

Gearhart Planning Commission gets first look at firehouse plans

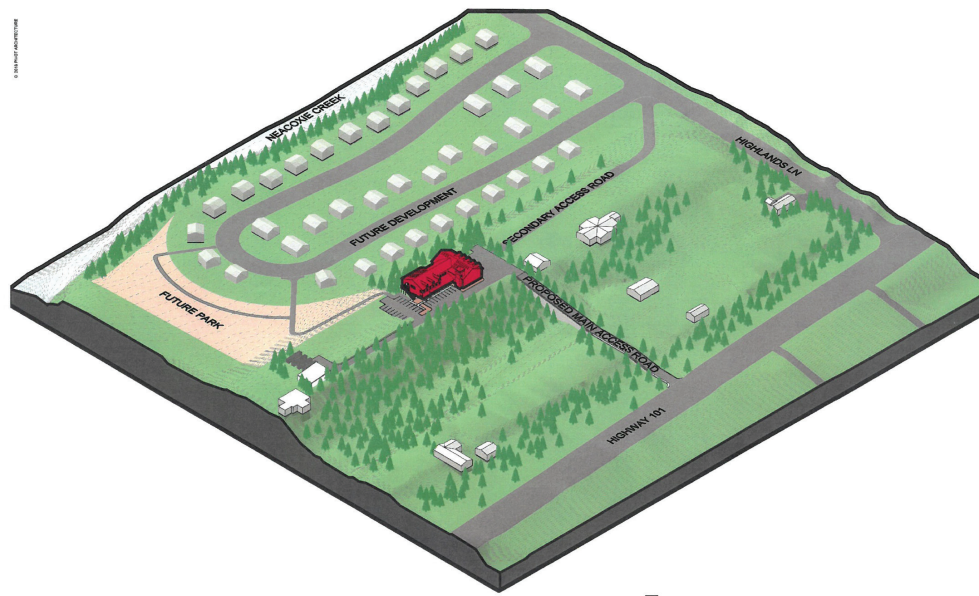
Goal is to survive all but the largest tsunamis

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

The Gearhart Planning Commission gets its first look at plans for a new firehouse and police station off U.S. Highway 101 near Highlands Lane. The plan, if approved by voters at a bond vote in May, calls for a 20-year \$14.5 million bond cost, at a cost of about \$1.15 per \$1,000 of assessed home value.

Commissioners reviewed preliminary design costs and drawings provided by Pivot Architecture, which has built fire stations in the past, including a station being built in a similar tsunami-resilient manner, City Administrator Chad Sweet said.

Cost at the new site is about \$325 per square foot. “We are required to build using critical infrastructure designs because we’re relocated in a potential for a 9.0 earthquake,” Sweet said. “Our building has to be built very resiliently, so it’s expensive. But if you divide that, take that cost per square



PIVOT CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN - AERIAL
Gearhart Resiliency Station

Conceptual site plan of the proposed resiliency station.

foot and multiply it by any home that’s for sale right now, it’s very similar.”

The budget includes \$10.9 million for the building itself and construction, which includes \$4.29 million for the 13,000-square-foot fire station, plus costs for earthwork, sidewalks, site improvements, water systems, lighting and a 21,500-square-foot open area for helicopter use. A

17% design contingency adds \$1.2 million to the building and site construction cost, estimated overall at \$10.67 million. A design fee of \$1.7 million and permits, inspections, equipment and other costs amount to \$3.1 million. With a 2% overall project contingency, total estimated project costs reach \$14.3 million.

“This is going to be a station that’s adequate for

us for some time to come,” Sweet said. “But it’s nothing really fancy. Our firefighters have changed over the years. Almost a third of our firefighters are females, which is fantastic. But it creates all these issues, especially when we’re sharing one bathroom right now with no shower and no decontamination.”

The resiliency station will also act as an emergency operation center in the



City of Gearhart

Gearhart resiliency station, looking northwest.

future so will be designed to be able to help us in any cases such as the 2007 storm, Sweet said, in which electricity and communications were down for days.

Plans also incorporate a future 2-acre park.

“I think a park in this area is very positive for all the people that live in this area to get to a park more easily,” Sweet said.

About 45 homes will be built by developers after the land is brought into the city’s urban growth boundary, Sweet said, about double what developers could have built if the land remained zoned by the county.

A traffic study clocked 50,000 cars over the highway last July during a 30-day period. Traffic from

the 45 additional homes should not alter that impact, he said.

A light could prove costly and unnecessary, estimated at an additional \$2 million, and studies cast doubt as to whether it would enhance safety.

“Right now it’s just not justified,” Sweet said. “But we’ll continue to do studies and watch that.”

Overall, the goal is to withstand all but the largest tsunamis.

“This is survivable,” Sweet said. “You see that this is something that we can deal with. It’ll be devastating. But if we’re prepared, we’ll be able to recover faster. If we’re not prepared, recovery will take a much longer time.”



Warrenton and Cannon Beach have received all-terrain vehicles from the state.

Warrenton, Cannon Beach fire districts add emergency vehicles

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

The state has awarded six fire departments across Oregon with new high-axle, all-terrain vehicles. Clatsop County received two of them.

The Warrenton Fire Department and the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District acquired the rigs in January through grants from the state’s Office of Emergency Management.

The vehicles are capable of accessing flooded areas, performing water rescues and fighting fires. Benches in the flat-bed allow firefighters to relocate a large number of people in an emergency.

Both fire departments applied for the grants several years ago, but recent flooding and wildfire conditions made the vehicles all the more needed.

“It has been a long time coming,” Cannon Beach Fire Chief Marc Reckmann said.

Cannon Beach’s fire district plans to utilize the new vehicle for multiple purposes, but it will primarily serve as a brush rig running out of the Arch Cape Fire Station. Since firefighters have easier beach access in Cannon Beach, Reckmann thought it would be of better use in Arch Cape.

The fire district plans to install a removable tank and pump system, as well

as a water filtration system to pull from streams in the event of a water system failure.

Warrenton will also add a tank and pump system to its vehicle, Warrenton Fire Chief Brian Alsbury said, once the city is able to fit it into the budget. The vehicle will also be used for navigating sand dunes. The fire department has relied on mutual aid and Camp Rilea for help in the past.

“That’s really our biggest, troubling spot is being

‘IT’S A REMARKABLE VEHICLE. I THINK WE WERE PRETTY FORTUNATE TO GET IT!’

—Warrenton Fire Chief Brian Alsbury

able to get into the dunes and into the shore pines and really thick stuff where big problems can happen if we don’t get on it right away,” Alsbury said.

While the vehicles, constructed by a company in Bend, will be under management by the fire districts,

the state has the option to request them elsewhere if an emergency occurs.

The addition of the all-terrain vehicle, Alsbury said, is a part of his push to bolster the city’s wildland response and rescue capabilities.

“You’ve seen in the last few years, how these big fires are happening in Oregon and we’re drying out,” he said. “The last two summers have been pretty dry ... Unfortunately, our future is getting warmer and things are drying out quicker and staying dryer longer, and that basically is building a perfect storm in a way.”

“I want to be ready for it. I want to stop it before it gets here. I’m trying to do as much as I can to protect the community.”

To test the rig’s effectiveness, Alsbury took it to a spot the fire department has always had problems with — the road that divides Fort Stevens State Park from Camp Rilea and turns into Strawberry Knoll. The area is filled with deep holes. Alsbury was impressed with its performance.

“We powered right through that stuff,” he said. “It’s a remarkable vehicle. I think we were pretty fortunate to get it.”

Cannon Beach gets disaster prep grant

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — A state grant will help the city build sites that can turn into emergency village shelters after a disaster.

The city was awarded \$360,000 from the state’s coronavirus fiscal recovery fund to add resources to its safety and survival cache sites. The City Council accepted the grant in January.

Rick Hudson, the city’s emergency manager, said the grant will help the city add electricity, sanitation, heat, lighting, generators and security to the cache sites.

He said investing in and maintaining the sites will help ensure people have a safe place to temporarily harbor if the city cannot be reoccupied after a disaster.

“It means there is a safe place off grid that creates a lot of resiliency to the community,” Hud-

son told the City Council. “And there are other residents around our area that would end up migrating to our location anyway due to the geographic island nature of where we are. So it does create a safe harbor for many, many people in this area.”

Hudson said the sites are on safe ground, outside of the tsunami inundation zone for a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. Developing the sites is costly, so the grant is a serious benefit, he said.

Recent data suggests COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness wanes over time. If it’s been more than five months since your last vaccination (or two months since you received the J&J shot), we recommend getting a booster shot. Boosters are free and available at many local pharmacies, as well as the County Public Health Department.

Please help us reduce disease transmission and severity of disease by getting a booster as soon as you can!

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