



Petitioner submits signatures for mayor's recall

Widdop might have to resign or anticipate election results

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

The Clatsop County Clerk and Elections Office are verifying signatures on a petition circulated by Gearhart resident Harold Gable in an effort to remove Mayor Dianne Widdop from office.

Gable submitted 114 signatures Feb. 11 to Gearhart City Administrator Chad Sweet, who serves as the city elections official. Sweet confirmed the number of signatures and that the forms were completed

correctly. The information then went to Clatsop County elections officials, who will verify the signatures.

Gable needed to submit 102 verified signatures — or 15 percent of the total votes cast for governor in Gearhart's district during the most recent election — by next week's deadline to continue the recall process.

If the required number of signatures is verified, officials will notify Widdop, who then will



Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop

have five days to submit her resignation or a statement of justification no more than 200 words to be included on the election ballot.

County elections officials informed Sweet they intend to have the signatures verified within the next two weeks.

Gable said he has a team of individuals ready to go after more signatures before the deadline if some of the submitted signatures are not qualified. He believes that should not be an issue.

"I feel we've already got that done," Gable said.

He felt the collection of signatures went well and they gathered "more than enough."

"We had a great team of people," he said. "We would have liked to get another hundred or so, but I think if it goes to vote, it will show up there."

Even once the signatures are verified, his work is not done, he said.

"We're in for whatever it takes," he added.

If Widdop does not resign, an election must be held within 35 days of the expiration of the resignation period.

Gearhart will incur the cost of the election, which is estimated at about \$6,000 to \$8,000 and not previously included in the city's budget, Sweet said. Already the city has spent time and money to

handle the situation, he added.

In the event Widdop is voted out of office, City Council President Sue Lorain will serve the remainder of Widdop's term — about two years — and the council will appoint someone to fill her vacated seat.

Gable said he's confident the recall will be successful and that it would be in the city's best interest for Widdop to resign to avoid the city spending money on an election.

Widdop said she would not be "bullied into resigning. The petition signers represent less than 13 percent of Gearhart voters. I believe it is necessary to hold the election and allow all Gearhart voters to have their say on the issue...."

Seaside businesses object to proposed sales tax

By Nancy McCarthy
Seaside Signal

Local business operators said during a meeting Feb. 12 they may not be able to keep their doors open if a sales tax is adopted to help fund a \$31 million expansion of the Seaside Civic and Convention Center and construction of a parking structure.

"I've gone door-to-door in the Gilbert District, and 90 percent of the businesses are against it," local graphic artist Kathleen Peterson said. "They don't want to be taxed."

In addition, Peterson said, the construction project, which would double the size of the convention center and add a multistory 500-space parking structure, would further impact the community's economy, which is just now recovering from a long recession.

"They're hanging on, hoping to recover, and they feel it will be another blow to them," Peterson said.

Peterson's comments came during the Seaside Downtown Development Association's regular Thursday morning breakfast meeting Feb. 12. The room was packed with business owners — many who do not usually attend the weekly breakfasts — who wanted to hear a presentation by Russ Vandenberg, the convention center's general manager.

Although the construction project and financing proposal are still in the development stage, the issue is expected to come before the City Council this year. It will not be subject to a public vote.

This was Vandenberg's second presentation; he spoke to the Seaside Chamber of Commerce Jan. 30. Since then, opposition to a proposed sales tax and a bump in lodging taxes has gained momentum.

Vandenberg said the convention center faced the loss of groups that had rented the center for conferences for years but had grown too large for the center, which can handle only 200 people. The groups consisted of school administrators, student councils, ham radio operators, bridge and

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ANDREW R. TONRY PHOTO

Volunteers from Seaside schools worked behind the counter at a local Subway restaurant Feb. 5. Their volunteer labor resulted in \$200 more to each school's coffers.

Volunteers SANDWICH their time between school and snacks

Subway stores offer portion of sales to local schools

By Andrew R. Tonry
for the Seaside Signal

Around tables full of snickering, giddy children, the line snaked almost to the door. At the register, a customer took the sandwich someone had just made him and offered a more earnest, heartfelt thanks than usually heard in the world of fast food.

"Thank you all so much for doing this," the customer said, sub sandwich in hand. "You're doing an awesome job. Just awesome."

His gratitude was directed towards the many volunteers behind the counter who, packed elbow to elbow, helped assemble his foot-long turkey club.

For two hours, Feb. 5, teachers and faculty members from schools along the North Coast volunteered at several Subway restaurants. In exchange for their time, franchise owner Mike Davies



ANDREW R. TONRY PHOTO

Molly Aubray shares a laugh with a Subway customer while finishing up a "guest sandwich" during a two-hour fundraiser at a local Subway restaurant recently.

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Free conference gave local woman WINGS

One-day session helps women go to school and begin a new life

A victim of childhood sexual abuse, destabilizing reverberations echoed into Nichole Soares' adult life. At 31, after leaving an abusive partner, she moved into government subsidized housing with her children, aged 4 and 8.

After moving into her home, Soares received a flyer for an upcoming event. It read: "WINGS: Women Interested in Going to School."

"That started my journey," she said. It's been four years since.

Last December, Soares, who lives in Clatsop Plains, just north of Gearhart, earned

her bachelor's degree in liberal arts with double minors in sociology and anthropology from Eastern Oregon University. Two years earlier, at Clatsop Community College, she finished her associate's degree in liberal arts with honors.

No longer in subsidized housing, Soares now volunteers at The Harbor, in Astoria, a support center for victims of abuse, as well as at the Crisis Line. She plans to earn a master's degree in social work while focusing on rehabilitating children, juveniles and other victims of physical and sexual abuse.

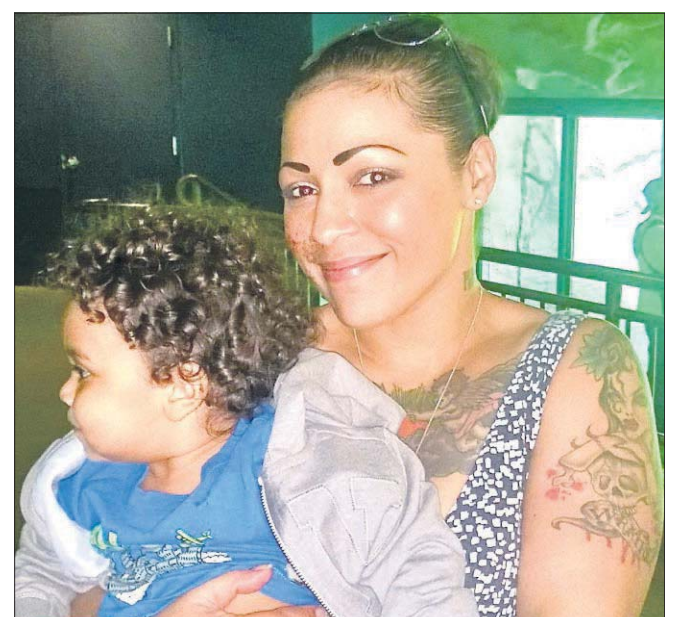
"WINGS 100 percent got me here," said Soares. "That really was something that changed my life. In that one moment, in that one day, it changed my life completely."

When she arrived at the free, one-day conference, in 2010, she wasn't sure what to expect. Quickly, though, Soares knew she'd found the right place.

"What really resonated with me is that the WINGS conference is all about reaching out to women from all walks of life. That made me feel accepted right off the bat," she said.

"A woman got up and was talking about being a single parent and reaching a kind of plateau in her life where she didn't know what to do with her life," Soares added. "She told her story, and I felt like I understood what she was saying."

The effect was profound and immediate.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Nichole Soares, who holds her son, Phillip, says she turned her life around after attending a one-day WINGS conference four years ago.

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