," he said.

Local musician Paul Deuber comes to the history center

The Cannon Beach History Center & Museum welcomes local musician Paul Deuber on Friday, May 27, at 7 p.m. Deuber has been performing locally for decades.

He bought his current guitar at Portland Music when got out of the Marines in 1968. Deuber sings songs in the tradition of Peter, Paul and Mary, Gordon Lightfoot, and Paul Simon. Deuber has played for the Stormy Weather Arts Festival event, at the Coaster Theatre for the Songwriters' Hootenanny, among other venues.

Beyond music at concerts, pubs, galleries, and restaurants in town, Deuber

has been instrumental in encouraging entertainers in public spaces like Sandpiper Square, where he and his wife, Margo have long owned businesses.

Seating for this concert is limited. Tickets are available at the museum, by phone at 503-436-9301 or through the online gift shop. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$2 for children. Complimentary refreshments will be provided. All proceeds will help fund upcoming events at the history center including future concerts, lectures, exhibits, and field trips. To volunteer for this event, email info@cbhistory.org.

Centuries later, the world is still a stage

William Shakespeare died 400 years ago, an anniversary noted around the world and by the Cannon Beach Book Company. He has had more theatrical works performed than any other playwright known in history. Countless theater festivals honor his work, students memorize his eloquent poems and scholars reinterpret the millions of words of text he penned.

"Shakespeare: Sonnets, Songs, Scenes, Scholarship" is a potpourri of readings from his

works that will be presented by northwest actors Donald Conner, Brandy Hussa, Jason Hussa, Frank Jagodnik, Cameron Lira, Liz McCall, Jack Shields and Merrill Lynn Taylor Saturday, May 14, at 7 p.m. at the Cannon Beach Book Company.

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