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Joyce Garver Theater bids \$2M over budget



POST-RECORD FILE PHOTO

Bids to restore the historic Joyce Garver Theater, located at the corner of Northeast 15th Avenue and Northeast Garfield Street in Camas, came in \$2 million over budget. The theater remodel is part of a \$119 million construction bond passed by Camas School District voters in 2016.

Camas School District to look into other funding sources for renovating historic building

By KELLY MOYER
Post-Record editor

Plans to renovate the historic Joyce Garver Theater in Camas -- a final piece of the \$119 million construction bond passed by Camas School District voters in February 2016 -- are on pause after four construction bids came in more than \$2 million over budget.

"It's a difficult project ... but for the bids to be this high was a surprise to all of us," Heidi Rosenberg, the school district's capital programs director, told Camas School Board members Monday night during the Board's virtual meeting.

At issue is a \$9 million remodel of a historic theater named for Joyce Garver, a former Camas drama, music and art teacher. Built in 1936, the theater was an addition to Camas High School until the 1970s, when the high school was demolished. In the mid-1980s, the theater got a slight upgrade, with a new entry and a few interior revamps. The building served as a performance center -- for the school district and the greater Camas community -- until the district closed the building in 2009 due to safety concerns.

The district's 2016 construction bond prioritized renovating and re-opening the theater, along with building Lacamas Lake Elementary

and Discovery High schools and upgrading several athletic fields. In January, representatives from Mahlum Architects, the Seattle- and Portland-based firm that designed Lacamas Lake Elementary, the Camas district's newest grade school, showed school board members a short video of what the Garver Theater might look like by the summer of 2021.

Basic plans call for the theater, which is located next to Liberty Middle School at the corner of Northeast 15th Avenue and Northeast Garfield, to seat more than 700, have an open lobby with a flexible floorplan and upgraded auditorium, balcony and stage, new greenroom/classroom in the northwest corner and new restrooms. Had the bids come in under

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CAMPAIGNING IN A TIME OF COVID



Donna Sinclair, a Democratic candidate running for state legislature in the 18th District, installs a campaign sign in Washougal. Sinclair has had to readjust her campaign strategies during the COVID-19 shutdowns.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF DONNA SINCLAIR

For candidates used to going door to door and hosting in-person town halls, the coronavirus has changed the playing field this election season

By KELLY MOYER
Post-Record editor

Monday marked the beginning of candidate filing week in Washington state and the start of an election season that races toward an Aug. 4 primary before culminating in the Nov. 3 general election.

For candidates, this time of year is typically filled with door-knocking, in-person town halls and on-the-road campaign events.

So what happens when statewide bans on gatherings and "stay home" orders meant to prevent the spread of a deadly new coronavirus upset the natural order of campaigning?

The Post-Record recently talked to two Democratic candidates who declared early campaigns this year -- Washougal School Board member Donna Sinclair, who is running for a state legislature seat in the 18th District, and Vancouver professor Carolyn Long, who hopes to represent Washington's 3rd Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives -- about what it's like to campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Out of the gate strong ... and then it all stopped'

When Sinclair announced her bid for state legislature in mid-January, the World Health Organization (WHO)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLYN LONG

Carolyn Long (left, middle row), a Democratic candidate running for Congress in Washington's 3rd Congressional District, speaks to supporters online during a recent virtual "Coffee with Carolyn" event. Long has found success with her online Facebook Live town halls and "Coffee with Carolyn" events since the start of the COVID-19 shutdowns.

had already alerted world leaders to be on the lookout for cases of a novel coronavirus, but the threat posed by COVID-19 was still, in most people's minds as well as in the words of WHO reports, "a developing situation."

Inside the Sinclair campaign, talks of house parties, meet-and-greets and events at public libraries still dominated discussions in late January and early February.

"We got out of the gate strong," Sinclair says. "I was still working a lot, so I couldn't go to many meetings, but we were doing a lot of planning ... and, on the weekends, doing fundraisers."

Late February brought a successful house party fundraiser Sinclair's way, and by early March she was drawing crowds at public meet-and-greet events in Salmon Creek and at the Camas Public Library.

"And then it all

stopped," Sinclair says. "I was teaching four classes -- three at Western Oregon and one at (Washington State University Vancouver) and it was midterms at WSU and finals week at Western," Sinclair recalls. "On March 13, we were having a midterm at WSU."

The university had already made a decision to hold online classes after the midterms concluded. One student came to the midterm wearing a mask.

"The midterm, on March 13, was my last day in class," Sinclair says.

Since then, she has left her house fewer than half a dozen times -- and then only for essential trips to pick up groceries or get mail from her campaign's post office box.

After more details about the coronavirus' dangers emerged in mid-March and people start-

ed to consider staying home to help "lower the curve," Sinclair immediately shifted gears on her campaign strategy.

"A lot of people have invested money in my campaign, so I couldn't just say, "There's a pandemic. I can't campaign anymore," she says. "And I didn't want to (stop campaigning.)"

Instead, Sinclair looked to the strategies she was learning about in her role as a history professor.

"The first thing I did was attend three or four Zoom trainings, including one on digital campaigning through Emily's List," Sinclair says. "We immediately started building our social media and digital presence."

When she hosted her first Zoom event in late March, "everyone was really depressed and we talked about (CO-

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Washougal reopens Lower Hathaway Park

Steamboat Landing, Sandy Swimming Hole remain closed

By DOUG FLANAGAN
Post-Record staff writer

The city of Washougal has re-opened Lower Hathaway Park, which had been closed since late March due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

Opening the park will "allow citizens to recreate by the Washougal River," according to a news release issued by the city of Washougal.

"As we move further into the spring season, we know that sunny weather is on the way. This pro-

vides the opportunity for all of us to get outside and enjoy our beautiful area," Washougal city manager David Scott wrote in a statement released Thursday, May 7. "I encourage (residents) to take advantage of our open parks while following social distancing guidelines so that we can keep them open for all of us to enjoy."

Sandy Swimming Hole Park, the Steamboat Landing Dock, and the city's playgrounds, restrooms, sports courts/fields, and picnic shelters will remain closed until the third phase of Washington Gov. Jay Inslee's recently-implemented "Safe Start Washington" plan, according to a news

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Plant fair cancellation deals financial blow

Mother's Day weekend event normally draws thousands to downtown Camas

By KELLY MOYER
Post-Record editor

If it were a normal year -- a year devoid of a deadly new coronavirus and the statewide shutdowns it has prompted -- Nancy Watson, of Camas, would have been in full plant-fair preparation mode last week.

Instead, Watson and other vendors were adjusting to the cancellation of the Downtown Camas Association's annual Camas Plant & Garden Fair, originally set to take place on Saturday, May 9.

"We've attended the plant and garden fair every single year, except one and that was when I had just had chemo-



POST-RECORD FILE PHOTO

Lacamas Lavender Farm is a longtime vendor at the fair.

therapy and was sicker than a dog," Watson said. "We live for this. But they made the absolute correct

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POSITIVE IMPACT



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State recognizes Camas-Washougal schools

IDAHO BOUND

Athletes commit to Division I University of Idaho

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Theater:

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budget, architects proposed adding a “crossover” space behind the stage, an elevator to access the balcony and upgrades for the balcony seats as well as further enhancement for the first-floor seating. Rosenberg said the district staff reached out to the two lowest bidders — including Kirby Nagel-hout Construction, which had the lowest bid of \$11,471,000 — to understand why the bids were higher than expected. “It doesn’t seem to be related to COVID-19 necessarily,” Rosenberg said. “There are still some unknowns about why they were higher. Our cost estimators have been really good on other projects.” A few of the factors influencing the higher bids, Rosenberg said, were related to the fact that there are still several school-re-

lated construction projects happening in the area. “It’s not a hungry bid market, so people aren’t lowballing it trying to get in,” she said. And then there’s the fact that the theater renovation is no simple task. “It’s a complicated project ... doing a lot of work in a very old building,” Rosenberg said. “(And) doing a lot of renovations of major systems.” The district also wanted to increase accessibility to the historic theater, which added to the costs. And the demolition estimates and structural upgrades also came in higher than expected, Rosenberg said. Rosenberg and Camas School District Superintendent Jeff Snell said they would like to take another look at the project itself, “go back through what’s left in the bond program” and see if there are other funding sources that might be considered. They plan to present ideas at the school board’s workshop on Tuesday,

May 26, with the possibility of accepting one of the bids at the regular May 26 school board meeting. School Board member Doug Quinn thanked district staff for considering other funding options. “If (rejecting the bids) would take us out another year, I would like to ... hear back from staff on (another) solution,” Quinn said. Board member Corey McEnry, who sat on the visioning committee for the theater renovations, agreed that rejecting the bids and postponing the remodel was not his preferred option. “I do feel like we have a narrow window to get this accomplished,” McEnry said Monday. “The building itself is kind of a community icon. We don’t want to under-deliver with this project ... and we don’t want to sacrifice something that will be a part of our district for decades to come without looking at options.”

Election:

From page A1

VID-19,” Sinclair says. “I thought, ‘Maybe this is not the time for this.’” As she spoke to more constituents of the 18th District, Sinclair realized people were hungry for more information. So she started conducting interviews with health care experts and business leaders and put that information, as well as a list of resources, out to the public. “The situation has really caused me to evaluate how I’m approaching the campaign,” Sinclair says. “Public health is a key issue, so I’m thinking a lot about that and doing as much research as I possibly can.” She is talking to people, mostly online, about their needs during the crisis. “I’m talking to a lot of people who are older and need safety, pure and simple. They’re not so much concerned about what’s going to happen next; they’re concerned about not being exposed to this virus,” she says. Sinclair also talks to a lot of local business owners, who she says are “just trying to hang on.” She is looking forward to campaigning more often this summer, after her classes at WSU-V and Western Oregon have wrapped up. Until it’s safe to meet in small groups again, Sinclair will keep campaigning in a way that doesn’t jeopardize her own health of the health of those around her: by posting her signs around the 18th District, calling people, sharing online resources and hosting digital events. “It’s an ongoing process of evaluating the evidence and seeing what’s safe and what’s not,” she says. “I’ll always err on the side of caution.”



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLYN LONG

Congressional candidate Carolyn Long wears a mask during a volunteer shift at a local food bank.

Camas High, holding town halls at the Camas Public Library and meeting with supporters at places like 54°40’ Brewing Company in Washougal. “The bread and butter of my campaign is really being in the community as much as possible,” Long says, “holding town halls and connecting with people on a personal level.” Since announcing her second bid as a Democratic candidate for the 3rd Congressional District in July 2019, the Washington State University Vancouver (WSU-V) professor has hosted over 50 town halls. Recently, however, those town halls have had to go virtual. Long held her fourth Facebook Live Town Hall last week and regularly hosts more personal, “Coffee with Carolyn” events online to reach out to supporters and voters. Although the venue has shifted from a library or someone’s living room to a computer screen, Long says she is still trying to let people know she hears their concerns. “People are anxious. They have a desire for leadership in Southwest Washington,” she says. At the same time, Long says, she also sees people wanting to come together as a community during the COVID-19 crisis, independent of political beliefs. “People want to have a sense of community right now,” Long says. “At this moment that we’re in, we’re just trying to think about how we can give back to the community. The calls (I’m making) to people right now are about how they’re doing. Politics is secondary.” When she meets with smaller groups online during her “Coffee with Carolyn” events, which tend to have 10 to 30 participants, Long hears mostly personal stories of how people are coping right now. “We talk about how they’re doing, how their family is doing,” Long says. She’s heard stories of neighbors helping neighbors, distillery owners producing hand sanitizer to

give to frontline workers and people reconnecting with loved ones for the first time in months. “That’s rewarding,” she says of hearing the personal stories of communities coming together for a common cause. “And it’s something you don’t necessarily get in a (non-COVID-19 environment).” Other stories aren’t as rosy, especially those involving small business owners. “Many have not been able to access the resources that Congress told them would be available to them,” Long says. “Some of these small businesses operate on very slim margins. (If they don’t have funds coming in) for just a couple weeks, it can mean they’re never coming back.” Having grown up working for her parents’ produce stand on the Oregon Coast, Long says she understands the frustration and fear these small business owners are feeling. At a recent Facebook Live town hall event, Long addressed the subject of the federal Paycheck Protection Program. “I’m really sad to say that it’s not the first time I’ve heard from a small business owner about the problems that they’ve encountered with the small business loans,” Long said. “Business owners are actually keeping people on payroll in anticipation of a loan coming through and it hasn’t — and then they’re really putting themselves in jeopardy in terms of their financial stability.” What’s made the situation worse, she added, is the fact that large corporations seem to be getting funds meant to keep small businesses afloat during the COVID-19 shutdowns. Long says her Facebook Live town halls tend to bring out more policy related questions. “We’re hearing questions about health care and about preserving Social Security and Medicare at every town hall,” Long says. “And I’ve never had more interest in my broadband-for-all proposal — they never knew that so many people didn’t have access to (broadband).” Although Long has transitioned easily to a more digital world, campaigning in the time of COVID-19 does have one definite drawback for a candidate who seems to thrive in face-to-face situations. “The most rewarding thing about campaigning for office is having the chance to meet people where they’re at and listen to what’s on their mind,” Long says. “You can’t beat having that human connection, that one-on-one ... I do miss that connection.”

DEATH NOTICES

Bateman, Linda Sue (Kiedrowski), 70, Washougal, died May 4, 2020. Brown’s Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

May 8, 2020. Brown’s Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

Strong, Pamela Sue, 70, Camas, died May 6, 2020. Brown’s Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

Bogda, Marilyn Lenore, 87, Washougal, died

Hobbs, Marietta Legg, 72, Vancouver, died May 8, 2020. Brown’s Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

Vaillencourt, Bonnie Nadine, 88, Camas, died May 8, 2020. Brown’s Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

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KNIGHTON 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
The children of Frank T. and Dorothy M. Knighton happily announce their parents 60th Wedding Anniversary.
Frank and Dottie were married on May 20, 1960 in Okanogan, WA. They have been blessed with two amazing children, Katherine (Bob) Coffland, and Joseph (Nikki) Knighton, six grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.
Frank retired as a Washington State Grain Inspector in 1991, and was very active in Fire District 9 (later ECFR). Dottie worked at the Pendleton Woolen Mills for several years. They enjoy gardening, woodworking, quilting, and socializing with the Mickey D’s Coffee Group.
Please share your anniversary wishes for Frank and Dottie at Knighton60thAnniv@gmail.com.

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Helping our community through COVID-19
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A member of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), Straub’s Funeral Home regularly receives information via NFDA from the CDC, Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies about the evolution of COVID-19 in the United States. NFDA continues to lead the conversation with federal officials about the role of funeral service as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic.
If our staff here at Straub’s Funeral Home can be of assistance, please contact us at 360-834-4563.

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