



R.J. Marx

From left, back row, Dan Hess, Anne McBride, Justine Hill, Mark Truax, Jim Henry, Brian Taylor, Bob Mitchell, Susan Penrod, Brian Owen, Jeff Roberts. Front row, from left: Doug Dougherty, Sheila Roley, Lori Lum Toyooka, Sondra Gomez and Shannon Swedenborg.

Gearhart looks at bond for resiliency station

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

This could be the year that voters consider a bond to build a new resiliency station outside of the tsunami inundation zone on North Marion Avenue known as High Point.

The building will house the day-to-day operations of the fire department and police department.

At last Wednesday's City Council meeting, Mayor Paulina Cockrum said she would like to pursue a November bond "if all the necessary process steps fall into place by the filing deadline. Bond interest is quite low right now, and that is a big part of my reason for wanting to move forward at this time."

In 2018, after considering nine locations, the city's fire station committee recommended three concepts and locations to the public to help guide the decision-making process.

"Evacuation areas toward the ocean in Gearhart along Marion are relatively safe and may be good locations for a new station," the committee wrote.

A survey showed that 78% of the almost 1,000 who responded supported a new fire station and 75.5% supported a bond to pay for construction.

About 50% supported the High Point site, with an elevation of between 62 feet and 65 feet, as their No. 1 choice, followed by 38.4% who preferred the fire department's location on Pacific Way. The cinder block building, constructed in 1958, is considered a risk for flooding or collapse during an earthquake and tsunami.

Only 11.5% of respondents chose the Dune Meadows Park at Pacific Way and North Marion

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A campus milestone

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

"Congratulations, you have a beautiful, brand-new school."

Bob Mitchell, Seaside's director of building and code enforcement, shared these words as he passed the certificate of occupancy to Seaside School District Superintendent Susan Penrod last Wednesday.

Flanked by former superintendents Doug Dougherty and Sheila Roley, architect Dan Hess, project manager Jim Henry, district staff and board members, the team celebrated an accomplishment three decades in the making, relocating Seaside High School, Gearhart Elementary School and Broadway Middle School students to a safe location outside of the tsunami inundation zone.

"This has been a long process and there are so many people here who started this process before I was privileged to be part of it," Penrod said. "I've been lucky to walk into this situation. I'm eternally grateful. What a wonderful place this is for our whole community."

With a scenic mountain location and panoramic views overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Hess said he saw the goal of the architect as "to get out of the way," he said. "As an architect, we're supposed to be able to visualize these things, and of course we do, but to actually experience it in person and to see all the ideas of my team coming to fruition — it's very rewarding."

Mitchell approved plans and building permits in 2019 after two years of consultation with Hess, engineers and contractors as directed by the State Building Code.

Mitchell estimated he spent almost



Seaside School District

1,000 hours on the project.

"On the plan review, I think I put in 150, a couple hundred hours alone," he said. "It took many, many hours to get through it all. But we did take our time, I think we got everything right, and I'm very proud to be a part of the project."

Roley, who was superintendent at the start of construction in April 2019, said Mitchell's vigilance inspired a confidence in the building's safety.

"I was told Bob would find every problem," Roley said. "The other half of that is, Bob is not just a problem finder, he is a problem solver."

As principal of Cannon Beach Elementary school in the 1990s, Dougherty became aware of the dire need to move schools to higher elevation outside of the tsunami inundation zone after watching a video of the after-effects of the 1964 Alaska earthquake. When the school began tsunami evacuation drills, National Geographic sent a reporter and published a feature that garnered world attention.

As earthquake science progressed and Seaside risk scenarios increased to alarming projections, Dougherty and the school board engaged experts and studied options. Cannon Beach



Bob Mitchell, Seaside's director of building and code enforcement, in April 2019, when the school district's plans were approved.

Elementary School closed in 2013, the same year the district brought an unsuccessful \$129 million proposal before the voters.

Three years later, a land gift in the city's southeast hills provided an

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Competitive races for park district board

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

With five open positions on the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District board of directors, the field is beginning to crowd.

Celeste Bodner and Erika Marshall each announced this week they will run in the May 18 election. They face competitive elections in Position 2 and Position 4, respectively.

Bodner is the founder and executive director of the Seaside-based FosterClub, a national nonprofit with a mission to improve the lives of young people in and from foster care. She was appointed to the board in August to fill the unexpired term of Jeremy Mills, who stepped down in July.

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City sets new policy for rental complaint process

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

The Seaside Planning Commission has sought to eliminate confusion about who or where to call when the vacation rental next door is out of compliance.

Providing access to 24-hour local contacts has been a goal of the city's code compliance officer, Jeff Flory, whose job is to monitor vacation rental regulations and restrictions. Since he started about a year ago, he's worked with commissioners to tweak the rules to add responsiveness and accountability to the process.

For neighbors, the local contact information can be obtained online or by calling the Planning

Department.

If the emergency contact or homeowner doesn't respond within a reasonable amount of time — considered about two hours — then a complaint could be lodged with the city.

Failure to respond to a neighbor's valid complaint could lead to Planning Commission review of the property owner's conditional use permit.

Street parking, long a source of confusion for homeowners, neighbors and law enforcement, was also a matter of commission concern.

Visitors to a vacation rental property are allowed to use on-street parking, on a limited basis, for a limited period of time. Added code language states visitors should not significantly increase traffic or negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood,

since this is a violation of the vacation rental's condition of approval.

"The question becomes, as it always does for parking, 'How many is too much, how long is too long, what is OK,'" Chris Hoth, the chairman of the Planning Commission, said. "You can't say it's up to three cars for 45 minutes. It's a little subjective about what's considered to be a problem."

It will be up to the code enforcement officer to determine what's reasonable. "If this is a situation every weekend at a VRD where there's extra cars there, we can argue it's having an impact on the neighborhood, and at that point, take a look at it on a specific case-by-case basis," Flory said.

"If it's something ongoing

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Jason Lancaster and Amy Myers inside the Sasquatch Sandwich Co. food truck.

Hamilton Market gets an OK for outdoor food sales

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Sasquatch Sandwich Shop received a go-ahead from the Seaside Planning

Commission last week to serve hot food and gourmet sandwiches from their food truck in the parking lot of the Hamilton Market.

William Montero and his family purchased the

market in September 2019 from the Smith family, owners of Ken and Sons Select Family Market at 250 Avenue U.

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