

Parking: Developers seek to enhance ‘downtown feel’ by easing parking rules



R.J. Marx

Seaside’s Erick Zuber, a commercial mortgage banker, asked commissioners to ease downtown parking rules to bring an “urban feel.”

Continued from Page A1

Stuart Emmons, an Astoria resident, architect and planner, said Seaside has the most stringent parking rules of Astoria, Gearhart, Warrenton or Cannon Beach. “If we want to bring in more affordable housing, parking is really an issue that can hold up unit count on site,” Emmons said. “I am very supportive of reducing parking ratios for especially studios and one-bedrooms, and I would even consider two bedrooms.”

There are other ways to look at potential reduction, he said, especially in areas near public transportation.

Public Works Director Dale McDowell said he was in favor of using underutilized spaces in the downtown core.

McDowell warned, however, with more

cars on the street it may be more difficult to clean the streets because of the turning radius of the street sweeper. “My only comment, is how we are going to keep it clean,” McDowell said.

Seaside’s Erick Zuber, a commercial mortgage banker, said he had looked at properties at the urban core of Seaside. “There are some underdeveloped units,” he said. “The people I speak with on a daily basis, the urban feel is, people don’t need cars. They want to walk to work, to shops or restaurants, whether by bike or walking.”

A two-to-one parking ratio per parking is a “little bit exorbitant,” Zuber said. “As a developer, I think it’s in good interest to have some safeguards for people who want to live within their community without a car.”

Commissioner Teri Carpenter said she was “absolutely in favor” of adopting the amendment in Seaside’s downtown core, but said she was concerned about parking limitations in other parts of Seaside. “I have found in my opinion, lack of parking can lead to larger problems down the road, but I’m still excited about this downtown.”

The ordinance will return for refinements at the Dec. 17 Planning Commission work session, and could be referred to the City Council at the commission’s January meeting.

“It’s a lot of easier to ratchet things slowly than doing it in one fell swoop and realizing oh gosh we’ve got an error,” Cupples said. “With the push for affordable or workforce housing, the goal is to get something designed and put on the plate.”

Festival of Trees: Foundation raises nearly \$200,000

Continued from Page A1

Bethany Stamschror, who attended the open house with her daughter Greta and son Otto, said the event is a traditional part of their holiday season. They especially enjoy the cookie-decorating and story time, as well as finding familiar faces in the crowd.

“I love just seeing everyone we know in the community in the same place together,” Stamschror said.

The community open house has evolved significantly since the beginning of the Festival of Trees more than two decades ago.

According to Ward, the foundation always invited the community to come see the trees, because they wanted the festival to be “a magical time for kids and their families,” in addition to the people attending the gala. They also had a couple of activities in the lobby and a Santa Claus on hand.

Since Ward joined the foundation five years ago, they’ve expanded the community open house to include Candy Cane Lane, moving activities upstairs to facilitate future growth.

“It’s kind of blossomed from there,” she said. “Each year, we’re hoping to add a different component and make it a really cool experience for families.”

To accommodate the hundreds of guests who attend each year, the foundation requires not only community partners but also close to 120 volunteers. The bulk of the volunteers are individuals who regularly help with tasks and activities for the hospital. Others show up particularly for Festival of Trees or volunteer through the organization sponsoring a specific activity.

Most of the volunteers “keep coming back,” said Mark Squire, the volunteer coordinator, adding he believes that’s a good indication they enjoy assisting the festival and serving the hundreds of locals and visitors who attend. “It’s just



Katherine Lacaze

Mrs. Claus reads a story to children during the Seaside Festival of Trees Community Open House during the Festival of Trees.



Katherine Lacaze

Bethany Stamschror helps her son Otto, 4, make a Christmas ornament on Candy Cane Lane at the 2019 Community Open House for Festival of Trees.



Justin Grafton

“Merry S’more-mas,” donated by Maggie’s on the Prom Restaurant and the Seaside Oceanfront Inn, designed by Sadie Mercer and the Maggie’s on the Prom Crew.

a great community-builder, because it’s not just Seaside that participates.”

During the event, families also voted for their favorite among the donated trees that were auctioned off during the gala.

“We had some absolutely beautiful trees,” Ward said.

This year, the People’s Choice Tree was Stay and Play in Seaside, a unique “tree” made from a ladder

and strung with elegant purple and silver ornaments. The tree was designed by Dawn Fujiwara-Pavlik, of BMM! Promotional Products.

The tree with the highest bid at the evening gala and auction was a Toast to Jan Martin, donated by Ryan and Stephanie Snyder of Martin North. Jan Martin, Stephanie Snyder’s mother, died in February 2018. Jan Mar-

tin and her husband, Steve made a significant impact in the hospitality and real estate development industries on the North Coast and were well-respected in the community.

The Toast to Jan Martin tree went for \$8,200, a record at the Festival of Trees, Ward said. Overall, the foundation raised about \$195,000 at the gala and auction.

Inmates: Letting them know they’re ‘not forgotten’

Continued from Page A1

Carl and Shirley Yates have been visiting prisons and writing to inmates for over 20 years. This year, along with a crew of volunteers, they will be sending between 800 to 900 cards to people behind bars. The incarcerated reside in correctional facilities in California, Mississippi, and Oregon. What started as a small list of card recipients grew by word of mouth. It started with 33 women Yates began mentoring via letter and over time, a Christmas card list was developed.

“The cards are designed by David Haidle, an artist,” Yates said. “The greeting inside was written by his wife, Helen. They donate 1,000 cards every year to our nonprofit here in Oregon. Our friends and neighbors get together and we address and sign each card.”

Yates provides pointers to her volunteers. It starts with putting the person’s first name inside the card so the message becomes personal and offers tips on what kind of handwritten message to inscribe. The messages

are meant to be oblique but positive. Some examples include, “Stay strong and may the hope of this season be yours” or “This card is to let you know you’re not forgotten,” or “Be encouraged and have a peace-filled Christmas.”

Each card is signed with the volunteer’s name. There are stickers for the return address, which is always the same, the post office box for “At the Water’s Gate,” which is the Yates’ ministry.

The mood was festive at 7 p.m. at Seaside Coffee

where the proprietor, Michelle Wunderlich, provided festive snacks to fuel the card writers in their task. They met for two hours. They produced a lot of signed and addressed cards.

“In the past, we’ve done this at my house,” Yates said. “It was Michelle’s idea we do it here this year.”

For more information about the Christmas cards for prisoners program, contact Shirley Yates at smithyates@yahoo.com. Donations are always welcome to cover postage.



Making Christmas cards at Seaside Coffee.

Shirley Yates



Eve Marx

Carl and Shirley Yates hope to make those behind bars feel a little less forgotten at Christmas.

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