

Campus: Opportunity is ‘second to none’

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opportunity for a new campus outside of the inundation zone. Dougherty helped drive community support — along with the addition of impassioned student voices — for a vote again in 2016.

In a 65% to 35% vote, residents endorsed the \$99.7 million plan to replace schools at an 80-acre location on Spruce Drive above Seaside Heights Elementary School.

“We’ve been working on this for almost 30 years,” Dougherty said. “It’s a project that first started out slowly. It got a lot of local attention, then national attention, and it was very helpful. But it really was the community that came around and made this a real-

ity for the next generations.”

Roberts called the new school “remarkable, one of a kind, a testament to the community and an incredible commitment to our kids.”

“We are lucky to live in a place that continues to support its kids through their checkbooks — through taxes and operating levies, all these things,” he said. “It’s a special place for everybody, regardless if they have a kid in the building or not. That’s why this is such an incredible community. We’ve already had kids returning to school — sixth, seventh, eighth graders returned in the last two weeks — and their excitement over their new learning spaces. Having roofs that don’t leak, having desks that fit, tons of natural light.



R.J. Marx

Bob Mitchell, Seaside's director of building and code enforcement, presents the building certificate of occupancy to Seaside School District Superintendent Susan Penrod.

It's brought a smile to a lot of their faces and it's good to be here.”

He pointed to the opportunity that awaited them as “second to none.”

“When we stood down there and broke ground, we knew it was big,” school board president Mark Truax added. “But it was a lot bigger than we thought it was.”

County tackles South County rental rules

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

During a county Board of Commissioners work session in February, the county set the table for discussions, laying out ways to tighten short-term rental ordinances as well as potential policies to consider down the road.

Cities on the North Coast have struggled to balance the growth in vacation rentals as the region becomes a more popular tourist destination. Pockets of the county have also felt the same pressures.

Many of the questions and policy suggestions came out of quarterly community discussions the county started hosting last summer.

The virtual discussions began in Cove Beach in July to promote dialogue after strife over vacation rentals. The meetings were expanded to Arch Cape and Clatsop Plains.

Gail Henrikson, the county's community development director, said the meetings were an opportunity to explain how the code compliance process works and how they prioritize and address complaints.

“It was also a chance for us to hear all of the concerns that we were getting on a piecemeal basis, but just to (create) a community-wide dialogue so everybody was hearing the same thing at the same time,” she said. “And then by hearing that, it also gave staff a chance to begin to identify areas in the ordinance where we needed to make revisions to help us better implement and enforce it.”

During the community meetings, residents explained how short-term rentals have impacted their



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Vacation rentals in Arch Cape are required to book minimum seven-night stays.

quality of life. Many of the complaints deal with noise, parking and overcrowding. Other complaints are out of the county's control.

Vacation rental owners have described their efforts to be good neighbors and encourage their guests to do the same.

“And they also have concerns about possible changes to the ordinance that may impact how they do business or even possibly eliminate the possibility of them doing business,” Henrikson said.

There are two county ordinances that regulate vacation rentals. One is specific to Arch Cape, while the other covers the remaining unincorporated parts of the county.

Both are similar, but have a couple of key differences regarding parking and length-of-stay requirements.

The Arch Cape ordinance requires a minimum sev-

en-night stay, and only one reservation is allowed during a seven-day period. Street parking is not allowed. There is no limit or minimum stay requirement for other unincorporated areas, and street parking is allowed.

Commissioners directed staff to set parameters and a scope of work for an ad hoc committee to help combine and reconcile the two ordinances.

“Those would be the two big areas where we would need to have a committee to look at it and determine how best to reconcile,” Henrikson said. “Whether it’s taking one of the ordinance provisions and recommending that to be adopted or just creating some sort of compromise between the two ordinances.”

The board's guidance on other questions could be drafted as amendments. Some of those ques-

tions include whether there should be a “three-strikes rule” — requiring staff to revoke a vacation rental permit after three complaints — and penalties for people who knowingly submit false complaints.

Some policy items were provided as a starting point for future discussions, including questions about capping short-term rentals, prohibiting them in certain parts of the county and how the lodging tax is utilized.

Henrikson said those items will not be included in the revisions to the ordinances at this time.

“It was so clear to me how much everybody who wrote cared about this issue,” said Commissioner Lianne Thompson, who represents South County. “Every single person has this passionate devotion to community well-being. There is not a consensus on what that community well-being looks like, how it’s defined, none of it. There’s no agreement.”

“My concern about establishing a committee would be it would have to have a purview where it looked at what was state law, what were the sidebars. I’ve seen some things with citizen advisory committees that have caused me great concern.”

“There have been a number of proposals that have been in clear violation of state law and have been termed ‘aspirational.’ Well, I don’t have an aspiration to break the state law, and I think it doesn’t help the situation when anybody thinks that their will or their whim or their idea or their passion, however we want to characterize it, can have the force of state law or county ordinance.”

Clatsop WORKS accepting applications

By EMILY LINDBLOM
Coast River Business Journal

Students looking for summer work experience can connect to employers from multiple local industries through Clatsop Community College's Clatsop WORKS program. High school and college students ages 16 and older can apply now for these paid internships.

Ryan Stanley, coordinator of Clatsop WORKS as well as Cooperative Work Experience at the college, said Clatsop WORKS is a low-risk way for students to explore different fields with the option to change their minds about what they want to pursue. For example, one student who planned on going into health-care ended up doing a social media internship and loved it.

The program also includes six to eight professional development and networking sessions throughout the summer, done over Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders in lumber, manufacturing, personal finance, construction and other industries present about a variety of topics to help students develop their workforce skills.

“I’ve been here for 10 years and it’s hard for students to understand what opportunities are here for them after high school or college,” Stanley said. “We’re able to fill that void and create that opportunity for students in a way that complements their skills and sets them up for success in their careers and beyond.”

Kevin Leahy, director of the college's Small Business Development Center and Clatsop Economic Development Resources, said the area has many more job opportunities than when he was growing up here.

“Unless your parents owned a business or were in government or law enforcement, there were not a lot of career options here,” Leahy said. “I’ve seen how much that has evolved in Clatsop County. We have tourism but also forest products, fishing, medical — a lot of what makes us who we are and we want to transfer that to our youth.”

Clatsop WORKS began four years ago and is modeled after the McMinnville WORKS Internship Program, which connects Linfield University students with intern-



Clatsop WORKS

Interns tour a Hampton Lumber mill.

ships. Leahy said the steering committee decided to open Clatsop WORKS to both high school and college students.

Funding comes from the local school districts, the college and the Northwest Regional Education Services District.

“It continues to grow and gives students opportunities that are unparalleled,” Leahy said.

Leahy added the employers have been very engaged in helping the students gain work experience and training, and the employers get a tremendous return on their investment.

Several of the businesses involved in the 2020 program

plan to participate again this year.

“When host employers take students on, they get to train and develop them and can hire them when the internship ends or after their high school or college,” Stanley said. “We work with as many sectors of the economy as possible to help students find work and also to fill gaps local businesses are looking for.”

Student applications are accepted now through 5 p.m. on April 16 via clatsopworks.com. The employer application deadline is June 1 and the internships are expected to run from mid-to-late June through mid-August.

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