

Hyak Building project faces a new challenge

Organization and partners say project still will move forward

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

The Hyak Building project in Seaside is facing yet another challenge, this time in the form of soon-to-be neighbors who don't want the facility nearby.

The building in question is a large multi-unit dwelling on the corner of Edgewood Street and Avenue S that is currently possessed by the Clatsop County Housing Authority. The county authority is ready to transfer the property and building to the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority, which has partnered with Helping Hands to use part of the building to house men who are in the last phase of the Seaside-based non-profit's re-entry program. Clatsop Community Action also plans to contribute to the project by providing rental assistance funding

for the building's first-floor independent living units through a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program called Continuum of Care.

Some people are unhappy with that prospect and are asking that Helping Hands find a new location.

At last week's Clatsop County Housing Authority meeting, Rosemary Baker-Monaghan, who lives near the building on Edgewood Street, said the non-conforming use of the Hyak Building as a multifamily dwelling has lapsed and is no longer allowed.

"I think the project that is planned for this property is going to have to find another location," said Baker-Monaghan, a former Seaside mayor and the executive director of Astoria's Liberty Theater.

The property, she said, must now conform to the residential medium density, or R2 zone, which only allows a single-family dwelling or duplex.

A nonconforming use, according to Seaside's Zon-



KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO

The Hyak Building is located on the corner of Edgewood Street and Avenue S, and some of the neighbors are not happy with the prospect of Helping Hands using the building for a project.

ing Ordinance, is the use of a structure or lot, which existed prior to the adoption or amendment of the ordinance, that does not conform to the new zone regulations. However, if a nonconforming use is discontinued for a period of 12 months, subsequent uses of the lot, parcel or structure have to conform to the zoning ordinance. No one has occupied the Hyak Building for a couple years. The property was purchased by Clatsop County Housing

Authority in early 2012, and a few months later it was officially intended for use by Helping Hands.

Baker-Monaghan has taken up her concerns with the city of Seaside, as well, and is relying on a case from Clackamas County that took place in the early 1990s as support for her position. In Clackamas County, a dwelling in an exclusive farm use zone that was used as a single family residence lost its right to the nonconforming residential use – which was

not a permissible use in the exclusive farm use district – after its occupant died and the house was unoccupied for a few years. In that case, the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals upheld the decision of the county hearings officer.

Baker-Monaghan is not the only person who has raised concerns. Another woman, who described herself as a "concerned property owner," in February sent an email to Seaside Mayor Don Larson, Northwest Oregon Housing Authority Executive Director Todd Johnston, Helping Hands, Seaside City Manager Mark Winstanley, Clatsop County Commissioner Sarah Nebeker and others.

"I am writing to strongly protest this location as an owner of a single-family home on the same block," she wrote. "The south end of Seaside is a quiet neighborhood made up of primarily single-family homes. The thought that someone would insert this type of non-residential use and in essence devalue all

of the surrounding homes is 100 percent wrong. Not to mention potentially inserting a criminal element."

She described Helping Hands' project as "a drug and alcohol half-way house." The house, though, is not designated for convicted criminals or former prisoners; it would be used for housing formerly homeless men who are in the "pregraduate" stage of Helping Hands' multi-month re-entry program. The occupants would be enrolled in school or carry jobs and would pay a small rent to help cover the lease.

The backlash from neighbors is just the most recent in a series of roadblocks faced by Helping Hands in the process of using the house. The organization had struck a partnership with the Clatsop County Housing Authority to lease the building in August 2012, but the deal hit a series of obstacles that ended up causing financial stress for Helping Hands.

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Tsunami warning key sleeves get mixed reaction from visitors

Tsunami from Page 1A

"It's kind of a catch-22," Hudson said.

She's gone through two cases of the sleeves and has requested more, but with business picking up for the late spring and summer months, she is unsure whether she'll continue to use them.

Mary Vellutini, general manager of Sand & Sea, said they haven't experienced a similar negative reaction.

"Basically, I think the public is informed enough about Seaside and the chance of the tsunami," she said.

Finding a balance between enticing visitors to come to Seaside and enjoy their vacation and also spreading the word about potential hazards, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, "is something this community is always going

to have a challenge with," Dugan said.

Over the slower winter months, Sand & Seas has not distributed that many key sleeves, but with business picking up, Vellutini believes they'll start using more. She thinks they will be effective in bringing more attention to a potential tsunami event and helping visitors feel prepared.

"Any little bit of information will help them in case we do have a tsunami," she said.

The hotel also has binders in each unit with a page about tsunamis that provide evacuation instructions and maps. Additionally, staff is trained to direct people toward appropriate evacuation routes.

Some hotels decided not to use the key sleeves. Best Western declined, citing a corporate policy that prohibits using any other key

envelope but the ones corporate approves. Worldmark by Wyndham already has an evacuation plan that incorporates directing people to the facility's parking structure, said Jon Rahl, director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau.

The big picture

The key sleeves are the main feature of the Seaside's new awareness initiative for hospitality industries, which started last spring when the Clatsop County Emergency Manager told the city funds from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management were available, Rahl said. After getting approval to fund the project through state, they start putting out the key sleeves late last fall.

"This was a touch point we could have with visitors to

increase awareness and give some easy steps" to evacuate during a tsunami, Rahl said, adding it is the city's job to keep both residents and guests informed that earthquakes and tsunamis are hazards in the area.

The city is using the fire department to distribute the sleeves, Rahl said, because the agency already has regular safety contact with hospitality workers during annual inspections.

He doesn't know how many hotels ultimately will end up using the key sleeves. With summer approaching, he said, the city might make another push to distribute the material. The overall project cost about \$5,000 – paid for by state funds – and some staff time.

Other products have been developed by the state as part of a separate Oregon Coast Visitor Tsunami Awareness project. Those products, which are available free of charge to hospitality groups, include Living on Shaky Ground magazine in English and Spanish, a two-sided poster on earthquakes and tsunamis, a printable table tent with information and an Oregon Tsunami Waves video that can be played on in-room television channels.

"The purpose of the Oregon Coast Visitor Tsunami Awareness project is to improve the visitor's awareness of the tsunami hazards and to support the hospitality industry on the Oregon coast in becoming more prepared for tsunami events," the Oregon

Office of Emergency Management website states.

The project is being funded by the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program, a part of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

While no one product, such as the key holders, will fully prepare the community and its guests for a natural disaster, every little bit helps to increase awareness and prevent worst-case scenarios, Dugan said.

"I think not just this one thing is going to be a cure all, but I think it's a cooperation or coalition between all entities," he said. "At least it gets people talking about it."

For more information, call the Seaside Visitors Bureau at 503-738-3097.



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