



Resetting the clock at Vista Ridge II

Commission, neighbors have long list of concerns

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Developers and neighbors will both have an opportunity to regroup before consideration of plans for Vista Ridge II, a 17-home development on 6.5 wooded acres in Seaside's eastern hills.

Robin Montero, chair of the Planning Commission, said at last Tuesday's meeting that the development "was a great opportunity to create an inviting community up there while being able to enjoy the beauty of the natural surroundings. The current plan is very aggressive, but I think with adjustments, we can make a beautiful addition into our Seaside hills."

At the same time, Montero had a list of questions for project engineer Mark Mead, including what type of development is planned, housing selection and style.

"We've been told it's one or two stories, but there aren't any specific style selections," Montero said. "What type of housing? Luxury, medium, affordable or mixed?"

Representing Sunset Ridge LLC at a Planning Commission meeting in September, Mead sought approval for the subdivision east of Wahanna Road, to be accessed by Hemlock and Aldercrest streets and separated from the original Vista Ridge subdivision by a creek.

Plans show the parcel could be developed into 17 residential building lots from 7,000 to 15,000 square feet, with

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Alison Brie, center in a red dress, on the set of "Somebody I Used to Know" at McMenamins in Gearhart.

HOLLYWOOD IN GEARHART

Alison Brie, Dave Franco in Gearhart for major film production

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

A major Hollywood production brought cast and crew to the North Coast on Tuesday for filming at McMenamins Hotel in Gearhart.

The Amazon Studios romantic comedy "Somebody I Used to Know," directed by Dave Franco and starring

Alison Brie, Jay Ellis and Kiersey Clemons, launched in late September.

Brie, known for her work on the TV shows "Mad Men" and "Community," is married to Franco and co-wrote the script. Franco also directed the horror movie, "The Rental," which starred Brie.

Filming for "Somebody I Used to Know" took place on the outdoor deck behind McMenamins and will con-

tinue in the Portland area.

According to Amazon Studios, the movie follows a workaholic, played by Brie, who, on a trip to her hometown spends a night reminiscing with her ex-boyfriend, which makes her start to question everything about the choices she's made and the person she's become.

The movie will debut on Prime Video next year.

GEARHART

Firehouse vote eyed for next year

Vote delay leads to new campaign

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

In the aftermath of a judge's decision validating wording on a firehouse bond measure, city councilors and staff are looking ahead to a new bond vote in May for the proposed \$13 million station bond off of Highlands Lane. City attorney Peter Watts is still shaking his head at the challenge, because of filing deadlines, led to postponement of the citywide vote, which would have taken place this November.

"It's really surprising we would get this sort of opposition to that site," Watts said. "We came up with a really creative way, in my mind, of getting a free site for a fire station, and a site for a park. I really had thought this would be kind of a rally 'round the flag issue, and everyone would be kind of proud of the city for coming up with a really creative solution to what seemed to be a big problem. We were looking at \$3 million to \$4 million for that High Point site, and two lawsuits — why would we buy a site if we can get one for free that's at a higher elevation?"

Gearhart is working with planners to bring the 30-acre Cottages at Gearhart subdivision off Highlands Lane into the city's urban growth boundary in a land swap for acreage in the city's "no-build" zone near the ocean. The land would be used for a firehouse and police station to

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Photos by R.J. Marx

Brick Stone and Logan Dahlen of Controversial Coffee.

Controversial Coffee comes to Seaside

Queer-owned business seeks to open discussion

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

For those who like their lattes with a dash of controversy, a new shop at 111 Broadway provides a shot of both. Brick Stone and Logan Dahlen purchased the former Pacific Pearl Coffee and turned it into Controversial Coffee, serving Sleepy Monk coffee, specialty drinks and cool souvenir items on Seaside's busiest street.

What's controversial about Controversial Coffee?

"This is Controversial Coffee because we are a queer couple," co-owner Brick Stone said. "It's kind of controversial to be trans-queer in a public space."

Stone and partner Logan Dahlen plan to encourage conversations — not debates. "There's a big difference between



Candles available at Controversial Coffee.

conversation and debate," Stone said. "There's a lot of people who want to come in and debate whether or not that matter deserve rights, or respect for that matter. That's not debatable and then we have to ask people to leave if they're disrespectful because there's none of that in here."

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Vacation rental dwellings are reaching their threshold

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

A three-bedroom home on South Prom. Another three-bedroom home on the 1600 block of South Edgewood. A two-bedroom house on the 1800 block of South Edgewood. A two-bedroom home on South Columbia.

Four homeowners came to Seaside's Planning Commission meeting last Tuesday seeking conditional use approval for a vacation rental dwelling. All four received that approval.

"One of my concerns is, I see articles that say Seaside is the place to invest in vacation rentals," Jeff Flory, the city's transient rental dwelling enforcement officer said. "This is a huge business model for people — so I think we're going to see a flood of people from out of the area continuing to do it."

Since Jan. 1, the city has received 73 land use applications. Of these, 58% are for transient rentals, including 32 vacation rental dwellings, seven transient rental condos and three bed and breakfasts. The city has 411 transient rental dwellings, active or pending. There is a backlog of 96 inspections needed to be completed.

The widespread turnover of formerly residential homes and its impacts on the availability of affordable housing concerned planning commissioner Seth Morrissey.

"I do have a quick comment on the vacation rental approval because I think all of us are concerned with all the proliferation of vacation rentals," Morrissey said. "I've had conversations with the City Council and I don't think anyone really knows whose responsibility it is to actually adjust and kind of refine the rules of vacation rentals."

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