

Flooding: Fixes in 2013 were ‘both expensive and extensive’

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But the flooding that occurs near Highway 101 by Circle Creek RV Resort during heavy rains is something city officials hope to address and possibly mitigate.

Parts of Seaside flooded during the recent storm. With snow melt, rain swelling the rivers and king tides, the city had a lot of standing water, McDowell said.

Near Circle Creek, rain and snow melt again made passage difficult if not impossible.

“I do think it would be interesting to have a conversation with the Oregon Department of Transportation again concerning the flooding that does take place south of town,” City Manager Mark Winstanley said.

Changes were made several years back that lowered the frequency and level of flooding, “but it has obviously not solved the problem down south of town,” Winstanley said.

In the 1970s, berms had been built to hold back the Necanicum River and improve the land for devel-



Lydia Ely/The Astorian/Daily Astorian
Cars crossed a submerged section of U.S. Highway 101 south of Seaside early this month.



R.J. Marx

An area of U.S. Highway 101 that sees chronic flooding during heavy rains.

opment, City Councilor Tom Horning said.

Much of the seasonal water was constrained by the berm, but floodwaters could not flow into the fields and wetlands, and had nowhere to go but across the highway, causing delays and closures.

In 2013, the Department of Transportation, the county and North Coast Land Conservancy completed remediation of a parcel of wetlands designed to flood-proof the area of land near Circle Creek.

While the Department of Transportation acknowl-

edged the wetlands mitigation project would not stop the highway from flooding entirely, they hoped to significantly reduce flooding by allowing the water to drain naturally onto the wetlands.

The removal of parts of the berm along the west side of the river on North Coast Land Conservancy property did solve a large part of the flood problem, Horning said.

“However, not all of the berm was removed, so not all of the problem was fixed,” Horning said. “It stands to reason that the remaining berm could be removed to

return the highway and river flooding to the way they were in November 1972 when the flooding really began in earnest.”

Its total removal should restore that flooding section of road to nearly dry, he said.

The fixes in 2013 almost a decade ago were “both expensive and extensive,” Winstanley said.

“Coming back and taking a look at that again is something that would be interesting,” he said. “It’s about time

for the city to engage the Oregon Department of Transportation again and see whether they have any ideas on how they might solve that. We complain just like anybody else would, but I think we can see if we can’t have some more conversation about that.”

City Councilor Steve Wright, the Seaside board member for the Northwest Oregon Area Commission on Transportation, brought the issue to the group’s January

meeting.

Group members were responsive, he said, and will look for a regional coalition, possibly with Oregon Solutions, which works with partner organizations in resolving difficult public policy issues.

“The areas that flood are outside the city so a regional agency seems a good place to start,” Wright said. “We need to keep working on solutions. The problem occurs less frequently but it still shuts down 101.”

Firehouse: If 20-year bond passes, construction could begin in 2023

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The city could present a \$13 million bond proposal in May. Gearhart would build the firehouse on land off Highlands Lane, currently out of city limits. To bring it into the urban growth boundary, the city would exchange an equal amount of acreage already within city limits.

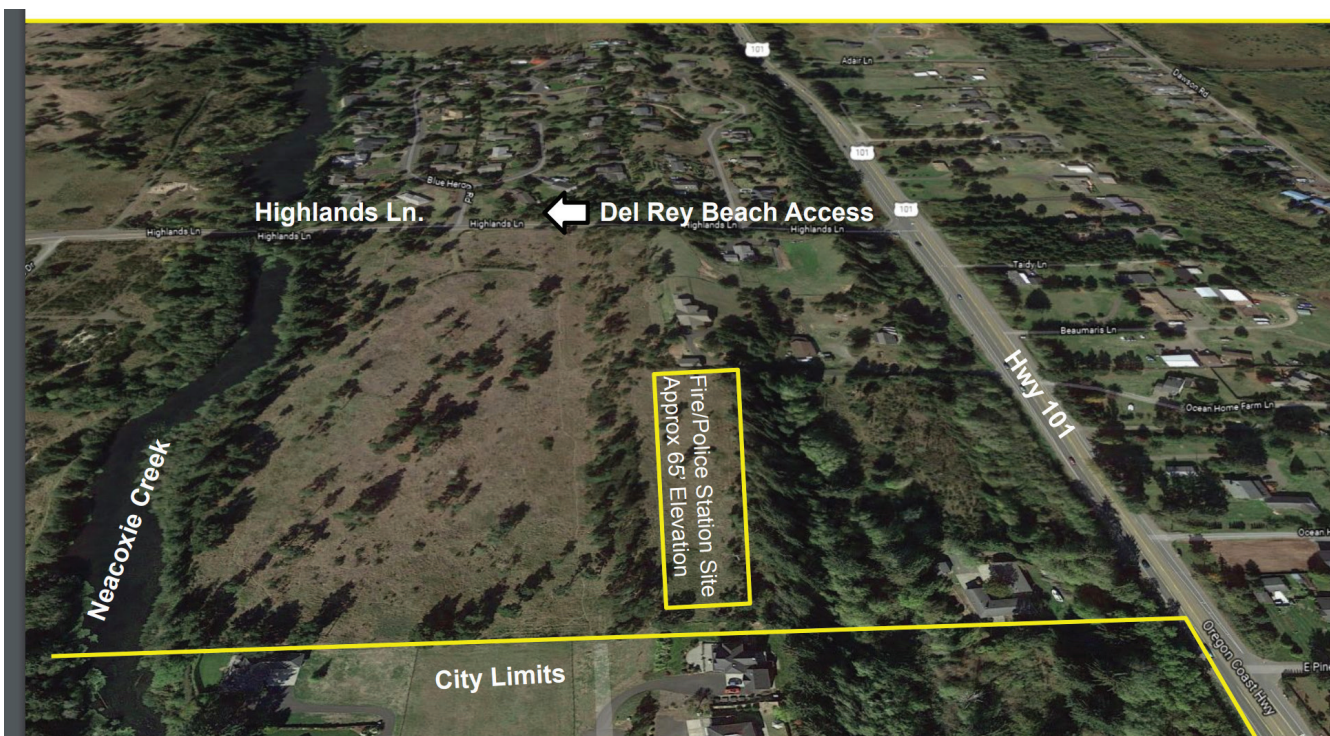
The city has more than 70 acres west of the state’s no-build line that are inside the city’s urban growth boundary and zoned residential.

There are two areas available for the swap, consultant Scott Fregonese said, including about 50 acres of oceanfront land with setback rules prohibiting development. The idea would be to carve off a 34-acre piece to make up for the 34 acres in the north for the firehouse.

While state law has removed statewide restrictions within the tsunami inundation zone, Gearhart has chosen to keep stricter requirements and not allow critical facilities within the tsunami overlay zone. Land off Highlands Lane, at an elevation of about 65 feet, is outside that zone.

“We have to prioritize candidate sites for the UGB swap,” Fregonese said. “We can’t just look at one location, even though we’ve kind of got our eye on this one. We feel like it’s best.”

In September, the city made a contingent land transfer agreement with the property owner and developer,



Aerial site view of the proposed Gearhart fire and police station.

The Cottages at Gearhart LLC. As terms of the agreement, two lots part of the parcel — a 2.14-acre lot for the fire station and 2.4-acre lot for park property — would be transferred to the city.

The city has been working with the state Department of Land Conservation and Development to follow the correct process and achieve the state buy-in, Fregonese said.

The city will need to amend its comprehensive plan and zoning maps to swap the urban growth boundary and apply the single-family residential zone. In order to take effect, the decision to swap areas of

the urban growth boundary and amend maps must be concurrent with the city and county. Public hearings will be required at both the city and county levels.

Starting February, the city will ask the state to review the material to allow the swap to occur, Fregonese said.

Timing is expected to be complete in April, before the proposed May firehouse bond vote. “It just depends on what they asked for if they want more information, or more clarification that can happen when you go back and forth with these types of reports and applications,” he said.

At the same time the city

would have to rezone the county’s 34 acres to city residential zoning.

“And then hopefully by the summer there’s an annexation into the city,” Fregonese said. “After we have the UGB swap in place the city can then annex that four acres into the city, and then we could begin the development process.”

Typically a planning commission will have one or two meetings, recommend the comp plan amendments of the zoning change to the city council, he said.

“Then the City Council will have one or two to then adopt those comp plan amendments and zone

change,” Fregonese said. “We’d like to work with the county closely to make sure

that the timing lines up so we can support them too. I typically attend both the county and the city meetings.”

The process could continue through the end of winter into the spring.

“We will know before whether the state is going to say yay or nay on the swap,” Fregonese said. “So even if we’re in the process of doing the comp plan amendments in the zone change we will still know that we’re allowed to do the swap.”

If the 20-year bond is approved by voters, the firehouse could see a four- to six-month design process in 2022 with construction starting in 2023.

If the bond does not pass, City Administrator Chad Sweet said, the city may consider continuing on with the urban growth boundary exchange, allowing the city to acquire higher elevation land for other purposes.

NEWS NOTES



Galen Abdur-Razzaq

‘Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement’

On Saturday, Feb. 5, the Seaside Public Library will host Galen Abdur-Razzaq who will be presenting “Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement.”

Abdur-Razzaq will kick off this event with a prelude on his flute. From there, this presentation will chronicle music from the turn of the century to present day and highlight various artists, their music, their influence on the evolution of jazz, and their struggles.

He will then illustrate how jazz became an advo-

cacy for the Civil Rights movement, with proceeds from jazz concerts used to finance major events such as the Freedom Rides and the March on Washington in 1963. The lecture is infused with music demonstrations.

Abdur-Razzaq is an extraordinary flautist with an extensive performance career. As a speaker, he has performed at colleges and universities for over 30 years. A former educator, he holds a master’s degree from Rutgers University, in education and performing arts, and studied music at Berklee School of Music in Boston.

The presentation is a hybrid event where participants may either join in-person or via Zoom. In-person participation is capped at a maximum of 15 and sign-ups are required so please contact the library to attend. The library will be hosting the event in the community room. If you would like to participate via Zoom contact the assistant library director who will share the event Zoom link.

Volunteer for Seaside Kids Inc.

Seaside Kids Inc., a volunteer organization that has helped kids to be involved with different sports, needs volunteers as softball and baseball programs are getting ready to start up soon.

Seaside Kids needs coaches, umpires, concession stand volunteers and field maintenance. No special talents or skills are necessary, just a willing heart and caring for kids.

To volunteer call 503-758-4827. When working with kids, a background check is required.

New emergency room physician at Columbia Memorial Hospital

Michael Triller, M.D., has joined the Columbia Memorial Hospital Emergency Department, where he begins working this week as a part-time provider.

Triller earned his medical degree from the University of Washington School of

Medicine in Seattle. He also earned bachelor’s degrees in Spanish and biology, with a chemistry minor.

Triller completed a residency in emergency medicine at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland. While there, he worked in OHSU’s Level I Trauma Center and Tertiary Referral Center. In addition, he was a member of the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee and the Stroke Committee.



Michael Triller

Triller primarily works as a clinical associate in emergency medicine at Adventist Medical Center in Portland. He is board-certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine.

Triller’s work has been featured by The American Journal of Cardiology and the Scientific Sessions on Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology. His work has also been recognized by OHSU.

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