



Tsunami safety, park preservation among main issues

Residents and city clash over Gearhart fire station



BRENNA VISSER/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Katharine Murphy voices her concern over considering Gearhart Park as a location for a new fire station.

By Brenna Visser
Seaside Signal

Tensions ran high as Gearhart debated Thursday, May 4, whether or not a new fire station should be built on the back half of Gearhart Park.

Residents expressed their discontent with the park even being considered as an option. The park honors Lesley Miller, the Gearhart legend who helped secure the land to be a park from the county in 1947.

“This is really our only open space,” said Joy Sigler, who has lived in Gearhart since 1997. “And once it’s gone, it’s gone. I appreciate the amount of time and planning that went into this, but we are talking about a natural event that possibly wouldn’t happen for another 100 years — that’s 100 years without that open space.”

But members of a firehouse committee said the park site offered the best chance for safety in a Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

“When I first heard the park as an option, I thought no way,” Firehouse Committee Co-chairman Jay Speakman said. “That’s where I began with this issue.”

But Speakman said research led “us to believe this is the best we have. There is no perfect solution.”

Limited choices

About 70 residents packed the fire station to ask questions and raise concerns about the

See Gearhart, Page 7A

**Seaside Fire levy, see
PAGE 4A**



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Gearhart’s firehouse fails to meet modern standards or accommodate needed equipment.



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Parkland along Pacific Way and North Marion is under consideration as a location for a new firehouse in Gearhart.

Urban renewal offers possibilities

School district, city could see benefits

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

The city plans to move forward with the creation of an urban renewal area encompassing land along South Holladay, Avenue S from U.S. Highway 101 east and the southern section of Highway 101.

Funds could be used for bridge safety, traffic improvements, property acquisitions or affordable housing, among other potential projects.

“What we’re planning is what the city is going to look like out 20 years,” Mayor Jay Barber said after a community forum Wednesday, May 3. “I’m excited about the potential to get good community impact and then plan for those next years.”

Urban renewal is a financing program authorized under state law and implemented locally that allows for the use of property tax revenues to grow the economy in blighted areas.

These typically contain sections of a city which are underdeveloped and not

See Renewal, Page 6A

Rec District looks to possible building plan

Older facilities, school relocation spurs talk

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Members of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors could be evaluating the addition of a new building or buildings, Executive Director Skyler Archibald said.

“A lot of this is in the really early stages of developing,” Archibald said of a facility plan. “We really need more indoor recreation space for our fitness participants as well as youth programs. It may be feasible to acquire space in the area, and we’ve talked about the potential of middle school property which would be available, or constructing a new building on our campus area.”

The pool is roughly 40 years old; the youth center 20 years old, “maybe a little older,” Archibald said.

In September, the district embarks on a \$120,000 project to resurface, polish and add underwater lighting to the main pool. “We’re excited about it, but also realize the cost and the impact to our regular swimmers,” Archibald said.

See SEPRD, Page 6A

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 97
ASTORIA, OR

Spread the love: Students seek to sprinkle joy, kindness

By Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal

Seaside High School’s Breaking the Silence group is preparing to douse Seaside with messages of positivity when they take to the streets for a Happiness Sprinkling on May 24.

They will be marching with dozens of their fellow students and teachers, as well as any community members who care to join. By carrying signs with positive messages, wearing yellow, handing out paper stars to passers-by along the way and playing uplifting music, they hope to spread joy and kindness in the community.

Shirley Yates, the faculty adviser for the Seaside group, said the students want “a climate change, where people are all treated equal and with honor.”

The idea for the Happiness Sprinkling was borrowed from the Anacortes Center for Happiness, which

put on a similar demonstration in Anacortes, Washington, in May 2012. Since then, the Happiness Sprinkling Project has spread, first nationwide and now worldwide.

Breaking the silence

After a public incident of bullying at the high school earlier this year, a few students were moved to establish a group that would take a stand against not only bullying but all forms of violence, prejudice and abuse, and also provide a positive voice in the school and larger community.

“You can’t control the way you are,” said junior Celeste Kerr, who initiated the movement along with Jasmine Hewitt, Faythe Koontz and Britany Case. “We shouldn’t be ridiculed in a school that’s supposed to be safe. If it is a safe, healthy environment, it’s not going to include that kind of stuff in our lives.”



KATHERINE LACAZE/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Seaside High School members, who call themselves Silence Breakers, are organizing a Seaside version of a Happiness Sprinkling starting at 2 p.m. May 24.

Student Aaron Kiser described how often at school, one will be looking at other individuals and see that “something

is happening or someone is crying.”

See Sprinklers, Page 7A