

Land swap concern

To Gearhart Mayor and City Councilors:

I would like to address the proposed urban growth boundary land swap.

My opinion is based on a career in real estate investment and development. I have personally developed and consented more than 1,500 single-family residential lots, worked out several thousand residential lots of failed residential subdivisions as a commercial banker, and managed residential subdivision construction lending in San Diego for a major national bank.

I am not opposed to a

UGB land swap in principle; the transaction can create significant value for the property owner, developers and, most importantly, the community. My concern with the proposed swap, as it is currently structured, is based on my long career in real estate development. In my opinion, this transaction is structured to lose millions of dollars of potential value to the taxpayers of Gearhart.

The fundamental flaw is that the transaction is tied to a bond issue that may not pass. If you approve the land swap now and the bond fails in November, the developer will gain millions of dollars in increased land value from being in the UGB but the

taxpayers will not realize any greater community benefit. Simply put, Gearhart should realize a benefit proportionate to the developers benefit.

I recommend that you slow down this land swap process and that you make sure that each of you understands how much money the developer/landowner is making by annexing to the city of Gearhart and then get at least 75% of that value for the benefit of Gearhart property owners.

Gearhart is fortunate to have a wealth of elder statespersons who, by relying on their years of professional experience, can help you structure a land swap that is less specula-

tive and that benefits the community not just the developer.

For the long-term financial health of the community, please slow down the land swap and look deeply at how you can provide the most benefit to the community.

**Bob and Timi Morey
E2 Land Use Planning LLC
Portland**

Make former middle school safe for lodgers

I read the article about business owners considering working with Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District to house

workers in Broadway Middle School. An interesting approach (short-term) to the lack of affordable housing for employees of Seaside businesses.

My question to the council and the owners of all of the businesses invested in this project is whether or not the building, which has been noted as being full of asbestos and mold, will be rehabbed to ensure the health and well being of people who may end up living there while they serve the city of Seaside?

To quote a former article in the Seaside Signal:

“This is a building that has mold, rot, asbestos, cracks, sinking, water within the structure and a

roof that inspection reports show has needed total replacement for quite some years.”

Federal regulations require damaged thermal system insulation to be cleaned and repaired and replaced.

From \$4 million to \$5 million needs to be spent just to keep the building watertight by replacing the roof and all west-facing windows.

The money raised by businesses thus far may pay SEPRD’s mortgage payments, but it does not even come close to covering the cost required to make the building safe for people to inhabit it.

**Christina Buck
Seaside**

Forum: City councilor calls for a regional approach

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there’s a way we can make things better for everybody.”

Fears of Seaside turning into Portland — with its influx of homeless and public safety concerns — motivated Tom Schwenzer, a resident, to look to the courts

to the point that Portland is — and it’s scary,” he said.

Martin LeTourneau, founder of Love on the Streets, a volunteer group to help the homeless, called for permanent housing, shelters and camp areas. “Keeping them moving isn’t going to make them go away unless



R.J. Marx

A homeless encampment at the Mill Ponds in December.

doesn’t change things. Rather, it makes it more difficult for people to get off the streets, Seamus McVey said.

“Having somewhere to go would definitely make things a lot easier,” he said.

Pamela Cromwell, a res-

ident, described a period in her own life when she was living in her car.

“The depression is unbelievable, the sense of displacement is debilitating,” Cromwell, now a business owner, said. “If I didn’t have the limited support that I did have, I could easily have seen giving up. You’ll never be part of that beautifulness: the people who own the beautiful homes in Seaside. The people who have the magnificent businesses in Seaside. You’ll never be part of that. You’ll never be welcomed into that. Because you don’t have an address. And you don’t have a place to make food for yourself and you don’t have a place to simply be, you have no right to just be anywhere, everywhere that you go. You have no right to be there. And it’s a soul-killing feeling.”

Detective William Barnes said he sought a focus on the local population. “I would like to see some resources to help these people before they become homeless,” he said. “I don’t know how many times you see someone in the spiral. We have to wait until we hit that rock bottom before the resources kick in. And to me, that doesn’t make any sense.”

Montero called for a regional approach. “We need to be working with the other towns,” she said. “We need to shine more light on the South County and on Seaside. We need to be working toward the county commission, paying more attention to homelessness. We want to keep the communication and the conversation going. If you don’t keep it going, it just dies.”

‘I WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME RESOURCES TO HELP THESE PEOPLE BEFORE THEY BECOME HOMELESS’

Detective William Barnes

for greater enforcement. “I can’t say I walked up here with an absolute solution, but I’m telling you if I look the other way, if you’ve decided that you can’t do something about it it’s going to bring us

they have someplace to go to,” he said. “What we do need is for the city of Seaside to have a vision that we can build on and that we can work toward supporting.”

Being shooed around

Game: ‘It’s easier to be yourself when you’re playing a character’

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or fairy, and accompanying titles, such as sorcerer, monk, barbarian, druid or bard. During the course of a game, the adventurers run into a variety of nonplayer characters, all created and controlled by the dungeon master, who provides information or assistance to the group, or are sometimes villains who must be defeated in combat.

Collaborative role-playing

When Branson was hired in September, the library’s Teen Tuesdays program had been out of commission for several months because of the pandemic. She was tasked with helping to rebuild the program and introduce activities that could be done in a virtual environment. The idea of Dungeons & Dragons was pitched during Branson’s interview, and by November, she had incorporated the game into the monthly lineup for Teen Tuesdays.

At the Cannon Beach Academy, first and second grade teacher Ryan Hull had come up with a similar idea. During the end of 2019-20 school year, when he was teaching third through fifth grade, he asked his students



if they wanted to create characters for fun. Of the 23 in his class, 19 chose to. Throughout the following summer, he kept thinking, “I’ve got to do something about this.”

At the start of the new school year, Hull invited the students to start an ongoing campaign, which means continuing the same story with the same characters from week to week with different quests or tasks along the way. He originally had three

students involved, but the group has since grown to seven kids between second and fifth grade. They meet once a week on Wednesday afternoons.

Branson also has about seven or eight teens participating each session. It’s not always the same people, but she encourages the kids to come play when they can, and she works the story around the absences. One of the more difficult aspects is



Dungeons & Dragons

The Sword Coast in the game Dungeons & Dragons, is described as “a region of Faerun that comprises shining paragons of civilization and culture, perilous locales fraught with dread and evil, and encompassing them all, a wilderness that offers every explorer vast opportunity and simultaneously promises great danger.”

they only have an hour per session, which isn’t much time to advance the story. Branson focuses her campaign on smaller tasks, puzzles and problem-solving situations that can usually be completed in the timeframe, or at least leave the players feeling accomplished.

A safe environment

Both Hull and Branson likened Dungeons & Dragons to theater, which they’re individually involved with at the community level. In Branson’s experience, it can be challenging for some people to open up to others and make friends. But the game

provides a safe, fantastical and fun environment that is conducive to putting kids at ease as they work toward a shared goal.

“In a strange way, it’s easier to be yourself when you’re playing a character,” Branson said, adding it provides a starting-off point for developing friendships that extend beyond the game. She’s observed certain teens grow more engaged, vocal and comfortable over the past six months. “They have a lot of fun, which is the most important thing to me,” she said.

Hull also sees it as an opportunity to introduce real-

world issues and allow the kids to work through them in an imaginary environment.

“It’s a great place to talk about things and to talk about scenarios and situations,” he said. “If I know something is going on in the school or someone is dealing with something, I can make that situation happen in the story. ... We can role-play it in the game, and I think that’s been really great, too.”

He appreciates watching the students absorb information during different game scenarios and then think critically and collaboratively about solutions. They’ll often generate ideas or thoughts that didn’t cross his mind.

“They are really listening to the circumstances and getting into it and coming up with their own thing,” he said.

It also gives the students a way to channel their energy and hang out with their friends, which has been difficult in the virtual classroom. There often isn’t extra time “to socialize, have fun and kind of let your hair down,” Hull said. Even though they’re also playing the game virtually, it still helps fill that gap.

“I definitely think this was a good opportunity to socialize,” he said.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

MONDAY, JUNE 14

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., cityofseaside.us.

TUESDAY, JUNE 15

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A.

Seaside School District,

6 p.m., www.seaside.k12.or.us/meetings.

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., work session, 989 Broadway.

Gearhart Small Business

Committee, 6 p.m., cityof-gearhart.com.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Gearhart Parks Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee, 5:30 p.m., work session, cityofgearhart.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 17

Seaside Transportation Ad-

visory Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

MONDAY, JUNE 28

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway, cityofseaside.us.



PUBLISHER
Kari Borgen

EDITOR
R.J. Marx

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Jeremy Feldman
ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Sarah Silver-Tecza

PRODUCTION MANAGER
John D. Bruijn
SYSTEMS MANAGER
Carl Earl

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Skyler Archibald
Darren Gooch
Joshua Heineman
Rain Jordan
Katherine Lacaze
Esther Moberg

Seaside Signal

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The Seaside Signal welcomes letters to the editor. The deadline is noon Monday prior to publication. Letters must be 400 words or less and must be signed by the author and include a phone number for verification. We also request that submissions be limited to one letter per month. Send to 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside, OR 97138, drop them off at 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive or fax to 503-738-9285, or email rmarx@seasidejournal.com

Subscriptions

Annually: \$51.00, monthly autopay is \$4.25 e-Edition only: \$4 a month

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