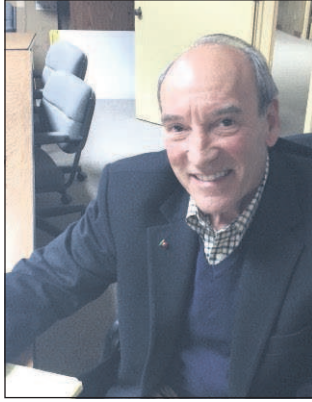


# Focus group report offers school district insights

Comments range from academics to core values

By R.J. Marx  
Seaside Signal



**Educator and consultant  
Jerome Colonna**

As Seaside schools embark on a plan to move endangered schools out of the tsunami zone, school district officials, business and community leaders and others launched the first step in the development of a multiyear strategic plan.

Under the direction of Colonna, principal of Colonna Strategic Planning Services, based in Bend, the district approved the \$15,000 cost for the plan in December, to be paid out of existing areas of the

budget, including the district's professional training budget, Superintendent Sheila Roley said.

"The board members met as a group with Jerry Colonna and he took us through his pro-

cess of developing the strategic plan for the district," Seaside School District Superintendent Sheila Roley said at the Tuesday, March 20, meeting of the district's board of directors. "He took us through the first phase of the process. Our first ask was to have teachers, principals and community members generate questions for members of the community."

The district held open forums and focus groups districtwide.

"We were just listeners," Roley said. "It was really wonderful. We had everywhere from two to 20 in the groups."

One-hundred-eighty people responded overall, she said.

The March report is a summary of those sessions, she said, intended to present the core beliefs of the community

and our school community — "what can they look forward to from our district," Roley said. "Some themes emerged: People really value the things we do well."

She said respondents offered "lots of compliments on the quality of our staff and our board, and in general the operations and personnel."

The district looks at students as individuals, she added. "It's not one-size-fits-all. People also recognize the importance of our extracurricular activities like athletics, arts, and other activities."

Focus group participants showed concerns about raising graduation rates absenteeism, standardized testing and developing "real-world skills," from balancing a checkbook to buying car insurance.

Improvements also sought stronger guidance programs, more focus on academics and safety and security improvements.

Main indicators of success as described by respondents included up-to-date technology, an understanding of how education is tied to future success and sharing schools.

"Interestingly, most of those comments are not about academics," Roley said. "You know kids are successful if they love fifth-grade loving school and wanting to come back, or knowing how to advocate for themselves. ... People see our role as being very holistic in the community and are not an organization that lives in isolation."

The goal of the strategic plan is to take the district "to

the next level of effectiveness," she added.

Since approval by the school board, students, teachers and others have registered input in focus groups and online. "The focus group comments will help form district core values and beliefs," Colonna wrote in his report. "The core values and beliefs will create a foundation for the plan's mission, vision, goals and performance indicators."

Mark Truax, a member of the planning committee, said the process is "going well."

"It's really interesting," Truax said. "It's kind of a slow pace, but it's what needs to be done. It's the kind of project that needs to be step by step and kept on task."

Completion of the strategic plan is expected by November.

# Campus construction causes concerns

School from Page 1A

The district expects 8,000 concrete trucks and 10,000 truck loads of imported gravel, he said. With added asphalt, rebar and structural steel, construction traffic could exceed 25,000 truck trips, the equivalent of 1.5 million automotive trips over an 18-month period, which could significantly reduce the life of roadways.

Carpenter suggested traffic be diverted to logging roads to mitigate some of these impacts, which would be greatest on Spruce Drive leading to the campus.

Traffic is dependent on the weather and the sequencing of the work, school district architect Dan Hess responded. "The contractor would rather not use Spruce if they could avoid it." But in bad weather, logging roads may not be an option. "Contractors want to stay off Spruce, but they have to be practical about how they do their work as well," Hess said.

Commissioners addressed concerns of backups along Avenue S near Highway 101, especially delays that could



**Seaside School District board members toured the school construction site during logging operations.**

be caused by buildup of construction traffic.

"The number of cars that line up along Avenue S and 101 is incredible," Commissioner David Posalski said. "Getting around that corner could be extremely problematic."

At the commission's March 6 session, traffic impacts and safety were elements of discussion. District consultants said they hope approval of their conditional use permit will be delivered at a third commission meeting on April 3, which would keep construction on

track for a June 1 groundbreaking. The district hopes to open for students in September 2020.

Commissioners unanimously voted to keep the record open for the April 3 meeting, which would include written testimony and responses from the district.

# Residents grumble about flood-control demands

County changes a result of federal insurance requirements

By Jack Heffernan  
The Daily Astorian



**Some residents are unhappy about potential county land use changes to comply with federal flood insurance demands.**

**'Frankly, staff isn't any more enthused about having to go through this process and working language changes into the code any more than you want to see them there.'**

**Gail Henrikson**  
Community development director

mailed out in February.

Throughout the hearing, Bruce Francis, the Planning Commission's chairman, reiterated that he sympathized with the residents but felt it was necessary to maintain access to the flood-insurance program.

"We're confronted with a problem that has been placed upon us to make a decision for the overall good of the majority, hopefully, to obtain flood insurance," Francis said while addressing the crowd's disapproval. "Maybe it is that we need to be attacking the political angles of this, rather than making that request here at this hearing."

A few of the residents suggested the county break away from the national insurance program altogether.

"They've got you by the throat on the insurance aspect, but I would suggest that you think about altering an approach on insurance," said

Henry Willener, who owns property south of Seaside. "Maybe get Washington and Idaho — forget California — and form a consortium to have your own insurance group."

Along with the recommendation for county commissioners to approve the rule changes, the Planning Commission advised that county legal experts explain the changes and work with the federal agency to roll back some of the regulations.

The most unpopular change discussed at the meeting would be an expansion of the definition of developments that would require property owners to pay an \$85 permit fee. Previously exempt activities — including minor repairs to a structure that don't alter its size, new driveways that don't change the topography of the land or signs placed by local public agencies — would require the permit once the rules go into effect.

"They come up with these ideas. They force it on the little guy," said Edwin Owen, a farm owner. "I'm just afraid that you start changing the rules, not only do I have to go beg for a permit, but then you start talking about, 'Oh, you can and can't do this,' you know, on a farm. It just bothers me."

But it's unlikely FEMA will buckle on the expanded permit requirements, Community Development Director Gail Henrikson said. She called the permit requirements "non-negotiable," along with mandates to seek permission for structure updates in certain areas.

"Frankly, staff isn't any more enthused about having to go through this process and working language changes into the code any more than you want to see them there," Henrikson said.

She said staff has worked with FEMA to determine how much latitude the county has in reworking the changes, citing an email the agency sent to the county earlier this month.

"FEMA's stand is that the exclusions that Clatsop County has offered in their definition of development makes their definition of development noncompliant with the National Flood Insurance Program," wrote Roxanne Pilkenton, a flood plain management specialist for the agency. "FEMA takes the definition of development seriously and, currently, push back from the state of Idaho has them facing suspension if they continue to allow exemptions that are expressly included in the definition of development."

County commissioners are tentatively scheduled to hold a public hearing on the subject in April. If that hearing is continued, commissioners would hold another hearing in May, when they would potentially adopt the changes.

# Registration opens for third annual CoastWalk Oregon

Registration is underway for the third annual CoastWalk Oregon, a fundraiser for North Coast Land Conservancy, set for Sept. 14 to Sept. 16. This year's theme, "Two Capes, Two Bays, Three Days," refers to the spectacular stretch of coastline participants will hike, from the mouth of Nehalem Bay to the south side of Cape Lookout, the heart of the scenic Three Capes region on the Tillamook Coast. Registration is limited to 90 participants.

CoastWalk Oregon participants spend three days walking roughly 10 miles a day on the Oregon Coast Trail. This year's event has some new twists. In addition to buses, boats from Garibaldi Marina and a vintage train from Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad will be among vehicles shuttling participants at the beginning or end of each day's hike. Every day

will start and end in Garibaldi. Day One spans the beach from Nehalem Bay to Tillamook Bay. Day two begins on Bayocean Spit and climbs Cape Meares before ending at the beach near Oceanside. Day Three takes participants down Netarts Spit and over Cape Lookout.

The registration fee covers wayfinding, trailhead shuttles, snacks, and a celebratory lunch at the end of third day. Lodging and most meals are not included. Most of the registration fee represents a tax-deductible donation to North Coast Land Conservancy, which is working to create a vast Rainforest Reserve in the mountains adjacent to Oswald West State Park — a private land conservation effort unprecedented in size in western Oregon.

For more details or to register, visit CoastWalkOregon.org.

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