

## Escape Lodging, city maintain RV partnership

By CARA MICO  
For Cannon Beach Gazette

Imagine what Cannon Beach would have experienced if the Rajneeshees had settled in Cannon Beach.

After a renewal of the contract between the city and Escape Lodging to manage the city-owned RV Park, on Wednesday, March 6, members of the City Council met with representatives of the lodging company for a look back and update of the RV Park and how it went from a potential cult site to a thriving visitor destination.

Escape Lodging President Patrick Nofield displayed a 1985 Eugene Register-Guard article about how the Rajneeshees were scoping land in rural Cannon Beach for their center which prompted the city's quick purchase of the 52 acres for \$2 million.

The RV Park's history was a part of Escape Lodging's annual report in preparation of their contract renewal with the city. Nofield brought key members of his team to discuss how the RV park fared over the last year, and shared the parks storied history as well.

The city later purchased the land and contracted with Escape Lodging in 2002 to manage the RV park and resort. Since that time, the city has reimbursed the private business for any expenses incurred while income goes directly into the city bank accounts.

Nofield said that there were "no regrets" in the site purchase and shared wisdom from the Steve Martin, his business partner and mentor in the venture. Martin died in 2000.

"Steve said that the money is a 'report card' as to how well we're serving people," Nofield remembered.

In exchange Escape Lodging gets a small monthly fee and a percentage of the profits, and during the winter months sometimes those profits are slim to none. This past year the net profit for the site was close to \$500,000, although January and February bookings were "extremely low."

The city put profits to use, Nofield said. Recent upgrades included improvements to sanitation, electrical and wireless communications.

The park has also recently added an electric vehicle charging station which is being used one to two times per day.

Bigger projects coming up will need council approval, Escape Lodging CFO Becki Filan said, but the park needs constant maintenance. Small ongoing needs like a new HVAC unit for the pool and picnic table repairs are on the list, but the roadbed needs major repairs and that won't be a cheap fix.

"We take expenditures over a certain level to the council," Filan said.

City Councilor Nancy McCarthy asked Nofield's input regarding the ongoing discussions of alternative uses for the site.

The city has added land adjacent to the RV Park as a possible location for a future city hall or public safety building. The land has also been considered as a site for affordable housing.

Nofield said Escape Lodging would like "a seat at the table," whether future uses on neighboring land include tiny homes or a new city hall.

## Warren Way reconfiguration ahead

Safer intersection is sought

By CARA MICO  
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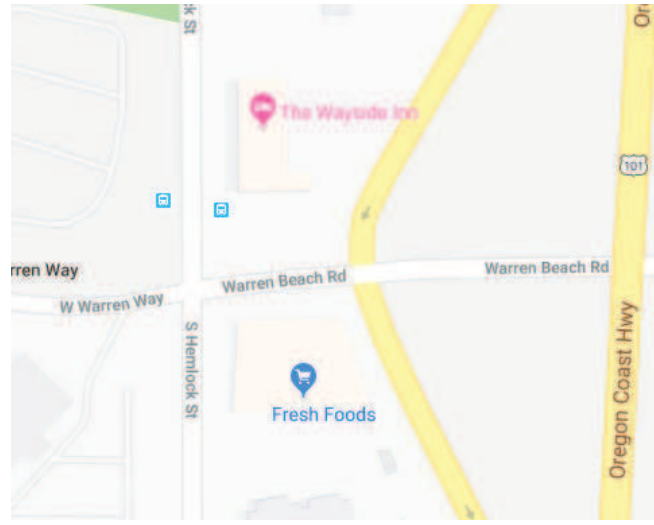
The Warren Way Hemlock intersection has been problematic since the installation of the candlestick barriers, considered eyesores by many.

Public Works Director Karen LaBonte is hoping to provide a remedy that will satisfy residents and help visitors to make safer traffic choices.

After the intersection was redesigned in 2013 by Lancaster Engineering, the City has received a number of complaints. A single point in time assessment by the engineering firm suggested that the intersection was working as designed, but the major complaints are around aesthetics and congestion out of Tolovana Inn.

While the latest crosswalk additions are an improvement, and ample street lighting and low speed limits minimize accidents at the intersection, it's still an issue from a public safety perspective.

Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said at the March 12 City Council work session meeting that a lot of the traffic accidents at the intersection are from confusion, "people treat the intersec-



Google Maps

The Warren Way/Hemlock intersection is getting a fresh look.

tion like it's a four-way stop, even though it isn't."

Those familiar with the intersection know that on peak summer days, the intersection is a problem. In addition to speeding cars exiting the highway, wandering pedestrians trying to navigate poorly placed crosswalks and blocked traffic out of Tolovana Inn make the intersection one of the most dangerous intersections in town.

Public Works asked Lancaster Engineering to reevaluate the situation to determine if the candlestick configuration was the only option for traffic control and engineer Brian Davis brought a few example solutions for the council to consider, including extending the south crosswalk on

Hemlock, narrowing the right hand turn off eastbound Warren with paint or planters, and a roundabout or a four-way stop.

"This is a great example of things that keep engineers awake at night. There's a lot of asphalt and not a lot of guidance," said Davis.

According to Davis, the intersection currently is considered functional by engineering standards, even though a 2016 evaluation gave it only a passing grade.

"There is slight congestion at peak hours and volume to capacity is about half

full," Davis said.

But traffic volumes at this intersection have grown over the past two years, largely thanks to economic growth, and if that trend continues Cannon Beach will have six years at most before major changes will have to be made.

There was general council support for a four way intersection, as it would require the fewest resources to solve one of the major safety concerns, but Davis believes that a four way stop has the potential to cause more traffic on Hemlock making operations worse, adding that safety concerns were an overriding factor.

Doug Neely of the Tolovana Inn weighed in and suggested that extending the southern crosswalk would help people cross more confidently. He also offered to extend irrigation into the triangle in between the Inn's driveway and Hemlock should the city decide to remove the asphalt and plant the strip with landscaping.

LaBonte will get estimates for the proposed work and bring the project back to the council for consideration sometime in the near future.

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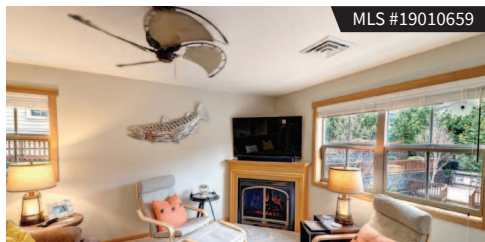
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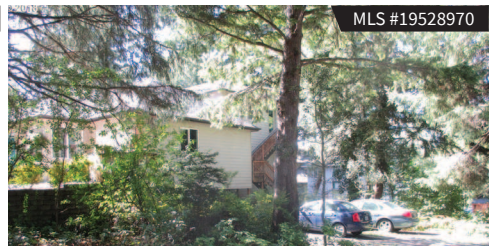
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