

Despite perceptions, rental permits are flat

Rentals from Page 1A

Local property managers and real estate agents echo this sentiment for the most part, arguing that in Cannon Beach the difference lies in the type of customer and the types of homes available.

A common misconception among buyers is that it is possible to pay for a second home by renting it out as a short-term rental, Brian Olson, the owner of Beachcomber Vacation Homes, said. Even in the best of circumstances, it is difficult for someone to justify the cost of a vacation home with just the income from a rental.

"You're lucky if you can break even in Cannon Beach," Olson said.

With a median home price in Cannon Beach at \$550,000 — almost double that of Seaside — and rules that prevent more than half of the property owners from renting more than once every two weeks, renting a home as a source of income is a less realistic goal than it may be at other places along the coast, said Alaina Giguere, a real estate agent in Cannon Beach.

This reality brings a different type of customer to the market.

"Someone who buys a \$3 million house ... they're not looking for a nightly rental on that. They just want the option (to rent). But first, they want a



COLIN MURPHEY/THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Vacation rental properties are common near the waterfront in Cannon Beach.

home they can use," Giguere said.

Perception

Even if the number of permits issued has not significantly grown, the perception is that more vacation rentals are coming into town. This is in large

part due to the fact a permit count doesn't reflect people who operate illegally.

Go on Airbnb any day of the week, and more than 300 lodging options will appear for Cannon Beach. With second homes accounting for about 60 percent of the housing stock,

and with only 20 percent of those registered as rentals, many could be operating under the regulatory radar.

How to find and track illegal rentals has long eluded the city, Barnes said. Following in the footsteps of Gearhart and Seaside, Cannon Beach signed

a contract with STR Helper, a program that helps identify illegal vacation rentals, and is in the process of hiring a code enforcement officer.

But until then, Barnes said, "There's a big mystery there."

The perception that vacation rental activity has in-

creased could also be due to the fact more homes are being rented in the offseason, in part because of a growing client base in Portland and better marketing.

"We have more advanced bookings than we ever got before. I think we're learning to fill up the spaces better," said Linda Beck-Sweeney, the owner of Cannon Beach Vacation Rentals.

While permits remained flat, city lodging tax revenue from vacation rentals jumped from about \$269,000 in 2012 to more than \$420,000 in 2017.

Regulation

Whatever the cause, the fear that a growing number of rentals are taking up housing for year-round residents and impacting livability has inspired the city to consider revisions to vacation rental regulations.

Potential changes include taking away the ability to rent a unit nightly, which some on the City Council see as a disincentive to prospective homebuyers interested in turning their property into a rental.

Whether that action would lead to any tangible reduction in vacation rentals remains to be seen.

"I don't know whether that will have an appreciable difference on the 'impacts on the community issue,'" Barnes said.



BRENNA VISSERT/THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Matt Owen thanks guests at a fundraiser held by the Cannon Beach American Legion Post 168 to raise money for his cancer treatment.

Support shown for Matt Owen

Bartender from Page 1A

"I suppose you can't put this in the paper, but I guess my reaction would be, 'Holy s---!' I honestly didn't think I was that well-liked," Owen laughed. "It feels wonderful to know the community comes to support its residents when one is in need."

In a packed legion hall, every customer and colleague has their own connection to Owen.

"He's just so funny, kind and generous," said Nannette Cooper, a regular customer who first met Owen at the Seaside Golf Course. "He's just so positive, and with a situation like his, man, that's half the battle."

Jose Sosa, who used to work with Owen at the Lumberyard, remembers him as a role model as a teenager.

"On the outside he can look intimidating, but he is one of the sweetest people I know," Sosa said. "He's the type of

guy who will always stick up for you."

Tonya Spath, another former co-worker, remembers a particularly busy and understaffed New Year's Eve shift, where Owen, as the manager, was pitching in to do everything from manning the door, serving orders and washing the dishes.

What makes the moment "Matt," Spath said, is the way he kept his cool.

"I remember we were all like, 'This sucks!'" Spath said. "He said, 'Yeah, it does. But we'll get through it.' That's what makes him special. He's always calm. He's always Matt."

It's a mentality he is sticking with as he faces the unknowns that come with cancer treatment, and one he hopes to keep sharing behind the counter at the American Legion.

"Sure, I have some worries," he said. "But I'm optimistic."

American legion accepting donations for Christmas gifts

Dec. 7 deadline for donations

Cannon Beach Gazette

The American Legion of Cannon Beach Post 168 is accepting Christmas gift donations until Dec. 7, but this year will not be accepting food donations. Hundreds of pounds of perishable and non-perishable food and gifts were distributed to needy families of our communi-

ty and the legion thanks the community for 41 years of support toward the Christmas basket program. Low-income households — some of which have single, older people living alone — sign up to receive one or more gift baskets to receive right before Christmas.

This year, the legion will partner with the food bank to help with donations for Thanksgiving dinner rather than collect and distribute food directly, Commander Don Boehm said.

Three candidates vie for council

Ballot from Page 1A

due to low voter turnout. It will go up to 19 cents per thousand of assessed property up from an average 14 cents voted in five years ago. With the new rate, a homeowner would pay \$19 a year on a \$100,000 house. Earlier in the year, the board indicated an intention to keep the levy rate the same out of fear that voters would have "tax fatigue" from multiple levies and bonds coming on the ballot in November, but decided an increase was needed to cover growing costs. Between 2019 to 2024, the levy is estimated to bring the district about \$1.2 million over five years. The last levy brought in approximately \$700,000 over five years.



County marijuana tax

Clatsop County voters will decide on the general-election ballot in November whether to place a 3 percent tax on recreational marijuana. Revenue from the handful of dispensaries outside city limits would be about \$50,000 annually, county staff estimates.

The state ballot measure in 2014 that legalized marijuana



Robin Risley



Greg Swedenborg



Mike Benefield

sales gave cities and counties the ability to impose a tax of up to 3 percent if approved by voters in a general election. No recreational dispensaries existed outside city limits in 2016, the most recent general election. The tax would be effective 30 days after voter approval.

County jail bond

Voters will decide on

the general-election ballot whether or not to support a \$20 million bond to relocate the Clatsop County Jail from Astoria to Warrenton. If the bond is approved, the county would relocate the jail from Duane Street in Astoria to the former North Coast Youth Correctional Facility. Jail capacity would rise from 60 inmates to 148 with room for future expansion.

Wanted: Gallery Group seeks coordinator for the city's thriving artistic community

By Nancy McCarthy
For Cannon Beach Gazette

There's an art to promoting an arts town, and the Cannon Beach Gallery Group is looking for someone with that skill.

For eight years, professional event organizer Bonnie Gilchrist, of Lake Oswego, worked with gallery owners in the Gallery Group to promote the group's two annual events, Spring Unveiling and Plein Air. She also assisted the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce in organizing the Stormy Weather Arts Festival.

But Gilchrist retired this year, and the group is seeking someone who demonstrates the art of promoting the arts. The application deadline is Nov. 15. Check the Gallery Group's website for details.

"We're looking for some-

one who really knows PR, who is good with writing and can promote Cannon Beach as an arts town," said Jane Brumfield, co-owner of Imprint Gallery.

Where the person lives isn't as important as much as their knowledge of and interest in Cannon Beach.

"It's more important that it's the right person than where they live," said group President Jeffrey Hull, painter and gallery owner.

Allyn Cantor, owner of White Bird Gallery, agreed.

"Portland, or Seattle doesn't matter," she said. "For a lot of people, this is their 'spot.'"

Gilchrist said she enjoyed working with gallery owners, meeting artists and forming lifelong friendships in the community. She also appreciated the freedom to expand the two festivals and bring more visitors to Can-

non Beach.

But there were challenges, too, including working with different personalities, gleaning information on deadline from busy gallery owners, establishing relationships with distant editors and working within the city's restrictive sign ordinance that prohibits event banners.

The new Earth & Ocean Arts Festival next September, which will replace Plein Air, presents more challenges, Gilchrist said.

"Creating and promoting a 'new' festival will take a lot of work, as it will have to be carefully crafted to appeal to the demographic that includes art buyers (and) collectors," she added.

It will take a person who can deal with the diversity of arts represented in the group's 11 galleries. They include printmakers, jewelry designers, painters, sculp-

tors, photographers, and blown and fused glass artists.

While the Gallery Group, a nonprofit business association, includes a diversity of arts and artists, there's more cooperation than competition among the galleries, Hull said.

"Maybe it sounds idealistic, but I do think we all help each other, just by being here, being successful," Hull said. The budget for the new coordinator, including salary and expenses, is \$20,000.

The Gallery Group's goal is to remind people that Cannon Beach is the go-to place for art.

"We've got such high-quality art in this town for such a small town, and we have the backdrop of the natural beauty to match it," Cantor said. "And it's a friendly place to come — it's not pretentious — to look for art," Cantor said.

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