



## WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON DOWNTOWN PARKING

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Got parking?

That was the question business leaders wrestled with at a workshop last Tuesday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center hosted by Seaside city councilors David Posalski and Randy Frank.

“What I want to hear is what are businesses and the community’s perception that are issues with parking here in Seaside?” Posalski asked.

The city’s last parking study was done in 2003 and 2004, he said. “Ninety-six percent of them felt parking was a problem, and that was 17 years ago,” Posalski said.

Calling it a systemic problem, Posalski asked for a long-term view. “Where are we going to be in 10 years? And how are we going to deal with it? Because at least with the trends that I’ve seen, in the 10 years I’ve been here, it’s gotten worse every year.”

Attendees agreed on a lack of

spaces in walking distance of downtown for visitors and residents alike, not only during the visitor season but throughout the year. Remedies centered on a multilevel parking structure, paid parking options, off-site parking and shuttles. Solutions included greater use of the upper level of the WorldMark Seaside parking lot, more clearly marked signage throughout town and in parking lots, parking areas outside of the downtown area and shuttles to shopping and the beach.

“I was here during the 2003 survey,” Susan Deshon, of the Carousel Mall, said. “The problems have not changed, they have been augmented.”

Deshon said RVs and buses seeking to find spaces have been problematic during an “astronomically busy time” for downtown during the coronavirus pandemic.

Bus parking will only worsen, said Keith Chandler, general manager of the Seaside Aquarium. “We haven’t had the problem because we don’t have the groups that we have normally, because there’s no school. When school gets

back in session, all those bus drivers are going to park right downtown,” Chandler said.

Jeff Ter Har, owner of Ter Har’s, a clothing store, proposed an app that could provide available parking options to tourists and residents.

Workshop participants suggested parking at a location outside of the downtown area, possibly at the former Broadway Middle School, the former Seaside High School or an area east of U.S. Highway 101, with a “park and ride” to bring people downtown.

There are 160 parking spots in the WorldMark lot and 225 in the convention center parking lot, Frank said.

More spots could come with a new multilevel parking garage on the site of the convention center parking lot. “The answer is we need more spots,” Seaside’s Greg Peterson said. “When we do, we get a lot of structure in the back here two, three, four levels? I know that’s a big price tag, but how do we solve it?”

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Even in the middle of the week, all spots are taken on Broadway.

R.J. Marx



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Aerial view of property in the Highlands offered as part of a potential land exchange.

## Gearhart zeroes in on Highlands firehouse site

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Gearhart City Attorney Peter Watts provided an update on a shift in direction for the city’s proposed firehouse and resiliency station.

“It really feels like everything’s falling together,” Watts said at last Wednesday’s City Council meeting. “I am working on putting together a written agreement regarding the Cottages property, which is where we will be putting our firehouse.”

He said he expects to have the agreement ready for the council’s review at their next meeting.

The city is working with planners to bring the 30-acre Cottages at Gearhart subdivision off of Highlands Lane into the city’s urban

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## Gearhart presents new budget, poised for federal funds

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Gearhart released its 2021 to 2022 budget last week, showing \$2.57 million in resources, up about 8% from last year’s \$2 million budget.

The budget committee met last Thursday to review the proposed budget and to consider revenue sharing funds to area nonprofits.

The general fund anticipated resources for the fiscal year of almost \$2.6 million, City Administrator Chad Sweet said in presenting the budget. The city’s municipal tax rate remains the same at \$1.53 cents per \$1,000. A 3.9% increase of city tax revenue is a result of new development in 2020 and 2021 and increased property values.

“We were a little surprised by how the economy fared this last fiscal year,” Sweet said. “Looking forward, factors such as pent-up travel demand, interest rate relief funds, supply chain housing and material prices will factor into the next fiscal year.”

This year’s budget is unique in that the city is set to receive \$330,000 from the American Rescue Plan approved by Congress, Sweet said.

The funds may be used for infrastructure, planning and emergency response.

The city’s transient room tax is budgeted at \$380,000, a \$130,000 increase. “Last year the TRT was underestimated, not anticipating COVID would increase traveling to Gearhart,” Sweet said.

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## Gearhart responds to mismatched pipe lawsuit

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

A lawsuit against Gearhart over a homeowner’s mismatched pipes moved ahead in Clatsop County Circuit Court. The city filed a response April 27, stating the complaint fails to “assert ultimate facts sufficient to constitute a claim for relief against the city.”

“There’s no easy solution to the problem,” City Attorney Peter Watts said at

last Wednesday’s City Council meeting.

The complaint, filed in Circuit Court, claims that Gearhart is responsible for mismatched stormwater pipes offset by 5 inches, causing water to escape from the gap in the pipes, which created a sinkhole on Julie Hamilton’s Fifer Heights Road property.

Hamilton wants \$50,000 in damages and the city to permanently repair the mismatched pipes. The city continuously foregoes fixing the root of the issue in favor of cheap, temporary mea-

sures that do not last, Hamilton said in court documents.

Watts said that the system was engineered before the property was annexed into the city. The developer was likely responsible but sold the property and is now deceased.

“We are sympathetic to the homeowner,” Watts said. “There is no obvious solution, but the good news is that our insurance carrier is handling it, so we don’t have to worry about it quite as much.”

## Brown, longtime Seaside educator, to retire

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
Seaside Signal

Since 1990, Sande Brown has filled a variety of roles in the Seaside School District: teacher, assistant principal, principal and, most recently, director for curriculum and the English as a second language program.

“They were all the right place to be at that point in time,” she said. “I loved being with students, I loved

being principal. ... I love the three communities: Gearhart, Cannon Beach and Seaside.”

At different times, she was principal of all three of the school district’s elementary schools, including the former Cannon Beach Elementary School and Gearhart Elementary School.

“I’ve been really lucky to work in areas I’m passionate about,” Brown said.

Now, she is preparing to move into full-time retirement. Her resignation, which is effective June 30, was approved by the school board in March.

Brown originally retired in 2016 before accepting her part-time position for what she intended to be six years. Her retirement at that time felt different than it does now — less final. When she first retired, she was exhausted, but “not really done with education,” she said.

“I thought I could be a part of education and make a difference in education from a different perspective,” Brown said.

One part of her job has been to choose new curricula. Each year, school districts in Oregon adopt

new curricula for a particular content area that they can use for the next seven years. Eventually, they cycle through each subject.

On top of that, Brown has been responsible for coordinating music, art, English language arts and summer programs, as well as science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs. She has also worked with those involved in English as a second language and efforts to develop partnerships with external agencies.

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Katherine Lacaze

Sande Brown is retiring from the Seaside School District.

