

Parking amendment ends ‘one-size-fits-all’ requirement

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

The city saw an end to “one-size-fits-all” parking requirements for owners of apartment buildings. The goal is to remove road-blocks to affordable and workforce housing.

“The ordinance we have now requires two off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit, Planning Director Kevin Cupples said.

Some neighboring communities have a lower requirement, Cupples said. “If you have a studio, one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartment, it would adjust the required off-street parking in order



The Seaside City Council met April 12.

to not require as much as it would be for a single-family dwelling or condominium.”

This has a significant impact on the amount of backup land necessary to develop smaller apartments or multifamily dwellings which in turn drives up the land cost to develop smaller rental housing.

According to the new ordinance, studios will need one off-street space; a one-bedroom apartment 1.25 spaces and a two-bedroom apartment 1.5 spaces. Larger units would continue to require a minimum of two off-street spaces.

The idea came from former planning commissioner Bill Carpenter, who

was honored earlier in the evening for his service to the community. Based on a request by the commission, the City Council initiated the public hearing for the zoning change in 2019.

“I first saw this amendment on my term on the Planning Commission,” Councilor Steve Wright said. “This was Bill’s idea. It shows the perseverance of one individual to keep pushing at it and pushing at it, and we thank you.”

Wright and council members Randy Frank, Tita Montero, Dana Phillips and David Posalski voted for the amendment, along with Barber. Tom Horning was absent.

Gearhart Planning Commission remembers Anderson

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Experienced, reliable, level-headed and an anchor to the community.

Eight-year planning commissioner, Carl Anderson, who died earlier this year, was remembered at by commission members at the April meeting.

“Carl was an anchor,”

the city’s planning director Carole Connell said. “I’ve known him the eight years I’ve worked for the city, and he had experience in other cities, and it showed. He was experience. He was incredibly reliable, level-headed and always ready to compromise. He was very level-headed. He’d make a motion then vote against the motion. He heard all sides of things.

He was just so practical in every decision.”

“We lost a great friend and someone who served faithfully,” Virginia Dideum, chairwoman of the commission, said. “Even if we disagreed during the meeting, we could be friends still. We will sincerely miss his presence.”

“When I first came onto the Planning Commission, Carl took me under

his wing,” said commissioner Terry Graff. “I always admired him not only for the way he understood Gearhart, but also as a person. I will really miss Carl sitting at the end of the table. He was a very, very special person.”

“He was a very smart fellow,” David Smith said. “I appreciated his way of looking at things and pointing out things I had totally

missed. When he was contrarian he was contrarian in the most pleasant manner.” Commissioner Austin Tomlinson said he appreciated Anderson’s humor, and the time they spent together on the commission.

Anderson was a unique member of the commission, Russ Taggard said. “He always seemed to have the perspective that the rest of us had overlooked. He

will be missed by all of us for sure.”

Sharon Kloefer was appointed to fill the commission vacancy.

A five-and-a-half year Gearhart resident, Kloefer described herself as a homeowner and outdoors person. “I walk the Ridge Path. I love Gearhart and I’m very concerned about keeping it the beautiful place it is,” she said.

Downgrade: District’s financial profile described as ‘healthy’

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district’s credit is now no longer solely derived from the towns the district represents,” Jacobson said.

The grade is based on factors including resident income, a district’s available fund balance and cash, long-term liabilities and fixed costs.

A key consideration for the downgrade is the

district’s elevated financial leverage driven by the substantial amount of debt issued to replace existing schools with new facilities located above the tsunami inundation zone in the event of a very large earthquake. The district has \$102.9 million in Moody’s rated debt.

The district’s fixed costs are also high, with debt service set on

an escalating schedule through 2047 and including deferred interest.

As Seaside School District approaches the end of construction, final costs for new campus construction will cap at more than \$131 million.

The number, about a quarter more than the original 2016 construction bond of \$99.7 million, is supplanted by bond sales,

interest, state grants, timber money, school sales and most recently a \$9 million 20-year loan.

Despite the downgrade, the district’s financial profile is described as “healthy, with solid reserve levels supported by consistently structurally balanced operations.”

In their rating report, Moody’s notes the financial strengths of the dis-

trict, as well as its “substantial” tax base, Hill said. “However, because the new methodology reduces the importance of the tax base in their criteria, the district’s debt is now regarded as elevated.”

The district’s tax base generates more property tax revenue than the minimum amount guaranteed under the state funding

formula given the district’s total enrollment.

Because the district’s capital plan is essentially completed with the new campus, the district’s debt burden should decline over time, Hill said. “The district does not anticipate borrowing again in the foreseeable future; therefore, the reduction in the current bond rating should have no effect.”

Pipes: City fills sinkhole with gravel

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Hamilton alleges.

City Attorney Peter Watts says the city is working toward a resolution with the property owner.

“At the risk of oversimplifying things, there is a pipe that during heavy rain events discharges water onto some private property,” Watts said. “It’s caused some damage. We had to do some due diligence to figure out some hows and whys.”

What the city found, he said, was the city does not own the pipe, the city did not build the pipe, the city did not engineer the pipe. The pipe was in place prior to annexation of the various properties into the city.

“So, we feel pretty comfortable and that is something articulated to the attorney that is suing us,” Watts said. “We absolutely would like to resolve this if we can.”

According to the complaint, sometime in spring 2019, Hamilton noticed a hole in her yard. She contacted the city, who indicated they’d investigate and fix the problem causing the hole. Hamilton believed the problem was fixed at that point.

Last June, the city was performing work on a property down the street from the property, Hamilton said in her filing.

In the course of the work, the hole in the front yard of the property enlarged and

imploded. She contacted the city, which admitted the hole was caused by a mismatch in two stormwater pipes running underneath the property.

According to Hamilton, the city admitted the mismatched pipes required replacement to fully prevent the sinkhole from growing, but failed to replace the pipes despite repeated requests. Instead, the city filled the sinkhole with gravel to stabilize the front yard of the property.

The city continuously foregoes fixing the root of the issue in favor of cheap, temporary measures that do not last, she said.

There’s not a “super obvious” solution, Watts said at a City Council meeting earlier this month. He said the city has been attempting to mitigate the problem by filling the hole with gravel.

“I received a letter yesterday accusing us of trespassing by continuing to do that activity,” Watts said. “And they reiterated their desire to resolve this outside of litigation. It’s a little bit confusing to me. If we’re trying to help someone mitigate this issue by putting gravel in and then have them accuse us of trespassing probably doesn’t send the best possible sign of ‘let’s all work together.’”