

Bonamici: Health care, climate change top priorities

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at Gearhart Elementary School. “But when we learned the president was compromising our national security and raising national security issues, that’s when I said my constituents and Americans deserve to get the facts.”

Asked afterward by The Astorian whether she would vote to impeach the president, the Oregon Democrat said: “I likely would because what I’ve seen is admission about what the phone call was and the summary of the phone call to me raises serious enough concerns, but we need to wait until the inquiry is finished.”

Bob Shortman, the Clatsop County Republican chairman, was critical of House Democrats. “Right now, this is just a political partisan pact in the House to hinder his reelection campaign,” he said.

At the town hall, Bonamici said impeachment is among the top five issues people are raising with her, along with prescription drug



R.J. Marx

Clatsop County GOP chairman Bob Shortman questions the Democrats’ call for impeachment of President Donald Trump.

abuse, migrant children being separated from their families, public lands and robocalls.

However, she wanted constituents to know that the impeachment inquiry is not all Congress is doing.

Bonamici said it is important to stay hopeful and engaged. Although she said it has been difficult to get some things done, “we also have to look at where we are getting things done.”

Health care, making college more affordable and addressing climate change are among the congresswoman’s top priorities.

She pointed to the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, which would allow Medicare to negotiate directly with drug companies over prices for some of the costliest drugs.

She said she also wants to make sure everyone has a career path, whether through college, apprenticeship or a worker training program —

a goal reflected in a bipartisan apprenticeship bill she is working on.

Bonamici said she wants to move toward a clean energy economy while also discussing the workforce and jobs.

Clatsop County, as well as other parts of the state, has felt the tension between people who want to preserve or revive jobs in industries such as timber and those who want to transition to a clean energy economy.

Animosity over state House Bill 2020 — a cap and trade measure that failed at the Legislature — is lingering as #Timber Unity protesters ramp up efforts to recall state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, D-Astoria, for voting for the bill.

“No one’s interested in putting anyone out of a job. My grandfather was a coal miner. We’re not interested in putting people out of jobs. We’re interested in making sure people are getting good-paying jobs and get the skills to work in renewable energy or other local industries,” Bonamici said.

VRD: Commission lets Ninth Ave. VRD permit stand

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“A well-run VRD can actually have a positive, not negative, effect on the community,” he added.

In voting to deny the appeal, commissioners determined the property at 403 Ninth Ave. had met the city’s requirements in issuing the permit.

The Van Hornes expressed their dismay at the outcome.

VRDs are “taking the soul out of our communities,” Karen Van Horne said. “At what point do you draw the line?”

The denial comes a day after a joint Planning Commission and City Council workshop, in which similar concerns came up for review.

On Oct. 14, the City Council will hear a proposal for a new, higher VRD

license fee, and in upcoming meetings the Planning Commission will be considering an array of changes to the city’s rules, including VRD limits, contact information requirements and inspections. A compliance officer will be hired by the city for enforcement.

“Are we two seconds early?” Karen Van Horne asked after Tuesday’s vote.

Hoth said the commission was seeking “some kind of resolution” on the topic of VRDs.

“If there are legitimate problems — and sometimes there are — they’ll be addressed more specifically. And we’ll be discussing regulations that will limit the number that can be,” Hoth said. “As far as them going away, that’s probably not realistic.”

Rilea: Kids learn through doing at STARBASE

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students as Mr. Electric and Professor Plankton, respectively — through a variety of experiments that introduce them to chemistry, physics, computer-aided design, coding, and programming. Mathematics and engineering processes are woven throughout the curriculum, as the students use estimation, metric measurement, data analysis, and calculation geometry.

Fifth-grade teacher Brett Deur said he appreciates the collaborative aspect of the program and the ability for students to partake in experiments and then make modifications after gathering one set of results.

“The instructors take time to do it right,” he said. “They’ve already done all the planning, gathered all these materials.”

In Yager’s experience, the program supports “growth mindset.” It challenges students in a way that’s empowering and allows themselves to excel in subjects that might have felt intimidating before. Often, students begin “to see themselves as technologists or scientists, when they might not have ever done so before.” Yager added.

Bringing STARBASE to the Coast

The goal of STARBASE Oregon, which is funded by the Department of Defense but administered by the state, is to reach students who live in inner cities or rural locations and are under-represented in STEM fields. The state runs three STARBASE academies in Portland, Klamath Falls, and Camp Rilea, the most recent addition. All three academies only invite students from Title I school districts, which includes Seaside School District.

The schools need only to be within a 40-minute bus ride of Camp Rilea to partake in the program, which makes it accessible schools in the Long Beach Peninsula, as well. Although the STARBASE academies must be established at and supported by military sites, there is nothing militaristic in the curriculum and no recruitment aspect to the program.



Katherine Lacaze

Seaside fifth-graders Alexis Collins (from right) and Emilio Tate was experiment with Newton’s Cradle during a session on Newton’s Laws at STARBASE Camp Rilea.



Katherine Lacaze

Ethan Underhill And Navarro Garcia, fifth-graders from The Heights Elementary School.

Retired Col. Todd Farmer, the training site manager, was instrumental in bringing STARBASE to Camp Rilea, although the program had previ-

ously expressed interest in establishing a North Coast location. After visiting the STARBASE academy in Portland, he recognized how the program could benefit students in the community. They have an opportunity to touch and work with materials they wouldn’t be able to otherwise, because the individual school districts “simply can’t afford some of the materials and the equipment,” Farmer said.

The students get spend concentrated amounts of time on experiments, there are no tests, and the environment is fun and interactive, creating an experience that engenders interest in STEM subjects “in a very positive manner,” Farmer added.

The STARBASE program started operating at Camp Rilea during the 2018-19 school year, but only 10 classes could attend before the academy transitioned into camps for the summer. The Seaside elementary classes were able to get into the rotation for the first time this fall.

“This is a pretty big deal and an example of a wonderful partnership to make learning real for students,” curriculum director Sande Brown said.



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Gearhart: Bonamici visit

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“I’m not doing this because it’s political, I’m doing it to defend the constitution,” Suzanne Bonamici replied.

Ultimately, Bonamici extended a desire to reach out across the aisle.

“You find partners on issues and get things done,” she said. “There are 435 members of Congress and everybody there wants the same things. They want the nation to be secure, they want good schools. They want good jobs and a strong econ-

omy, they want clean air and water. They want good health care. They just have different ideas how to get there.”

Among the audience was state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, who is facing a potential recall vote herself.

“I appreciate how many people came out,” Mitchell said after the town hall. “Clearly we had a lot of folks at this event that maybe don’t agree with the congresswoman’s position on certain things. But it was a completely calm and peaceful gathering.”



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