# Camping: Council seeks sites ahead of ordinance

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selection of alternate sites. The ordinance, intended to provide options for the homeless, puts in place a permit program for temporary overnight camping in RVs and other vehicles.

Without options, police are limited in their ability to enforce the new rules.

"It's going to be difficult for the city," City Manager Mark Winstanley said. "There isn't going to be a site where people are going to come to you and say, 'Oh, you found the perfect place.' It isn't going to happen that way."

Vehicles, including vans or motor homes, would need to be registered and in compliance with vehicle insurance responsibilities.

A proposal to move RV parking and tents to areas south of Alder Mill Road and east of public works could handle about 20 RVs and 20 to 40 tents, Police Chief Dave Ham said.

"We can fit many tents in there for people who are using tents as their shelter," Ham said. "The idea would be to put some Jersey barriers across there so motor vehicles wouldn't be able to physically go through there."

But parts of that property are owned by the city and the North Coast Land Conservancy, a natural area that was acquired in 2002 with private and grant money for the purposes of conservation, City Councilor Tom Horning, who serves on the land conservancy's board,

"It's encumbered," Horning said. "It's got contracts with the funders who gave us the money to acquire it. And we can't redefine the



A map of the Mill Ponds downloaded from Clatsop Webmaps and edited. The Mill Ponds Park is outlined in heavy yellow line. The recycling center, along Alder Mill Lane, is outlined in purple with a big dot on the lot.

usage of the property without their permission."

With saltwater and freshwater ponds, Horning said, the success of the Neawanna River as a salmon hatchery is "unparalleled."

"Basically, it's one of the greatest salmon factories that you can have on the Oregon Coast," Horning said. "You get twice as many bird species as any other place in the county. Just because it's open and natural doesn't mean it's a wasteland or anything that could be converted into some more urban usage."

The Mill Ponds is already off the list of permitted sites, he added, as camping

on public parkland is prohibited in the ordinance.

City Councilor Dana Phillips asked the city to take all residential areas off the list of potential overnight camping sites. "I really have appre-

"I really have apprehension about having any camping in a residential area anywhere," Phillips said. "I really have a problem with the fact that after driving through Portland and seeing what is happening in neighborhoods, that it's going to get out of hand."

Winstanley proposed a look at the contract with Recology, which operates the recycling center on land owned by the city. That space could be used for campers.

Other options could come through the purchase of property or a building.

"There will be an obstacle or two with every piece of property that we are looking at," Winstanley said.

City Councilor Tita Montero suggested possible incentives for property owners to sell or lease to the city. "I would like people to maybe think about what kind of arrangements or enticements the city is willing to offer to some private landowner who might want to get involved with the city in this endeavor," she said.



R.J. Ma

Bill Montero was among volunteers at the Mill Ponds cleanup in 2021.

Montero also proposed a centralized location, possibly with the help of agencies such as Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare and Clatsop Community Action. "I think it would make it much easier if they can go to just one place," she said.

The workshop ended with more questions than answers, including the structure of the Mill Ponds deal, the availability of the recycling lot and potential sites for purchase or lease.

"In the interim, what temporary steps could we take as a council to be able to respond by the time the ordinance goes into effect?" Mayor Jay Barber asked. The city could hold another workshop before the City Council meeting on May 23, with additional information about available land or buildings and property or lease contracts on potential sites.

"We need to do something now to make sure that we have access for our homeless people to go this summer during tourist season," Phillips said. "We as a city must take a stand and get something done on a short-term basis. And I would love it if the county would work with all of our cities and come up with a property somewhere in the county."

### City budget: Expenditures to jump in most categories

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\$44.5 million in the proposed 2022-23 budget. With fund transfers, contingencies and unappropriated fund balance, the city shows more than \$90 million in all funds.

"We are financially in good shape," Winstanley said in his budget message. "The city has weathered the pandemic better than most. The council will be tasked with making wise decisions on how to spend funds to enhance the city, not on how to plug the financial coffers. Funding like the American Rescue Plan is a one-time shot."

The city has budgeted \$1.54 million from the federal funds, which includes unspent reserves from last year.

Proposed expenditures are up in almost every category, with the general fund — including the business office and the library — at \$2.7 million from last year's \$2.37 million. Public safety will see

a 5.2% increase; community development jumps 9.9% and public works will escalate 18.2%.

More than half of the room tax of just under \$9.6 million is allocated to the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. The Seaside Visitors Bureau receives an allocation of 17% for tourism marketing. Public safety receives 15.2%, including .8% for lifeguards.

The remainder of the room tax is allocated to the convention center capital improvement fund, the city's capital improvement and maintenance fund, public works for maintenance and operation of tourism-related facilities and the Prom improvement fund. A little more than 1% is allocated to the emergency readiness fund.

Along with a new city manager, the city is proposing to add a secretarial position, a public works secretarial position and finance director, a position held by Winstanley.

"Previous financial con-

ditions triggered a reduction in staffing and the finance director's position was eliminated," Winstanley said. "For the last several years we talked about the necessity to restore this position when I retire. This budget will restore the position at a department head level and reestablish all accounting functions back to their control."

The proposed finance director's salary is budgeted at about \$94,000. The city manager is budgeted at \$141,000, up from last year's \$131,000.

The public safety budget, at \$9.7 million, is up from \$9.3 million to cover police and fire costs. Included in revenue for public safety is room tax of more than \$1 million. The city has also allocated \$135,000 in liquor taxes and \$105,000 in marijuana taxes to the fund.

The city is budgeting more than \$8.4 million for street construction, associated with the renovation of city streets, including an Avenue S reconstruction project financed through state and city funds.

Sewer plant costs for the replacement and maintenance of critical facilities, including a sludge dryer to treat sewage, is budgeted at more than \$4 million.

The budget committee heard requests from nonprofit organizations for city funds, allocating \$145,500 for local community groups.

If the budget is adopted, Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Centers could receive up to \$50,000 for their work responding to homelessness.

Grants include \$15,000 each for Clatsop Community Action and The Harbor. The Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes, Court Appointed Special Advocates, the South County Food Pantry and the Emergency Aid Fund could receive \$10,000. Seaside Museum & Historical Society is designated to receive \$12,000.

Other nonprofits to receive funds include Seaside Hall, Restoration House, and the

#### 'LIFE COMES AT US FAST'

In his final budget message, City Manager Mark Winstanley shared a retrospective on his decades of service.

"Each year we are faced with problems and concerns, and each year they are met with successes and failures," he said. "We are a society that seems to recognize our failures and expect our successes. If it wasn't fixed yesterday, it surely will be taken care of today. I have had an opportunity to travel in Europe and Asia in the last two years. In these areas construction schedules are measures.



in 2021.

areas construction schedules are measured in centuries and workers are generational. I find it fascinating and concerning that buildings built during my tenure are now being labeled as old and obsolete. Life comes at us fast!

"I have become the oldest employee, the oldest member of my family, many times the oldest in the room," he continued. "I gave hugs; now I am given hugs. New people will bring a new perspective. This is good. Thank you for the opportunity."

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation Foundation.

Council President Steve Wright said Winstanley "is leaving us in excellent shape."

"We're not out searching for money," Wright said. "We have good reserves, particularly at the convention center. So it's a matter of using the money wisely."

The city will consider the committee's recommendations at a June meeting, Barber said, at which time the council will hold a public hearing to hear and adopt the budget for the new fiscal

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#### 651 Help Wanted

Clatsop CASA is seeking a part-time employee to train and supervise volunteer advocates for children. For complete job description and details about how to apply, contact WorkSource Oregon, Employment Division, 503-378-8063. For more information about CASA's services to children in the foster care system, see www.clatsopcasa.org. Position open until filled.

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