

Brew pub plan gets conditional go-ahead

Beer, cooking odors, said to be contained

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Despite questions about potential odors from a meat smoker and beer-making operation, a plan to convert the Gearhart grocery into Gearhart Station, a brew pub and deli, won Planning Commission approval Thursday, March 10.

The final verdict: The proposal fills a need in the community and meets the goals of the comprehensive plan.

Planning Commissioner Virginia Dideum was one of the four who voted to grant approval to the plan. "I'm one of those people who go to Fort George," she said. "I go to Buoy Beer. I would love to have some place to get dinner. This would be good for the community."

The transition is motivated by slow sales at the grocery store, according to the owners Molly and Terry Lowenberg. The grocery store has been for sale for over two years and has struggled to compete with regional grocers north and south of Gearhart.

"I go into that store," Dideum said. "I go into that store lots of times. And I'm the only person in that store."

The Pacific Way property, located in a commercial zone, is considered a café under the city's code.

Commissioners considered public need, hours of operation and a requirement the business operate at least 11 months per year.

Commissioners also studied parking, traffic patterns and septic, which has won conditional approval from the county.

Residents voiced concern about potential odors from smoked meats and the brewing process.

A system that size is more kept inside than out, Seaside Brewing co-owner and brewer Vince Burg said. "Inside the walls, smell," Burg said. "Outside the walls, pretty minimal."

Most brewing is done during the day, especially for a smaller brewery like the one proposed, he added.

Beer would be sold for customers within the store, and available for takeout in containers, engineer Mark Mead of Mead Engineering said on behalf of the applicant. The food area would be separated from



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gearhart Grocery has been a gathering place for many years.

the bar by a short wooden wall and families would be served at the nine tables, with a 40-seat area. The brewing area would be visible through a glassed area.

Mead said the owner felt the brew pub was needed "because

there wasn't one in Gearhart itself."

"He thought about doing just a restaurant, but a restaurant alone needed something else with it," Mead said. "By adding craft beer, you're add-

ing something that isn't there. He's put a lot of thought and research what to put in that building so it just doesn't sit empty."

Commissioners David Smith, Terry Graff and Jeremy

Davis voted against the plan; Dideum, Carl Anderson, Richard Owsley and Russ Taggard voted for it.

Mead said after the meeting a changeover date has not been set.

Gearhart group tackles rules governing short-term rentals

Septic concerns play key role in discussion

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

GEARHART — Even as the wind whistled and howled Wednesday night, March 9, a full contingent of Gearhart City Council and Planning Commission members gathered at City Hall to hammer out a proposed short-term rental ordinance. They hope to have the policy in place by summer.

"We need to look at the big picture," Planning Commissioner David Smith said. "We need to look at where we are and where we need to go."

Mayor Dianne Widdop added, "We don't want to have a hotel on a residential street." Minimum night stays, number of guests, registration, licensing and inspection procedures all figure in plans to regulate Gearhart's short-term rental properties.

It's about the septic

But before officials attacked those issues, they received a lesson in septic systems, as Clatsop County Public Health Environmental Health Supervisor Mike McNickle provided an overview of the city's septic systems, cesspools and gravity waste-treatment systems.

Many septic tanks, particularly steel ones installed 40 or 50 years ago, are disintegrating, he said. Others are overloaded or inefficient.

Since Gearhart residents use groundwater as their drinking supply, more short-term rental visitors could play a role in the public's clean water supply, he said.

Tanks for two people should be pumped every five to seven years, McNick-



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Russ Taggard listens as Mike McNickle gives a presentation on septic concerns for short-term rental properties.

le said, and a family of four should pump every three to five years, depending on usage. Five loads of wash could put a home at 75 percent of the 275-gallon daily water-usage average.

Homeowner limits

The number of bedrooms rather than the size of the bathroom determines a homeowner's limit, he added.

City Planner Carole Connell recommended a maximum of 10 people per short-term rental stay, including people sleeping in tents or RVs on the property, because "those people use the facilities," she said. "It has to do with the water usage."

Septic inspection would be required and cesspools would be prohibited from licensing at transient rental properties, officials agreed.

In addition to septic monitoring, officials addressed parking concerns, garbage pickup and emergency safety. Adequate parking should be

a consideration, commissioners suggested, and could be limited to one car per rental bedroom.

Property owners could be required to provide sideyard garbage pickup and information about recycling for their guests.

Rules may mandate emergency go-bags and ensure a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration radio in case of tsunami and earthquake scenarios.

Commissioner Terry Graff urged an occupancy cap and minimum-length-stay requirement.

"If you're going to do something to control the rental problem, the only way you're going to do it is with an occupancy cap and minimum rental stays," Graff said.

"That's the most important reason we're here," Councilor Paulina Cockrum said.

The Planning Commission will continue meeting to develop short-term rental licensing guidelines, with a public hearing April 14.

Monthly Craft Fair coming to community center

By Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal

The Bob Chisholm Community Center will be hosting a Craft Fair every third Thursday of the month to highlight the talents of local artisans.

The monthly fairs, sponsored by the Northwest Senior and Disability Services and the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District, will be from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the center. The next event is scheduled for March 17.

Holly Burns, the nutrition and health promotion coordinator, is lining up vendors, who will demonstrate their craft and sell their products. Proceeds from sales will go to benefit the center and its future remodel.

"Anyone with a talent can come," she said.

The community craft fairs, open to the public, will coincide with senior lunches, which are served each week day courtesy of Northwest Senior and Disability Services, a local intergovernmental agency. The agency is trying to get more people involved with the meal site, Burns said.

"We want to keep seniors as independent as possible for as long as they can be," she added.

The lunches, held at 11:45 a.m. Monday through Friday, are designed for residents 60 years and older, but anyone can join, though a donation of \$6.75 is suggested, Burns said.

Hot meals are served Mondays, Wednesdays and

Fridays, and salad, soup and sandwiches are served Tuesdays and Thursdays. The agency also offers a Meals-on-Wheels program, which delivers hot meals — in addition to a frozen meal — on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Both programs are volunteer-driven and serve residents from Gearhart to Cannon Beach and in between. Without the volunteers, Burns said, "this program couldn't function."

For many of the seniors who attend the lunches, "they come really to socialize with their friends," Burns said.

The center hosts other activities and classes for seniors throughout the week; they often are held before or after the lunches.

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