

Astoria leaders approve more details of Chinese Garden

By **CHELSEA GORROW**
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council has decided on a plan for the Chinese Garden and the former Safeway and American Legion Block.

Now plans will move forward to develop the project, incorporating the block redesign with the Garden of Surging Waves.

The decision was one of many the Astoria City Council made Tuesday, hearing presentations, hosting special guests and listening to public hearings.

During the three-plus-hour meeting, councilors approved a summer paving schedule, chose a design for the Chinese Garden and the former Safeway and American Legion block, listened to a presentation about the 17th Street Dock reconstruction project and congratulated Astoria Fire Chief Lenard Hansen for serving 35 years in fire service.

Mulvanny G2 Architecture designer Suenn Ho presented the City Council with the Garden of Surging Waves redesign for the block across from City Hall.

"I'm so excited this is coming to fruition,"

Councilwoman Arline LaMear said. "It's been so much fun to see each step along the way."

Ho updated members on a garden advisory committee's work on the Chinese Garden and the three choices that had been narrowed to two by the committee, with "Idea 1" listed as having the most votes. Both options the committee chose suggested filling the hole in the ground, left by the collapse of the former Safeway store's basement floor. "Idea 2" put the garden on the right.

Not in the hole

Councilman Peter Roscoe said he thought the concepts for the redesign – moved from Astor Street to the former Safeway block – would have put the garden in the hole.

But Ho said that was never considered. "Its proximity to the American Legion building is almost too close," Ho said, noting she has never ignored or tried to cover up the Legion building because it is a part of the block that should be embraced.

"If you put something in the middle, you compromise the ability to utilize the whole block for extended activities. It's almost like

you divide the block into two halves. Whereas, if you put the Garden of Surging Waves on the east side or the west side, it allows the block to have a lot more opportunity to provide places for the community to gather, and you have a lot of great activities in the summer and festivities. You want to have a place for people to gather."

Roscoe also had concerns with the cost, noting the funds for the original location – much smaller with fewer elements – still have not been fully raised. "I hate to be the guy that rains on the parade," Roscoe said, noting the expense of the redesign.

Seeking funding

Mayor Willis Van Dusen said the new location would make the project eligible for Urban Renewal District funds, however, and the Council decided to go ahead with "Idea 1." That concept would put the Chinese garden on the left of the block, closest to City Hall, rows of trees on the right – across from the Banker's Suite – and a plaza that would allow for a covered Sunday Market, and parking as an alternative use for the space in the off-time. Before

their decision, however, a public hearing was held.

Josie Peper from the Alderbrook neighborhood spoke about turning the hole in the ground into an amphitheater, rather than filling it.

Ho said she would take that idea and work hard to incorporate it into her design. "I'm humbled," she said, thanking Peper for her time and hard work. The community getting involved is inspiring for a designer, Ho said.

Peper was one of three citizens who commented at the public hearing.

John Souza brought up parking. The block design takes over the existing parking lot and does not accommodate as many cars as the current setup.

But Ho said the parking lot when the block held a Safeway square was even more restricted, permitting only Safeway customers to park in the lot.

"We're hoping it's going to be a nicely balanced approach," Ho added.

Mitch Mitchum, representing the Astoria Sunday Market board of directors, gave his full "support and encouragement" for the plans.

He also said the market, at a later date, may be able to offer a financial contribution to the project.

In other action:
• The City Council voted for a paving schedule for the summers of 2011, 2013 and 2015. The plans were approved, with 2013 and 2015 still adjustable as time moves ahead, but Van Dusen said he felt the decision to pave this summer and which streets would be first in a five-year plan was being done too hastily. Councilors LaMear, Roscoe, Russ Warr and Karen Mellin felt otherwise and voted to approve the paving plans.

• The 17th Street Dock project was highlighted by Hod Wells, with options for handrails, lighting and entrance archways. The dock replacement of the wooden structure – to be replaced with concrete – is set to take place in November. City Council members have two weeks to decide on any options they want for the \$4 million project. The city has received a \$3.8 million grant.

• Fire Chief Lenard Hansen received his pin to mark 35 years of service from City Manager Paul Benoit.



KATIE WILSON — The Daily Astorian
Firefighters rest after battling a fire at an apartment building at 779 Glasgow Ave. Tuesday afternoon. The cause of the fire was electrical in nature and caused an estimated total of \$25,000 in damage.

Fire: Resident smelled smoke

Continued from Page 1

She could smell smoke and traced the smell to the kitchen. A big pillow of smoke ran out from under the kitchen sink when she opened the cabinet door.

Hansen said the fire likely traveled up from the downstairs No. 3 apart-

ment into DeCost's apartment.

Firefighters from the Astoria, Lewis and Clark and Olney-Walluski fire departments responded and had the fire under control around 4 p.m.

Cost of damage to the structure was estimated at \$20,000, damage to property was \$5,000.

Shuttle: Concerns expressed about level of service

Continued from Page 1

no bus service was available. The service also cut down on parking congestion, they said.

District officials offered to restore the service at \$47 an hour. The city will pay \$34,000 to have it run through the summer.

Based on ridership statistics collected last year, the cost would equal about \$12 per rider. Although the council in earlier meetings discussed charging riders a minimal fee, nothing was decided at the council meeting Tuesday night.

Bus service overall from Astoria to Cannon Beach during the week has been greatly reduced since April 1 and doesn't operate at all on weekends. In addition, the bus often is late in arriving at its scheduled stops, noted local business owner Kathy Kleczek.

Kleczek urged the City Council to do a stringent evaluation of the shuttle service because, she said, transit officials haven't answered riders' concerns about the new bus routes.

"Buses are between 25 and 45 minutes late, and this causes people to miss their connections," Kleczek said. "There has been no communication from the district and no change in the schedule."

"If we are going to have a shuttle service run by the transit district and rely on them to respond to our concerns, then we are setting ourselves up,"

she added.

If the shuttle service experiences problems for tourists, "this reflects on our city," said Kleczek, who has been asking the city to buy a van and operate its own service.

Members agreed to evaluate the shuttle service in mid-August and directed City Manager Rich Mays to include a two-week cancellation clause in the city's agreement with the transit district.

When evaluating the service, the City Council will look at the number of riders using the shuttle and customers' feedback. It may also consider extending the service into the winter.

Hank Johnson, who operates an inn in Tolovana Park, asked the City Council to start the shuttle earlier in the morning to enable riders on the south side to get to work downtown in the morning.

But Mayor Mike Morgan noted that last year only one to four riders took the Sunday shuttle between 9 and 11 a.m. At a charge to the city of \$47 an hour, "you could take a taxi to the Portland airport for less money," he said.

In other business, the council:

• Discussed a plan to shift \$33,386 in garbage fees the city pays to Western Oregon Waste for recycling, yard debris, street sweeping and downtown trash collection to ratepayers. However, the City Council decided that the cost to collect garbage from the downtown restrooms and from trash cans throughout the city should come from

the city's general fund and postponed a decision until those costs are removed from the proposal.

• Approved a request from Western Oregon Waste to raise garbage collection fees for residential and commercial customers by 1.49 percent. Weekly service will increase by 31 cents, from \$20.96 a month to \$21.27. Service for every two weeks will rise by 20 cents, from \$13.62 a month to \$13.83.

• Approved a \$6.61 per cart rate for a subscription recycling service for commercial customers.

• Agreed to conduct a citywide forum on emergency preparedness in the fall. The discussion will include a proposal for a tsunami evacuation building and a new bridge over Ecola Creek.

• Heard a complaint by Hank Johnson, who expressed concern that the \$10,000 landscaping project he donated for the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce building is not being maintained. Johnson said plants have died or are missing and weeds are growing.

"Nobody has been there since last July," Johnson said. "It's a prime piece of property, and I am embarrassed to have anybody go by and look at it."

Johnson said he hoped the chamber's new director would see that the project was maintained.

Local Briefs

Logger killed in Naselle accident

NASELLE, Wash. — Details have been released of a fatal logging accident Monday.

John Everitt Inman, 49, of Castle Rock, Wash., died in the accident near Naselle.

At about 9:36 a.m., the Pacific County Sheriff's Office was notified of an accident that occurred at a logging site near the intersection of Upper Naselle Road and Hungry Highway.

The incident was reported by the operator of a logging shovel

owned by Inman Logging of Castle Rock.

The initial investigation indicates that Inman was caught between the logging shovel and a stump. He was pronounced dead at the scene at 9:50 a.m.

Sheriff Scott Johnson said his department and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries are investigating.

AHS senior in TV show tonight

Astoria High School Senior Stephanie Kilburger, who was fea-

tured in The Daily Astorian in November ("Ailing Astoria student diagnoses her illness, works to share her story"), will appear on KPTV Fox Channel 12 at 10 p.m. tonight.

Kilburger was 16 years old, at a slumber party, when she began to speak with a German accent.

No one in her family has an accent. She does not speak German.

That accent changed from German to English to Russian as her health began to deteriorate. She was later diagnosed with Myasthe-

nia gravis (MG), an autoimmune disease, that almost took her life.

Now a senior at Astoria High School, set to graduate Saturday, Kilburger's senior project is a mini documentary about her health ordeal that she hopes will help to educate the community on the rare disease she suffers from.

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