

Broadway: ‘We need to have a vision for the community’

Continued from Page A1

“as soon as possible, assuming the offer is accepted. I couldn’t be happier for our community.”

The former middle school, located off of U.S. Highway 101 and Broadway, was among school district properties relocated to the new Spruce Drive location outside of the tsunami inundation zone. Built in 1949, the nearly 75,000-square-foot building received upgrades in 1979 and a new gym in 1994.

Three acres of the 5.4-acre property are zoned medium-density residential and the remaining portion is designated for commercial use.

The Seaside Visitors Bureau and public

restrooms located on the property are leased and maintained to the city on a long-term basis.

The park district will

“We need to have a vision for the community and come together to make that happen,” Marshall said. “I think that the board and

‘I REALLY BELIEVE IN THE YEARS TO COME WE’LL LOOK BACK AND REALLY BE PROUD OF WHAT WE WERE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY.’

Erika Marshall, Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District board member

enter into a lease purchase or loan of up to \$2.5 million, with the appointment of special counsel and municipal adviser Hawkins Delafield & Wood LLP of Portland.

staff are extremely committed to the project. I really believe in the years to come we’ll look back and really be proud of what we were able to accomplish together as a community.”



Norris & Stevens

Aerial view, Broadway Middle School. Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District is located at top right-center.

SEPRD: Board changes lead to fresh look at middle school

Continued from Page A1

purchase, proponents said, will provide added recreational opportunities, revenue and child care and place the park district at a centralized location in Seaside for years into the future.

“I think this is a really good opportunity and hopefully we’ll be able to program recreational and community opportunities for people that live here,” Skyler Archibald, the executive director of the park district, said in October. “It comes at a much more affordable price tag than the previous bond and the cost of new construction would be at any point.”

Board conflict

Except for one park district board member, Michael Hinton, the entire board turned over since the last election. Katharine Parker was sworn in to replace Lindsey Morrison in December 2019. Su Coddington replaced Rodney Roberts in April.

Board members Jeremy Mills and John Chapman stepped down in July after district employees filed a formal grievance asking for their dismissal. Mills and Chapman displayed “behaviors unbecoming of a board members,” staff wrote. “These incidents besmirch the district’s name in the commu-



A lifeguard wearing a mask watches over the Sunset Pool.

R.J. Marx

nity and undermine staff’s ability to conduct their work effectively.”

In August, Parker became board president and Celeste Bodner and Erika Marshall were appointed. Bodner is the founder and executive director of the Seaside-based Foster-Club, a national nonprofit, which aims to improve the lives of young people in and from foster care.

Marshall, a Seaside resident, is interim director of global human resources for Mercy Corps, working with the organization’s vice president to guide overall vision and strategic direction.

Middle school purchase

The new board immediately changed the direction of the park district. The previous board had tabled a potential purchase of Broadway Middle School, for sale after the Seaside School District’s campus relocation.

Zoned partially residential and partially commercial, the 3-acre property contains the 73,000-square-foot school building, along with the Seaside Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau building and public restrooms, on land leased to the city by the school district.

The school district

reduced the price in February, but even at less than \$3 million — down from an initial listing of \$3.6 million, board members said the school was “no bargain,” presenting liability and ongoing maintenance issues.

In June, the board again rejected pursuing a potential purchase deal for the middle school, tabling the matter for a year.

But when the composition of the board changed, so did its attitude toward the school purchase.

The purchase could provide space for programs and revenue streams for community programs that

serve families such as after-school care, summer camp, “Start Smart” sports,

the farmers market and basketball.

In September, the park district board authorized Archibald to work with a real estate agent and deliver an offer before approving a resolution to seek financing for up to \$2.5 million.

Opposition to the project developed with the formation of the Taxpayers for SEPRD Transparency, a local group committed to bringing the school purchase to a vote by district residents. Their members questioned terms of the purchase and filed records requests for inspection documents, including an energy audit, asbestos report and roof evaluation.

Ultimately, the board chose to move forward as this week the district announced an agreement with the school district on a purchase for \$2.15 million.

School: District looks toward five-year strategic plan

Continued from Page A1

Drive-in graduation

Seaside High School’s annual commencement ceremony to honor graduating seniors typically takes place in front of a packed house at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

Instead, the Class of 2020 took a slow drive down Broadway to the Turnaround, where they received their diplomas with cheering friends and family members lining the street, waving signs and snapping pictures.

Vehicles transporting the graduates were then ushered to the large public parking lot downtown. There, the official ceremony took place outdoors under waning light and a drizzling rain, which did little to hamper the positive energy emanating from the students, teachers, family members and friends collected in the audience.

Principal Jeff Roberts encouraged the outgoing seniors to embrace their generation’s reputation for being persistent and strong-willed and use it as a standard by which to measure themselves throughout their lives.

Distance learning

While school administration and staff had hoped to move into the new campus in the fall of 2020, the date to return to in-person learning for the Seaside School District remains an elu-

sive and constantly moving target.

In response to Oregon Department of Education guidelines pertaining to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the district developed in-classroom and distance learning options with the goal of transitioning to in-person learning. The hybrid model offered high school students instruction four days per week, with four classes per day at 60 minutes each with. Students could also opt for 100% online learning.

New campus

Construction rounded a corner at the new campus on Spruce Drive, which is the end product of a \$99.7 million bond to move Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School out of the tsunami inundation zone. The former Heights Elementary, renamed Pacific Ridge, also received an extensive upgrade, renovations and added classroom, gym and playground space.

Project expenses—including environmental review and permits, extensive site work, construction and equipment, permit fees, consultants, architects

and project management — totaled more than \$131 million.

The district has been able to fund the added costs through state and federal grants, bond interest and other revenue sources. They also applied for a loan to fill the gap between expenses and revenue, about 3% of the project.

A costly reapplication of exterior insulation was covered by insurance, but the redo of the work has delayed completion of the project until February.

The former schools, while falling short of the district’s hopes regarding their sale, did bring in some revenue. The old Cannon Beach Elementary School was sold to Cannon Beach for \$400,000 early in the year. Gearhart Elementary School sold for \$400,000 plus an additional \$100,000 donation, and Seaside High School and Broadway Middle School are both under contract.

State scores

Seaside students showed rising attendance, test score and graduation numbers, according to the Oregon Department of Education. The district’s numbers have slowly increased in line with the district’s concerted effort to improve attendance, engage students and help them prepare for the next stage of life.

According to the edu-

cation department’s at-a-glance school and district profiles, produced statewide on a yearly basis, Seaside’s on-time graduation rate was 77% for the 2019-20 school year — up from 73% in 2018-29 and 67% in 2017-28.

One of the district’s long-term goals as per its five-year strategic plan — which was fully implemented during the 2019-20 school year — is that by June 2024, all students will be on track to graduate and be prepared with a plan beyond high school.

To start, Penrod hopes to see the district matching statewide rates, which were 80% for on-time graduation and 86% for five-year completion in 2019-20.

Data from the report cards provides a starting point for the district to evaluate differences among demographics and identify how the schools can work more closely with individual students to meet their needs.

DINING on the NORTH COAST

Great Restaurants in:
GEARHART • SEASIDE
CANNON BEACH

WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE LOCALS GO?

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Junior Menu
- Lighter appetite menu

BEST BREAKFAST IN TOWN! Fish 'n Chips • Burgers • Seafood & Steak
Friday & Saturday - Prime Rib
Lounge Open Daily 9-Midnight
All Oregon Lottery products available
1104 S Holladay • 503-738-9701 • Open Daily at 8am

Excellence in family dining found from a family that has been serving the North Coast for the past 52 years

Great Breakfast, but that's not all... Great lunch and dinner menu, too! Great pasta, steaks & seafood! Homemade Clam Chowder, Salads!

Seaside • 323 Broadway • 738-7234 (Open 7 Days)
Cannon Beach • 223 S. Hemlock 436-2851 (7am-3pm Daily)
Astoria • 146 W. Bond • 325-3144

CHOCOLATE CAFE

Cannon Beach Chocolate Cafe

Bring this ad in for 10% off your purchase! Stocking Stuffers and Gifts for Everyone!

232 N. Spruce • Cannon Beach, Oregon
Open 10 am-5 pm Daily • 503.436.4331

Call Sarah Silver
503.325.3211
ext 1222

YOUR RESTAURANT AD HERE.

Find Your Next Regular Customers!

Until Further Notice Drive-up and ATM Banking only at your local Branch

Please call your Branch to make an appointment for Loans and Safe Deposit Box access.

Bank of the Pacific
BankofthePacific.com