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Wednesday, October 23, 2019

SEQUIM GAZETTE

www.sequimgazette.com

Sequim's Hometown Newspaper

\$1.00
Vol. 46, Number 43



EAR TODAY ...



Contributor Bob Lampert spots these remaining rows of corn near Sequim-Dungeness Way.

City anticipates plan in 2020 for better east-west connections

Consultant says community, city goals can coexist

BY MATTHEW NASH
Sequim Gazette

Sequim's city streets could see improved accessibility, lighting, sidewalks and more as part of the South Sequim Complete Streets Project.

Consultants for the City of Sequim plan to bring a draft design for the plan to improve east-west connections south of Washington Street to city councilors by mid-2020.

Public discussions began in late August between residents and consultant firm Framework at a design charrette, a planning session, over three days, gathering ideas on better connections and possible issues between the city's wide-ranging development zones called Economic Opportunity Areas.

Jeff Arango, director of planning for Framework, shared with city councilors on Oct. 14 that his staff plan to host another open house in the winter or spring of 2020, followed by a draft design presented in spring 2020 and tentative adoption in the summer by city councilors.

If a plan is adopted, city councilors could direct staff to seek multi-part improvements on city streets, such as adding lighting, increasing ADA accessibility, adding sidewalks and bike lanes, improving connectivity between neighborhoods and more.

"This project's not about pumping a bunch of traffic through a neighborhood," Arango said. "We're trying to find that balance."

Arango said if amenities are made and companies begin to develop in the Economic Opportunity Areas, "it could create

See STREETS, A-12

Chum strong at Jimmycomelately

BY MICHAEL DASHIELL
Sequim Gazette

A multi-year project to help the summer chum salmon in Jimmycomelately Creek looked to be in dire straits last year.

In recent weeks, however, numbers collected at the creek's counting station indicate the chum population is back on track for recovery, said Cheri Scalf, a leader in volunteer monitoring and restoration projects.

A recent count in a trap along the creek brought the total fish counted to 2,050 individuals — more than counts in 2017 (530) and 2018 (167) combined.

"The forecast for this year was not optimistic," Scalf said, but, "we're ... well above the threshold and sustainability."

"We had two bad years. This good year is going to make up for that. It's good news all around for us."

Historically, Scalf said,



Summer chum salmon numbers are booming at Jimmycomelately Creek. Photo by Mike Hovis

thousands of summer chum salmon returned to spawn in Jimmycomelately Creek, but by the 1990s their numbers dropped sharply and they were threatened with extinction.

In late 1996 and early 1997, massive flooding in the Sequim and Blyn areas saw the creek cover US Highway 101.

Then flooding again hit the peninsula in late January of

1999, with flood waters from the creek once again cutting off the highway. In the span of three days, an estimated 1.85 inches fall and raised the nearby Dungeness River to a flow of nearly 4,000 cubic feet per second.

By 1999, only seven chum returned to spawn in Jimmycomelately Creek, Scalf said.

"That was the turning

point," she said. "It wasn't just a fish issue; it was a transportation and a safety issue. Essentially, the peninsula was cut off from the world."

That year, summer chum salmon in the Hood Canal area were listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Creek movements

Sometime after World War II, Jimmycomelately Creek had been confined in a rock-lined channel in an attempt to control it, Taylor Pittman, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, notes in a story for Shared Strategy for Puget Sound.

In the early 1950s, the channel was moved and straightened to divert it for irrigation. Known as "channelization," Pittman wrote, this method increases the slope of the flowing water by confining it to a relatively smaller area at a higher elevation.

See CHUM, A-3



Some of the 40 attendees of a kick-off for the South Sequim Complete Streets Project brainstorm options on Aug. 28 to better connect traffic and pedestrians going east-west south of West Washington Street and north of U.S. Highway 101. Consultants plan to host another open house in 2020 to discuss a possible draft of the project. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash

Mental health evaluation sought for woman accused in stabbing

Larisa Jean Dietz's arraignment rescheduled for Oct. 24

BY PAUL GOTTLIEB
Olympic Peninsula News Group

The lawyer for a Sequim woman who allegedly stabbed a man Oct. 8 in Sequim intends to seek a mental health evaluation for her client.

Port Angeles attorney Karen Unger said on Oct. 18 at the scheduled

Clallam County Superior Court arraignment for Larisa Jean Dietz, 48, that she plans to ask for an evaluation for the resident of the Sunbelt Apartments on the 500 block of South Fifth Street in Sequim.

Dietz's arraignment on attempted second-degree murder and first-degree assault with a deadly

weapon was rescheduled for 3 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24.

"I have some concerns about Ms. Dietz and her mental state," Unger said.

"I think she understands what's going on as far as she knows she's in trouble. So I guess we could go to arraignment, but then I intend to

ask for some sort of mental health evaluation.

"I think we may be relying on a diminished capacity defense, so that I'm kind of on the fence on whether she is competent to be arraigned."

Chief Criminal Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Michele Devlin said if Unger was wavering on whether Dietz was competent to enter a plea then she had no objection to the ar-

raignment being held over a week.

Dietz remained in the county jail early this week on \$1 million bail.

Dietz lived in an apartment near the residence of the stabbing victim, Ricky Lynn McGowan, 58, when Fire District 3 medical personnel were summoned in response to a man yelling for help within

See DIETZ, A-10

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