

Johnson, Boone hold Seaside town hall

Climate change, emergency preparedness, tax reform addressed

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

SEASIDE — Climate change, emergency preparedness and other topics were on the minds of residents who came to City Hall on Saturday, March 31, to ask state Sen. Betsy Johnson and Rep. Deborah Boone questions.

With retirement on the horizon for Boone, some quizzed her about the future of emergency preparedness, her legacy issue.

One of those constituents was Tiffany Mitchell, a candidate running for state House District 32 — Boone's soon-to-be former seat.

"I come from Utah, where we have similar issues living on a fault line," Mitchell said. "Then I moved here and I felt I was moving from one community with emergency planning issues to another facing the same issues. What do you think needs to still happen to

make sure this area is prepared?"

Boone, D-Cannon Beach, mostly reflected on progress the state has made, including legislation that created the Oregon Resilience Plan following the 2011 Japanese tsunami, as well as a bill that allows retired medical professionals to practice in Medical Reserve Corps like the ones in Cannon Beach and Manzanita.

Most of the success Boone said she has seen has been on a local level with neighborhood mapping efforts and preparedness groups.

"They've taken the wand in the relay here and are putting these ideas into place," Boone said.

Johnson, D-Scappoose, emphasized a need for clear messaging when it comes to responding to a disaster, after a tsunami watch issued for the Oregon Coast in January caused local confusion.

In a separate interview, Boone said she sees the future of emergency planning in promoting relocation projects like the Seaside School District is embarking upon, as well as supporting more dual-purpose, resiliency-based development.



BRENNNA VISSER/EO MEDIA GROUP

State Rep. Deborah Boone and state Sen. Betsy Johnson talk at a town hall at Seaside City Hall.

While there is more to be done, Boone said she feels confident in the progress she has seen since taking office in 2004.

"I'm comfortable leaving now. (Emergency planning) has taken on a life of its own," Boone said. "I'm sure everyone in this room knows some-

one connected to the resiliency world."

What the state is doing to address climate change was also on the audience's mind at the town hall, including Oregon's cap-and-trade bill, which failed to move forward in the last session.

The proposal was modeled

on programs in California, as well as Ontario and Quebec, Canada, that set a cap on greenhouse-gas emissions and force large polluters to buy allowances if their emissions exceed the cap.

Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson asked Johnson what it would

take to balance making a cleaner environment with the interests of the timber industry, which could be adversely affected.

Progress passing cap-and-trade in Oregon is stop-and-go due to larger unanswered questions about how a law would be implemented after an audit of the state Department of Environmental Quality showed there is inadequate staffing to carry out a program, Johnson said.

How money would be appropriated and to what types of projects also needs to be refined, Johnson said, but she still believes it will be the "signature bill of the next session."

"We don't want to accidentally do damage like raising gasoline prices, or put an older mill like Wauna Mill, which employs hundreds of people and invests heavily to reduce pollution footprint, that it's not regulated out of business," she said.

Other topics included tax reform, options for an overcrowded Clatsop County Jail, and issues with the Oregon Department of Transportation having enough staff to carry out projects listed in the \$5.3 billion transportation package passed last year.



EDWARD STRATTON/THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Tiffany Mitchell, center, stands with supporters during a kickoff to her state House campaign at Buoy Beer Co.

Local activist, advocate begins state House run

Mitchell running for Boone's seat

By Edward Stratton
The Daily Astorian

When Melissa Ousley dropped out of the state House race to replace retiring state Rep. Deborah Boone, Tiffany Mitchell said she felt like there was no longer a candidate quite representing her views.

So Mitchell became the third to file in the Democratic primary in May for state House District 32, along with Tillamook County Commissioner Tim Josi and local attorney John Orr. She kicked her campaign off Monday amid a packed taproom at Buoy Beer Co.

"When she dropped out of the race, I felt this void that really needed to be represented," Mitchell said of Ousley. "I listened to the other two candidates, and it's not that they're not good people. They just didn't represent my values or the values of so many other people that I had talked to that had also expressed that same regret that Melissa dropped out."

Mitchell is a case management coordinator for the state Department of Human Services who moved to Oregon from Utah in 2015 with her husband, who works for Pacific Power. She is an

organizer with progressive activist group Indivisible North Coast Oregon and has focused her campaign on broader social policies such as affordable housing, health care, reproductive health, stable education funding and equal pay. She has received endorsements from a variety of labor, education, women's and conservation groups.

"I believe that my vote will always fall on the side of the working-class person, because that's who I am," she said. "I have believed for a long time that we all deserve fairness in the way that we're treated. We all deserve health care. We all deserve the things that are supposed to make our nation great."

When she withdrew, Ousley said she was concerned about splitting the vote among three Democratic candidates and that her base was not strong enough to prevail. Both Mitchell and Orr, running more grassroots campaigns, face an uphill battle against Josi. The former state representative has broader name recognition and more political contributions, including from a multitude of large companies, Boone, D-Cannon Beach, and state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose.

Seaside teacher Vineeta Lower has filed as a Republican, and Brian Halvorsen as an Independent.

Candidates talk job creation, county housing shortage

Eight candidates vying for three seats

By Jack Heffernan
EO Media Group

At a forum that covered a range of Clatsop County issues, a few seemed to be a priority for candidates and spectators alike: job creation, emergency preparedness, a November jail bond, housing and the environment.

Eight candidates for three seats on the county Board of Commissioners in the May election gathered Tuesday night for a forum at Astoria High School sponsored by the American Association of University Women and The Daily Astorian.

Commissioner Lianne Thompson is facing chal-

lenger Susana Gladwin — a Jewell farmer — in the race for the District 5 seat, which encompasses Cannon Beach and much of the South County. Both discussed housing, economic development and emergency preparedness — three topics Thompson has often highlighted at commission meetings, as well. The most specific proposals from each candidate came in a discussion about preparedness for a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami.

Thompson said it is critical to train residents in disaster preparation, build up supplies and establish relationships with other at-risk counties. She mentioned her attendance at statewide conferences, which has drawn criticism from other commissioners due to her travel expenses, as useful in this

context. "We have friends all over the state to help us," Thompson said.

Gladwin said she was isolated for four days on her Jewell farm in 1996 due to flooding on the Nehalem River. She said Seaside needs bicycle evacuation drills, bridges and more truck routes out of cities.

"We plan constantly about how as a community we will survive because we know we'll be isolated after a bad earthquake and the bridges are down," she said.

Both Thompson and Gladwin largely avoided addressing a question about the upcoming bond measure that would relocate and expand the county jail at a cost of more than \$20 million. Most of the other candidates supported the need for a new jail with the exception of McCa-

rtin, who questioned whether such an expense is justified.

Candidates to replace Commissioner Lisa Clement in District 3 are Peter Roscoe — a former restaurateur and Astoria city councilor — Doug Thompson — a property manager and also a former Astoria city councilor — and Pamela Wev — an Astoria land use planning consultant.

In District 1, Mark Kujala — owner of Skipanon Brand Seafood and a former Warrenton mayor — George McCartin — a retired attorney and regular presence at public meetings — and Andy Davis — a medical data analyst — are vying for the seat being vacated by Scott Lee, the board's chairman. While each candidate listed some specific points of interest, they all agreed on one area in need of change: the commission's functionality.

Clatsop Democrats elect Larry Taylor as chairman

The Clatsop County Democratic Central Committee elected Larry Taylor to lead the party as chairperson, following the resignation of Doug Thompson. The vote came during the March 26 meeting of the committee. Taylor will fill Thompson's unexpired term until the party's regular elections in Novem-



Larry Taylor

ber. Taylor is retired and served as county chair from 2006-2016. He is active with the progressive movement in Oregon, having led the fight against the LNG facility within the state Democratic Party. He is also president of the broadcast nonprofit Uphill Media.

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