

Arch Cape committee still facing dissolution

Planning Commission urges end to panel

By Kyle Spurr
EO Media Group

Arch Cape residents who want to save their citizen advisory committee took a hit this week.

The Clatsop County Planning Commission sent a recommendation Tuesday to the Board of Commissioners to dissolve the Arch Cape Design Review Committee.

The Board of Commissioners originally discontin-

ued Arch Cape's committee in February, calling the group unnecessary, time-consuming, expensive and a potential legal liability.

Former interim County Manager Rich Mays accused the committee of harassing a county employee about her disability. Despite her requests, Mays claims, the group voted to move its meetings to a building that is not a federal Americans with Disabilities Act-approved facility.

Supporters of the committee challenged the county's decision with the state Land Use Board of Appeals, which sent the issue back to the county.

The county still plans to discontinue the design re-

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Planning Commission staff report

view committee, but this time through a process that includes public hearings before the committee, Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners.

"County Manager Cameron Moore advised that there is no point in staff spending time exploring options for retaining

the (committee)," according to a Planning Commission staff report.

Moore pointed out the county is still liable for the committee's actions and is required to spend staff time ensuring the committee follows public records and meetings laws.

Alternatives

The Arch Cape Design Review Committee, also known as the Southwest Coastal Citizens Advisory Committee, is one of a kind in Clatsop County.

Other county residents bring proposals directly to the planning staff, without input of a local committee.

Supporters in Arch Cape say the local input is critical to maintaining the livability of the unincorporated town south of Cannon Beach. The county is concerned the committee requires an extra layer for people who want to build or sell homes in Arch Cape.

In addition to dissolving the committee, the Planning

Commission recommended alternatives to encourage citizen involvement.

One idea is applicant-neighborhood meetings for certain applications, such as large subdivisions or rezoning requests. A meeting would be scheduled for the applicant to present their concept to neighbors.

"Usually, it's to the applicant's benefit," Community Development Director Heather Hansen said. "They are hearing what people are concerned about before they turn in their application."

The Board of Commissioners is expected to vote on the Planning Commission's recommendation later this month.

Whale unlikely to move again

Whale from Page 1A

unable to access the whale Saturday.

By their return the next day, the whale had washed back into the ocean.

"Where it washed ashore at Arch Cape, it was on a cobble beach," Cox said. "With no sand there to create that extra friction, it floated out to sea."

"When whales come to shore, they have often been dead for weeks," said Jim Rice, Oregon State University Marine Mammal Stranding Network coordinator. "Natural mortality can be harder to determine when the carcass has been floating at sea for awhile."

Chandler noted the mammal had

been dead for some time and its tissues likely rotting, which could make understanding its cause of death more difficult.

A necropsy's purpose is both to determine why the animal died and to gather tissues that can be used for future studies on the animal's nutrition and other research topics, Rice said. Potential reasons for whale deaths in general include lack of prey, diseases, biotoxins and trauma through fishery gear entanglement or collisions with vessels.

Humpbacks are less common than gray whales, and occasionally wash up on the North Coast.

Oregon State Parks and Recreation

staff will be on Short Sand Beach Saturday and Sunday to present free interpretive talks, whether the whale washes back out or not. Staff will talk about the importance of whales in the marine environment and the food source they provide when they wash ashore, Cox said.

Visitors are advised to park at North Short Sand Trailhead on U.S. Highway 101. Follow trail signs to Short Sand Beach, then walk north.

According to the parks department, visitors should not take any pieces of the whale or touch it and pets should be kept away from the shore. Researchers with required federal permits can collect tissue from the mammal.



FILE PHOTO

Beach cleanup in Cannon Beach 2015.

Tolovana Wayside beach cleanup slated on Saturday

Join SOLVE and PacificCorp for a beach cleanup at Tolovana Wayside on Saturday, Sept. 24, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Volunteers are encouraged to never turn their backs on the ocean and to wear and bring appropriate gear for rain or shine. Bags and gloves will

be provided. Recycling services are donated by Recology Western Oregon, and refreshments and setup at City Hall are provided by Pacific Alarm Systems.

For more information and to register, go to solveoregon.org.

The tale of the whale

On Friday night, the approximately 38-foot humpback whale veered around Arch Cape toward the Falcon Cove community.

As night fell Friday, the whale washed up on Cove Beach.

On Saturday morning, the whale could be seen with its stomach inverted and distended. Experts feared the stomach could explode.

Researchers were blocked by high tides as gas from the whale's stomach was naturally released during the day.

As researchers arrived to determine the cause of death, the whale washed back out to sea.

Tuesday, the whale's body returned to land, this time at Short Sand Beach in Oswald West State Park.

The day it rained whale

In 1970, a large dead sperm whale washed ashore near Florence, Ore. Engineers from the Oregon Highway Division were tasked with removing the dead whale.

Their plan? Half a ton of dynamite.

All seemed to go well until chunks of whale parts and blubber started raining down from the sky, splattering TV news crewmen and onlookers as far as 800 feet away.

One unfortunate bystander had a large chunk of blubber smash his car.

In his commentary, TV reporter Paul Linnman said, "It might be concluded that should a whale ever be ashore in Lane County again, those in charge will not only remember what to do. They'll certainly remember what not to do."

—Compiled by Corey Fisher

No touching!

The twice-daily high tides predicted over the next few weeks are not expected to be high enough to take it back out to sea, though it is still possible for it to wash out.

Researchers have the required federal permits to collect tissue from dead whales. All other visitors are encouraged to come see the humpback, but are not allowed to take any pieces and are discouraged from touching it.

When visiting, keep pets away from the corpse, and keep an eye on the ocean for safety's sake.



TARA ERBEN/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

By late Saturday, neighbors reported the whale had deflated significantly.

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