

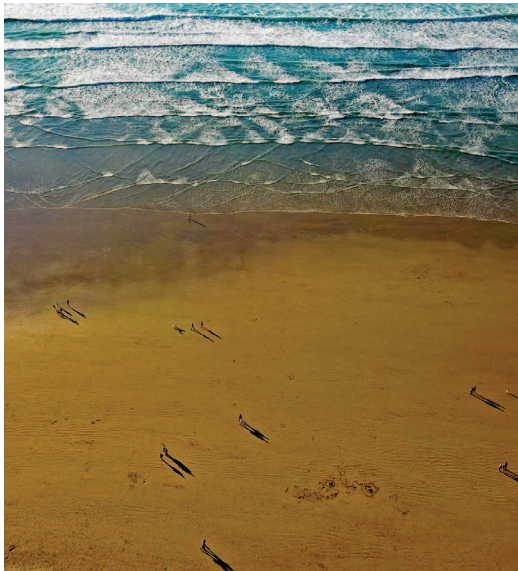
Review: City hall bond, staff changes are among the city’s top stories in 2018

Continued from Page A1

City Hall bond
Discussions of building a new City Hall and Police Station have also dominated headlines this year. Issues surrounding City Hall have been documented for more than a decade.
Conversations about replacing City Hall resurfaced this spring at the urging of City Manager Bruce St. Denis, who has concerns about the building in a tsunami or earthquake. The building would be vulnerable to a minor seismic event or a medium-to-large sized tsunami, St. Denis said. The new building would be seen as a central location for emergency response and communications. Councilors are currently considering whether to for a bond issue in November, which could vary between \$14.5 million to more than \$27 million, depending on whether the new structure is built at its current location on Gower Street or the 55-acre site east of U.S. Highway 101 known as South Wind.

Staff changes
Over the course of a year, Cannon Beach City Hall saw complete staff turnover of the city’s three department heads. City Manager Bruce St. Denis came to the city last December, filling the position left open by former manager Brant Kucera in June. In January, both former Public Works Director Jim Arndt and former City Planner Mark Barnes announced their retirement. Karen La Bonte as assistant public works director acted as an interim until she was chosen to fill the job long-term in May. In October, new Community Development Director Jeff Adams came from Georgia to take the reins upon Barnes’ November retirement.

Dune grading
After more than a year of work sessions and public testimony, the Planning Commission this November



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Drone view as people walk near the surf at Cannon Beach.



Brenna Visser/Cannon Beach Gazette
Jonathan Jessop grades sand off a sculpture while the family dog takes advantage of the sun during Sandcastle Day.



Brenna Visser/Cannon Beach Gazette
Corey Heikkilä of Portland works on the finishing touches of his sandcastle for his team Time Dye during Sandcastle Day.



Colin Murphey/Daily Astorian
Lisa Habecker and Ellison Randall release young common murrelets into the surf near Haystack Rock.



Colin Murphey/Daily Astorian
Eric Owen and Brooke Watkins with the Haystack Rock Awareness Program examine a dead bird during a survey near Cannon Beach.

recommended an updated Fore-dune Management plan to the City Council, which guides how and where dunes can be graded for views, as well as how they should be monitored after the work is done. Dozens of homeowners testified for months to the planning commission about the effects of sand inundation, and how those who bought homes at Breakers Point were sold property under the idea code allowed the ability to maintain beach access and view. The recom-

mendation came however with a last-minute condition — that the City Council should question whether grading for views should be done at all — which could significantly shift the tenor of future public hearings on the matter.
Former Cannon Beach Elementary School site
Four years after Cannon Beach Elementary School closed, Seaside School District in November announced it was seriously consider-

ing selling the former school property to the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum to make it a cultural center. Though other offers have been made in the past, this is the first time the district has publicly expressed intention to commit to a sale. The building has long been an object of desire for the city, which has discussed buying it as some form of event or community center on and off for years. If the sale is finalized, the museum hopes to work with the Greater Ecola

Natural Area, a group that has long advocated for the school to be a cultural center, to renovate the space to honor the history of both the tribes and the elementary school, introduce new trails adjoining the park and creating more parking.
Bunnies
Though hardly a new phenomenon, the prevalence of the Cannon Beach bunnies took over headlines this year after some residents in Tolovana asked the

city to do something about the large rabbit population, which neighbors have said have left lawns covered in thick layers of rabbit pellets and burrow holes and bring health concerns. While the city has chosen not to get involved at this time, the story garnered the attention of people across the country, even inspiring a “Save the Cannon Beach bunnies” petitions on Change.org. For now, the bunnies are still presumably nibbling on the grass near Tolovana Inn.

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