

Seaside mayoral suitors step up

Barber, Johnson show interest in top spot

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

City councilors met Monday, Nov. 28, to consider a replacement for former Mayor Don Larson. Larson stepped down from his post in November due to ill health after serving as mayor since 2002.

By the session's conclusion, two contenders emerged for the position, councilors Don Johnson and Jay Barber. By the end of the night's regular City Council meeting, a third name, that of Councilor-elect Tom Horning, was added to the mix.

Councilors considered three options: select someone on the council to fill the mayor's two-year unexpired term; appoint a former elected official; or choose someone outside of the council from the Seaside electorate.

According to city code, the mayoral vacancy must be filled by a council majority vote.

The appointee would serve immediately and continue until the January following the next general city election in 2018.

Within the ranks

Johnson, council president and representative of the city's Ward 3, indicated his willingness to serve the unexpired term.

A councilor since 2002, Johnson was upset in the November election to Horning, a geologist who ran on the issue of emergency preparedness.

"Having lost the election, I still feel I am qualified to be mayor," Johnson said at the workshop.

Johnson pointed to his own 12 years experience on the Planning Commission and 16 years on the City Council.

"I feel I've got a strong relationship with the city staff and with the councilors," Johnson said. "Every time I've been asked as council president to run the meeting, I've always brought everyone into the fold, and always listened to what they've had to say. I think I've worked well, I think I've been a good leader and I love this city."

If appointed, he said he



Councilors Don Johnson and Jay Barber at Monday's workshop in Seaside.

intended to step down at the end of the term. "I feel 16 years on the council and two years as mayor — that's more than plenty."

Barber, a retired college president, foundation director and ordained minister, served as a councilor and two-term mayor in Red Bluff, California, a position which, he said, gave him experience dealing with the public.

He and his wife Jan have lived full-time in Seaside since 2006.

Barber was selected in 2009 to fill the unexpired council term of the late Gary

Diebolt. Barber won election for Ward 1 in 2010 and again in 2014.

His "good working relationship" with the city manager would be an asset as mayor, Barber said. "That cannot be overstated in terms of its value. If the mayor and city manager don't have a positive working relationship, nothing ever gets done in a progressive way."

Councilor Dana Phillips said she "highly respected" Johnson, but in the aftermath of Johnson's election defeat, she urged the selection of Barber for the city's top spot.

Should Johnson be appointed mayor, "I'm not sure what we're saying to your constituents that voted somebody else in to fill your position," Phillips said.

New name surfaces

At the council's regular meeting, Horning's name was added to the mix.

John Dunzer, a perennial candidate for county and Seaside offices, including Seaside mayor, chided councilors for failing to look outside their ranks.

Horning's election to the council was not a "repudia-



Tom Horning at the Avenue A bridge in Seaside.

tion" of Johnson, but a public endorsement of Horning's message of emergency preparedness, Dunzer said.

Horning received 58 percent of the vote to Johnson's 41 percent.

"I look at all the people up here and all of you were running on the Don Johnson ticket and not on the on the platform of Mr. Horning," Dunzer said. "It would be my hope you would all get behind Mr. Horning, who has somewhat of a mandate from the people of Seaside of what the hell they want to have happen."

"I don't really care who you select or what you do," Dunzer added. "I just want you to get behind this mandate to get things moving on emergency prep. If we would just put our heads together, there are a lot of things we can do to save people's lives."

A mayoral appointment could be made by a council motion at the Dec. 12 meeting, Winstanley said.

THE CONTENDERS



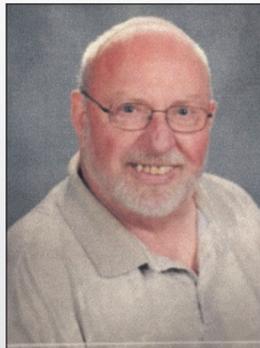
Jay Barber

Quote

'If the mayor and city manager don't have a positive working relationship, nothing ever gets done in a progressive way.'

Qualifications

Seaside resident since 2006; councilor since 2009; won election for Ward 1 in 2010 and again in 2014



Don Johnson

Quote

'Having lost the election, I still feel I am qualified to be mayor.... I've got a strong relationship with the city staff and with the councilors.'

Qualifications

Lifelong Seaside resident, councilor since 2002, current president of City Council

Seaside, state will team to collect pot tax

Intergovernmental agreement endorsed by City Council

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Like other cities in Oregon which have licensed the retail sale of cannabis, councilors endorsed an agreement with the state's Department of Revenue for collection of the city's 3 percent retail sales tax.

"If a local jurisdiction has a tax on marijuana, they are willing to collect the tax on the city's behalf," City Manager Mark Winstanley said at the Nov. 28 City Council meeting. "They'll simply pass that money on to us while charging us a small fee, in this case, 4 percent of the total amount of revenue, which is a very reasonable amount for their services to collect. We believe it would be advantageous for us to enter this agreement."

On Election Day, Seaside voters approved a resolution imposing the 3 percent tax.

Local sales taxes on cannabis passed in more than 100 Oregon communities, in addition to the state's 17 percent tax. Sellers are required to pay tax quarterly specifying total sales and the amount of tax filed. Failure to pay draws a penalty of 10 percent of the amount of the tax, in addition to the amount owed.

For their service, the department withholds 4 percent of local taxes collected.

The agreement can be ter-



Local cannabis taxes will be collected by the state.

minated by either the city or the state with 90 days notice.

"We currently receive liquor revenue, we receive cigarette tax and the state performs that function for us in those circumstances," Winstanley said. "In the case of a marijuana tax, it would be much easier for the state to go ahead and collect this tax at the same time they're collecting their tax."

The intergovernmental agreement clarifies collections, distributions and appeals. If necessary, the state would conduct audits and enforcement.

"It's a good deal," City Attorney Dan Van Thiel added. "I think it adds some muscle to the collection of it."

By October, the state had collected more than \$40 million on cannabis sales of \$160 million.

After administrative costs, 40 percent of state cannabis taxes are designated for schools. The remaining portions go for law enforcement, mental health and substance

abuse prevention and education.

Seaside councilors unanimously supported the agreement, which goes into effect at the new year.

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