



FOCUS ON HOMELESSNESS

Task force eyes overnight camping

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

The city's homeless task force met last Wednesday to consider updates to ordinances regarding camping in Seaside, designed to adapt to federal and state regulations regarding camping and homelessness.

Seaside's ordinances, like others throughout the state, have been struck down by the courts at this point. Without an ordinance, officials say they have no way to enforce overnight camping rules without being subject to liability.

"Unless a sheltering/housing option is available, the city cannot forbid use of public property," task force member Tita Montero said.

Ordinance No. 2021-06 would establish camping regulations, definitions, and details of a temporary camping program, as well as lay out prohibited areas, penalties and enforcement.

City camping programs would permit overnight camping from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Police Chief Dave Ham and

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Bike ban on Ridge Path is proposed

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

On Jan. 11, Gearhart Police Chief Jeff Bowman reported a tree down in Gearhart.

"Whoever cut this tree down, had no right to do so. Their action was self-serving and did little to serve the community," he wrote on the city blog. "I am sure they think their actions were excusable, as this is the growing trend for crimes being committed by citizens."

While the perpetrator hasn't been caught, the cutting drove action from the City Council to lessen the incentive for more cutting.

The reason the city is considering a bicycle ban, Mayor Paulina Cockrum said, is that recently a favorite tree on the new north Ridge Path was cut with a chainsaw.

"It was an arched tree you had to duck a bit to get by," Cockrum said. "It was in a very special place (to me) near the river."

Cockrum said she had seen bicycle tracks on the Ridge Path the same week as a tree was cut on the north Ridge Path. "I don't know who did it, but someone on a bicycle may have. Because the arch was right at about 5 feet tall, it would be hard to get by on your bicycle."

In following up with Bowman,

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'A Knight Out'

Family dance brings smiles, laughter

By KATHERINE LACAZE
Seaside Signal

The Sunset Recreation Center gymnasium was aglow with smiles and laughter Saturday evening, as dozens of families from the community gathered for "A Knight Out."

Roughly 200 people attended the family dance, sponsored by Runkle Consulting Group and Pacific Power, and enjoyed an array of music, dancing, cupcakes and crafting crowns and tiaras to go along with the theme.

"It was awesome to see so many people there, having a great time," said Melissa Ousley, manager of marketing and special events for the park district. "But it didn't feel overly crowded, and that was probably good since we're coming out of a pandemic."

The dance is a longstanding tradition of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, although last year's event was canceled because of COVID-19. In the past, they've also hosted a daddy-daughter dance and a mother-son dance.

This year, they took a different approach to make the event more inclusive and accessible, recognizing "not all families look like that," Ousley said. It became simply a family dance, with children attending with parents of all genders, uncles and aunts, grandparents, and family friends.

"Family is really how you define it, and it's not one particular definition," Ousley added. "Family is family. It's all about having loving, supporting relationships with children. ... We wanted to celebrate that and let people define it for themselves."

The shift was met with

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Katherine Lacaze

Above, a dad spins his daughter around at the family dance. Below, families gather on the dance floor.



COMING UP

The park district has two upcoming events:

- It's About Time: Fun All Comer Swim Meet, 4 to 5 p.m., Friday, April 1, and Splash-a-Thon, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 2. This is a fundraiser for the swim team.
- Seaside's Free Annual Community Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 16, at Broadway Park.

Auditors: Gearhart 'going in right direction'

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Gearhart's financial audit results look good, Kori Sarrett of Accuity LLC, said at the March 2 City Council meeting.

"I'm happy to present the results of the audit for June 30, 2021 for the council," Sarrett said. "Things are much better than they were last time we visited, and moving in the right direction."

The city contracted with Accuity to prepare the required annual audit reports, required by Oregon law.

"Overall, in their opinion, the financial information was fairly

stated in all material respects in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole," City Administrator Chad Sweet said in summarizing the report.

The general fund had a positive change of \$153,000 in 2020-21, auditors reported.

Overall, governmental funds increased just over \$200,000 for the fiscal year.

Some of the factors for the growth were transient room taxes, COVID relief funds and the playground equipment fundraising efforts, City Treasurer Justine Hill said after the meeting.

Hill was hired as treasurer in April 2021, at the end of the fiscal year.

In their report, auditors found

that the city was out of compliance on a purchase with a concrete contractor.

The city did not have three quotes or use a competitive proposal process, as specified by procurement requirements. "It's black or white — you're in compliance or you're not," Sarrett said.

The purchase, for about \$10,000, required the city to use the intermediate procurement process; however, it used the small procurement process.

Auditors asked the city to consider moving from QuickBooks for their bookkeeping work to other systems to match the city's other revenue streams.

"It eliminates some headaches

and some inefficiencies for staff but it also gives you a better solution for accounting," Sarrett said.

The outside collection and reporting systems for transient room tax should be reconciled monthly, she said, from an internal control and accuracy standpoint.

Sarrett expressed confidence in the city's financial management. "Even though we still have some things to note, most of them I have no doubt we won't see again," she said. "Justine gets kudos for being very ready for us."

"It sounds like things are going all in the right direction," Mayor Paulina Cockrum said.

"Yes, I would agree with that statement," Sarrett said.

Developer buys former Pizza Hut building

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Masudur Khan and Khan Properties added real estate to their portfolio in Seaside south of Broadway. On Feb. 26, Khan

purchased the former Pizza Hut building for \$880,000 from Pacific Coast Investment, based in Gunnison, Colorado.

Built in 1993 as a fast-food restaurant, the building at 470 South Roosevelt Drive, at 3,178 feet, is zoned commercial on a 1/2 acre lot. Pizza Hut closed in 2019 and the building has been vacant since.

He said last week he has no specific plan for the building at this time.

In February, Khan withdrew as a member of Seaside Lodging Hospitality LLC, Doel Hospitality LLC and City Center Hospitality LLC, which operate the Inn at Seaside, River Inn and the SaltLine Hotel.

Khan will focus on new

business ventures in real estate development and hospitality as the founder and CEO of Khan Properties Group.

Current projects and ventures include the Gilbert Block building in Seaside, Bagels by the Sea, three multifamily developments in Seaside and the Ocean Crest Resort in Moclips, Washington.



R.J. Marx

The former Pizza Hut at 470 South Roosevelt Drive.

