

Cannon Beach Academy celebrates progress

Charter school plans to open in fall 2017

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

Community members of all ages gathered at Chamber Hall to celebrate the Cannon Beach Academy's unconditional charter application approval by the Seaside School District board.

This major step brings the school closer to opening in fall 2017.

"We have come a long way," board President Kellye Dewey said at the academy's November potluck dinner. "Hard work from the start is now paying off for our families and our community. There still remains tons of work ahead, but our approved charter without conditions is a milestone that needs to be acknowledged and celebrated."

The Cannon Beach Academy formed in 2013 after Cannon Beach Elementary closed. The school district had denied two of the school's proposals, and withdrew its conditional approval for another proposal earlier this year.

The academy and school district worked together this year on the charter application. Before getting approved, the academy clarified certain aspects of its financial plan, with revenue to be generated primarily through district funding, pledges, fundraising and grants, board members said in October.



Cannon Beach Academy board members Patti Rouse, Barb Knop, Sally Steidel, Phil Simmons and Kellye Dewey with Jeneé Pearce-Mushen, Yohali and Alondra, who translated for Spanish speakers in the audience.



LYRA FONTAINE/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Residents gathered in Chamber Hall to celebrate the Seaside School District's unconditional approval of the Cannon Beach Academy charter application.

Jeneé Pearce-Mushen and two local children, Yohali and Alondra, translated Dewey's words for Spanish speakers.

A "fundraising mountain" created by artist Bill Steidel will serve as a marker for funds raised by the academy. Board members thanked Steidel for contributing his original artwork.

"I think you've all noticed that we have a mountain, and we do have a mountain of work to do," said Sally Steidel, adding that the piece of art will be placed somewhere in town.

Getting ready

The academy's grade levels will start with kindergarten through second grade, then add a grade each year. The board will recommend 17 to 21 students per class.

A contract will likely be secured with the school district by the end of the year, and enrollment could open in March.

Getting the building ready is one of the top priorities, Knop said. Because the academy's conditional use permit expired, board members have turned in a revision for the Planning Commission to review in December. The school is temporarily located at 171 Sunset Blvd.

With potentially vulnerable bridges between Seaside and Cannon Beach, not having a school in town is a "major logistics issue" in the event of an emergency, parent Ryan Dewey said.

"It's not about my kids' individual experience," he said. "It's for the community. If you don't have a school, grade school kids, parents and grandparents in a community, it's not a community. It's a resort town."

The potluck gathering also celebrated voters approving the Seaside School District's \$99.7 million bond measure to relocate schools out of the tsunami zone.

Not having a school in town is a 'major logistics issue' in the event of an emergency.

Ryan Dewey, parent

"We want to thank you all for being here and helping us start this from the ground up," Dewey said. "We wouldn't be where we're at without you all."

Moving forward

The academy can now start to finalize financial details, apply for grants, plan for enrollment, prepare the school building and start hiring staff,

according to board members. With its approved charter, the academy can apply for state Department of Education charter school implementation grants that will be available in the spring.

"If we can dig down and find the drive to take us to the finish line so we can open those doors for the first day of school, we will be so grate-

ful," Dewey said. "Imagine the smiles on those kids' faces. We are not only providing this school for our community, but also a choice in education, which is what every child deserves."

Dewey and board members Sally Steidel, Barb Knop, Patti Rouse and Phil Simmons were available for the audience to answer questions.

South County clash over timber lawsuit

Timber from Page 1A

"They were very cooperative and saw the value in our acquiring the parcel," Morgan said. "I think setting up an adversarial relationship with the state of Oregon and the Oregon Department of Forestry is a bad idea. I can see this dragging on years and years. The only entity that is going to benefit is the law firm representing the counties."

Lianne Thompson, who represents South County on the Board of Commissioners and serves on the Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee, is in favor of the county's inclusion in the lawsuit.

'How do we fulfill our obligation as elected leaders and be good stewards for these resources if we are not at the table?'

Lianne Thompson

Thompson said opting out would deny the county an opportunity to "negotiate to protect our resources."

Thompson said she wants the county to have a say in the

legal dispute. "We are forest trust land counties so we're automatically part of it," she said. "We would have to affirmatively say we don't want to be part of it, in which case we would have no say."

Opting out, she said, would leave Clatsop County out of future decision-making. "If you're a part of the lawsuit and sitting at the table and you get up and walk away, you've denied yourself a voice in whatever happens," Thompson said. "How do we fulfill our obligation as elected leaders and be good stewards for these resources if we are not at the table?"

Thompson said she listens

to both environmental groups and timber companies.

"The timber industry is not monolithic," Thompson said. "If you see them as the enemy and all the same, that doesn't allow for effective negotiation."

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