

‘Dire numbers’ for affordable housing in county

Cannon Beach City Planner Jeff Adams recommended a regional approach to housing issues. Adams was speaking to the Seaside Housing Task Force, an ongoing group chaired by Seaside City Councilor Steve Wright seeking to enhance housing affordability and availability.

“The reason I’m here tonight is because it often takes regional approaches, regional collaboration, capacity building, and why it’s important to do things regionally, Adams said. “Cannon Beach can only do so much and I think that’s what we’re running into. We have got to solve this across

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



all of our communities.”

People who work in Cannon Beach cannot afford to live in Cannon Beach, Adams said. This has become a strain not only on local employers, but on the community itself, which needs an array of residents and families to maintain social balance and economic well-being.

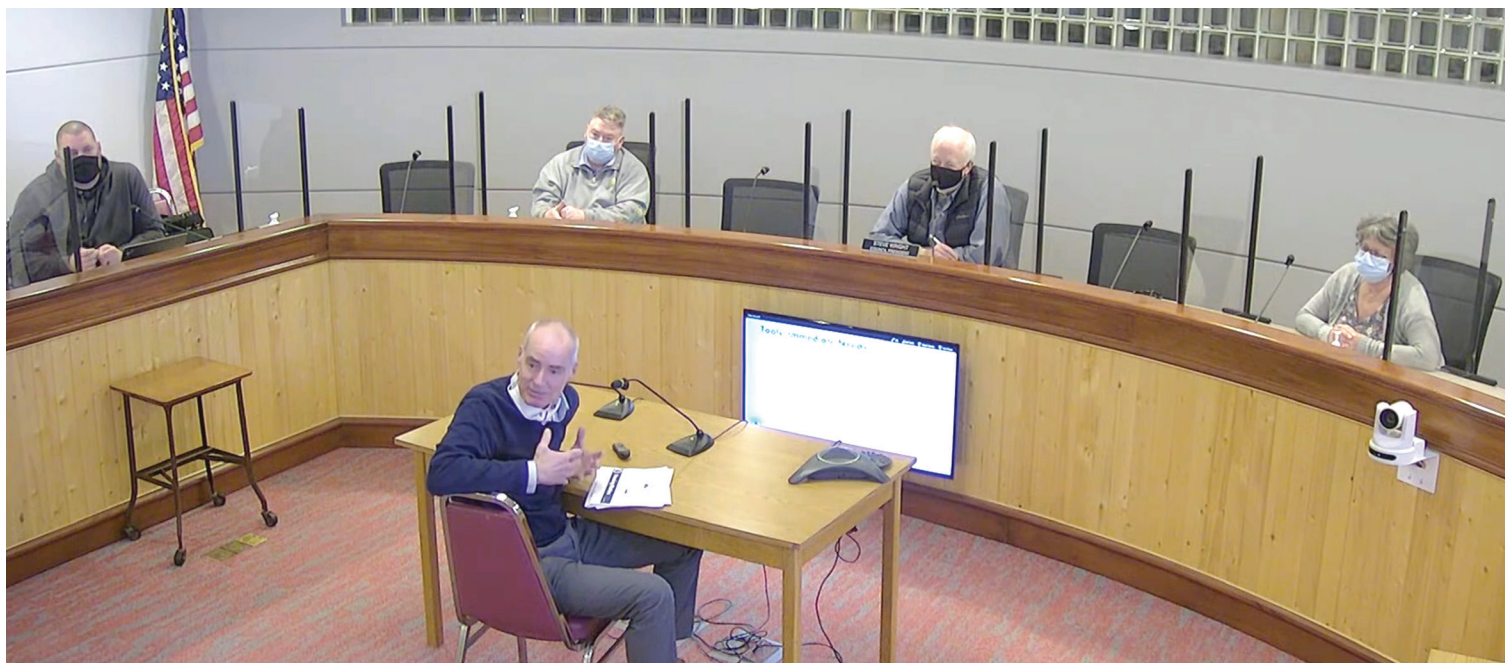
With a median income in Clatsop County \$72,900 and the average home sale in Cannon Beach \$862,000, “it doesn’t take a genius to figure out that it just doesn’t equate,” Adams said.

An income of \$72,000 can afford to purchase a home priced from about \$280,000 to \$300,000, he said.

“When I did the search in Clatsop County, there were six for sale that met that number within Clatsop County and only one home for rent,” Adams said. “We’re looking at dire numbers when we look at where we can find housing in Clatsop County, not just Cannon Beach.”

Using a 1% excise tax on building permits, Cannon Beach has worked with private contractors to produce eight units, he said. The tax is generating about \$50,000 annually, he said.

Adams said he sought a meeting with a representative from each of Clatsop County’s jurisdiction, possibly hosted by the Columbia River Estuary Study Task-



Cannon Beach City Planner Jeff Adams addresses the audience at a meeting of the Seaside Housing Task Force.

force, a regional group that takes a leadership role in initiating and implementing planning and habitat restoration projects. Seaside, Gearhart, Cannon Beach, Warrenton, the city of Astoria and the Port of Astoria are members.

The regional discussion is important for Cannon Beach because most of their workforce comes from Seaside, Warrenton and Astoria, Adams said.

“My new planner had to get a trailer home and moved into Bud’s up in Gearhart,” he said. “He just found an apartment up in Astoria, but he’s commuting from Astoria. We should all be in this together and contribute towards that common goal, because

our workforce is a regional workforce.”

Adams proposed a three-step process, including the regional discussion, the advancement accessory dwelling unit legislation. “Third, just keep the discussion going with the City Council on other tools where we can internally solve that because we do have opportunity as much as I think that we sometimes don’t want to face it but we do have areas where we could look at our city in a more granular level.”

In Seaside, acting planning director Jeff Flory said, accessory dwelling units of 525 square feet are a permitted use in all residential zones. That can go up to 800

square feet with planning commission approval. An accessory dwelling unit cannot be a short-term rental.

Seaside has four apartment projects for a total of 202 units that are in various stages of construction and excavation, Flory said, with a 78-unit complex coming to the Planning Commission in May.

In larger cities throughout the state, R-1 zoning is being replaced so every property has two or three units per lot, Adams said. “I think this is a growing trend and as we see this crisis continuing, that’s going to filter more towards us as well.”

Cannon Beach and Seaside have the lowest percentage of buildable lands, Wright said. “We just don’t have the land to start with,” Wright said. “People have gotten very creative and we are as much as we can trying to accommodate the creativity to see what builders come up with.

Future task force meetings will host Rep. Suzanne Weber and a representative of the Tillamook Housing Authority.

“All of us are running out of buildable lands. We’re all looking at a more challenging future,” Adams said. “So we’ve got to come together to solve these things.”

‘ALL OF US ARE RUNNING OUT OF BUILDABLE LANDS. WE’RE ALL LOOKING AT A MORE CHALLENGING FUTURE. SO WE’VE GOT TO COME TOGETHER TO SOLVE THESE THINGS.’

Jeff Adams, Cannon Beach city planner

Let’s work together, listen in a time of uncertainty

Seaside has been in the forefront of innovation. Over 40 years ago, it was city leadership that stepped forward with aggressive and innovative ideas to build the “Seaside Conference and Convention

GUEST COLUMN
JAY BARBER



Center” which was the innovation that moved Seaside from a “seasonal” economy to a year-round tourism center.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why you should vote yes on Measure 4-213

As a result of Jack Zimmerman and Harold Gable, the community of Gearhart was robbed of the opportunity to pass the bond to finance the fire/police station in November of 2021. Their ballot challenge sent the vote past the filing deadline. When the judge reviewed their objections to the ballot language not one argument was deemed legitimate. Gearhart cannot continue to delay critical infrastructure in our community. Because of this delay, we are looking at increased construction costs and bond interest rates. If I had to guess? I’d put it in excess of \$1 million dollars. Can you trust Gable and Zimmerman on this issue?

The state of Oregon provides the senior citizen deferral program which allows you to delay paying property taxes on your residence. I encourage anyone 62 years or older, disabled and receiving or eligible to receive Social Security disability insurance to explore this option if the increased cost is an impediment to voting yes.

What Gearhart will be faced with if you do not vote in favor of Measure 4-213 is further increased costs. If we do not have a fire station equipped to meet the key standards of our various homeowner insurance companies – guess what? We can join the communities who are unable to insure their homes or pay excessive premiums.

The life our volunteer first responders/police saves may be your own, or that of a loved one. Do the right thing — support

the safety of our community. Vote yes on 4-213.

More recently, the City Council approved the \$15 million expansion of the center to allow even larger conventions and conferences to come to Seaside.

More recently, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that there was the significant possibility that Seaside would lose portions of our economic

strength if local, tourist-based businesses were to close down and be lost for the future.

Working with local business leaders, the Seaside Chamber of Commerce and others, under the leadership of our city manager, the City Council approved a plan to provide over \$1 million in direct grants to hotels, restaurants and retail businesses. Seaside was the only city on the North Coast to launch this “innovative” idea, most likely saving many busi-

nesses and certainly many workforce jobs. This could only be done because of the excellent fiscal management of our finance officer and city manager with the support of the City Council.

Currently, in every city in our nation, city and town leaders are dealing with overwhelming challenges like affordable housing, homelessness, child care, mental health and addiction.

For many it is gun violence, for others (like Seaside) it is the

threat of a catastrophic earthquake and tsunami.

Leadership change is also a challenge.

Yes, it provides the opportunity for “fresh eyes” on old problems and challenges, but it is also a time of uncertainty for the dedicated leaders and staff of the city.

We must work together, listen to each other and trust the process of challenge and change.

Jay Barber is mayor of Seaside.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

- TUESDAY, March 22**
Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- MONDAY, March 28**
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- TUESDAY, March 29**
Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Ave. A.
- Seaside Airport Advisory Committee**, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- Gearhart City Council work session**, 6 p.m., www.cityofgearhart.com.
- MONDAY, April 4**
Seaside Housing Task Force, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- TUESDAY, April 5**
Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A.
- Library Board**, 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway.
- Seaside Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- WEDNESDAY, April 6**
Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- Gearhart City Council**, 7 p.m., www.cityofgearhart.com.
- THURSDAY, April 7**
Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- MONDAY, April 11**
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.

- THURSDAY, April 14**
Seaside Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., 415 First Ave., Seaside.
- TUESDAY, April 19**
Community Emergency Response Team, 5 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- Seaside Planning Commission**, work session, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- Seaside School District**, 6 p.m., https://www.seaside.k12.or.us/.
- WEDNESDAY, April 20**
Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- THURSDAY, April 21**
Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- MONDAY, April 25**
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- TUESDAY, April 26**
Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A.
- TUESDAY, May 3**
Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A.
- Seaside Library Board**, 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway.
- Seaside Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- WEDNESDAY, May 4**
Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
- Gearhart City Council**, 7 p.m., www.cityofgearhart.com.

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