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Caroling event comes close to laying an egg

4-H Poultry Club brings holiday cheer to seniors

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Sorry partridge in a pear tree, but you've been knocked off your perch by different birds full of holiday spirit.

The Peninsula Poultry 4-H Club, with hens in hand, gathered outside Victoria Place Assisted Living Community on Discovery Road before embarking on their Christmas caroling journey last Wednesday.

The songfest included holiday favorites fit for people and poultry alike.

"It should be fun," Tanya Barnett, chief organizer of the chicken caroling event, said before the singing started. "Maybe we can spread a little holiday cheer."

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Armed with hens and roosters wrapped in warm blankets, the festive group of around a dozen parents and kids huddled in the facility's outdoor courtyard as a group of seniors watched from the dining hall windows.

Almost every member of the crew had their hands full, either with chickens or with banners bearing the Poultry Club's logo and "Merry Chickmas" painted across the other.

The carolers awaited their cue, then festive songs rang through the air in the courtyard.

They brought all the classics, from "Deck the Halls" to "Jingle Bells" to "Silent Night," and even added a poultry twist to the lyrics.

"Troll the ancient poultry carols," chimed the group during Deck the Halls.

"Rudolf the red-beaked chicken, had a



Sylvie Errichetti walks over to show off her bantam chicken, named Shadow, to residents at Victoria Place. *Leader photo by James Sloan*

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City council OKs purchase of Evans Vista land

Property was once site of 'Pest House'

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After signing a purchase and sale agreement in August, the city of Port Townsend unanimously approved the acquisition of the Evans Vista property south of the Rainier Street and Sims Way roundabout.

The mixed-use area is 14.4 acres in total, and could be home to between 100 and 150 residential units in the future. Each council member voiced their support for the project during Monday's meeting, and praised city staff members for their extensive research before the purchase.

"I'm very much in favor of moving forward on this," said Deputy Mayor David Faber. "This is being done with a ton of due diligence."

The property was priced at approximately \$1.4 million, although the purchase will partially be covered by a state grant, without using money from the city's General Fund.

"We're all in unanimous favor for this," Mayor Michelle Sandoval said shortly after the purchase resolution was passed.

The property purchase has been in development since August, and the decision to buy marks a major step in providing for more affordable housing on the Peninsula.

Earlier in December, the city council met and unanimously approved a resolution authorizing City Manager John Mauro to execute a grant agreement with the Washington State Department of Commerce for the 14-acre Evans Vista land plot.

The \$1.4 million grant was awarded to the city in July for affordable housing development. A notable provision in the grant includes a 10-year

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CHRISTMAS, DELIVERED

Drive-thru, drop-off community meals a longstanding tradition

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It's not too late to forgo cooking on Christmas Day.

Imagine hand-peeled and sliced scalloped potatoes, mouthwatering ham, cranberry sauce, green beans (of course) and dinner rolls and cookies from Pane d' Amore, waiting for your fork.

That's the menu for the annual Tri-Area Community Christmas meal this year, a tradition for over 20 years.

Traditionally enjoyed table side, the pandemic threw a few twists into the format.

"This is the third year we've had to do drive-up," said Rita Hubbard, spokesperson for the event. Meals can be preordered by calling 360-379-4228, and can be picked up between noon and 2 p.m. Christmas Day.

Meal delivery will also be available from

10 a.m. to noon Christmas Day, thanks to volunteers.

"It's for everyone who wants a meal," Hubbard said. "Some people just don't want to cook for Christmas."

Thus far, 140 meals are reserved, but there's enough fare to feed 300 to 325 people.

"We have a lot of people who just show up, which is fine," she added.

Hubbard said there is lots of community support around the event. Olympic Community Action Program supplies the building (located at 10 West Valley Road, across from the Chimacum schools), God Bless Food catering "has been a huge supporter of us," Hubbard confirmed, and First Security Bank has been a big player, among others.

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Hubbard directly at 360-301-1104 or 360-385-3978.



Volunteers from a previous season help with preparations of the annual Tri-Area Community Christmas meal. *Photo courtesy Rita Hubbard*

United Good Neighbors supports the nonprofits, staff, and volunteers who are dedicated to providing critical programs and safety-net services to those most in need in Jefferson County.

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THIS YEAR'S GOAL: \$300,000

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Egg: Caroling event is definitely one for the birds

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very shiny nose,” trumpeted the singers.

The carolers rattled off around eight or nine songs, and received enthusiastic applause from the spectators. After the impromptu performance, some of the elderly onlookers walked over to get a closer look at the birds and thank the group.

“Only in Port Townsend would you have a chicken pop-up carol event,” one of the bystanders joked.

Many of the seniors were happy to hear the carols, and made sure to thank the participating kids and parents for their chicken concert.

“It’s really nice to have people willing to do that. I’ve always said thank you,” said Colleen Gawle, one of the Victoria Place residents. “It brightens the day, yes it does, and

the whole dad-gum time from now to New Years.”

NEXT STOP, AVAMERE

For their second, and final stop, the carolers flocked to Avamere, another senior living center in town. Looking to bring another great performance after working out the kinks in the first showing, the group arrived at the facility, but there was one problem.

Nobody was there.

Not a single soul was at the meeting point to hear the poultry carols. The crew waited for a sign, but none appeared.

Determined not to fly the coop, the carolers decided to march around the facility and spread their jovial holiday tunes.

The group belted their Christmas songs together as they paraded around Avamere. Between the songs, members of the jolly assembly mimicked chicken sounds from

“Cock-a-doodle-doo!” to “Bok! Bok! Bok!” The crew’s desire for an audience was finally fulfilled as a lady waved to them from a second-story window.

The carolers performed, chickens in hand, to their single spectator who applauded with adoration. Although only a few other window spectators got to hear the Christmas tunes before the group wrapped up, they felt satisfied with spreading the holiday cheer.

CHICKEN CHEER

“It’s really cool, it’s awesome how happy they are, seeing the chickens. I think that this would bring a little happiness to them. Not only the caroling, but being around chickens,” Poultry Club member Sylvie Errichetti, 14, said of the event.

“They bring me a lot of joy and I want to bring other people joy, because they’re really fascinating birds, and they are really cool and

really sweet,” Sylvie said while holding her black bantam named Shadow.

The performance was meant to spread holiday cheer, but also to bring more awareness to the Peninsula Poultry 4-H Club and the importance of chickens to rural communities in Jefferson County and beyond.

“4-H has a really strong background here in Jefferson County because we are a rural agricultural community, and chickens to me are a crossover livestock animal,” said Shelly Randall, a Port Townsend resident and one of the carolers.

“There’s just a lot of community outreach to let people know how important chickens are to our local food economy and like Sylvia was saying, how much joy they can bring,” she added.

Land: Property may host a variety of housing types

continued from Page A1

deed restriction that guarantees the property will be used exclusively to develop affordable, workforce, and mixed-income housing.

Additionally, the city completed a cultural resources survey of the property, in which they found no physical evidence of cultural resources in the area.

Through a literature review, they did find evidence that a portion of the property was used as the region’s “Pest House”; a building used more than a century ago as a quarantine location for immigrants suspected of having infectious diseases.

Although the site will be further investigated for human remains and other physical evidence, King predicts it will not have an impact on Evans Vista being developed.

Still, the discovery of the property as the former Pest House location allowed the city to drop the price of the acquisition by \$40,000.

The property survey was executed by the Portland-based Willamette Cultural Resources Association after City Manager John Mauro authorized an agreement of no more than \$20,000 for the service in early November. The Jamestown S’Klallam, Port Gamble S’Klallam,

and Suquamish Tribes were all consulted relating to the land as well, according to King.

“We are technically completed with our consultation,” King said of the cultural resources survey. “All in all, we can move forward with this project if we choose to.”

The city initially entered into a purchase and sale agreement contract for the land plot in August, with the contract set to expire Dec. 17.

The Evans Vista property is located within the work/live district of city limits, and is listed as a mixed-use housing zone. Although 6 acres of the land is unusable, sloped ground, the rest of the land could lead to a new neighborhood filled with housing units, commercial property, family services such as child-care centers, and more. About 8 acres of the property can be developed.

At last week’s council meeting, King noted the goals of the project.

“The Rainier sub-area plan is an area of our city that is largely underdeveloped, and this is an opportunity to create a neighborhood,” he said.

The primary goals of the plan is a housing project that includes homes from studio apartments to three-bedroom units for prospective

tenants, and forming a mixed-use hub of activities in the development.

Currently, the proposed plan for Evans Vista is a mixed-use property that will include new infrastructure, first-floor storefronts, and a variety of units for residents.

King predicts the 14-acre property will create between 100 and 150 housing units to increase dwelling options for Port Townsend’s working class.

“We’re targeting 30 to 50 units that would be affordable to those households making 50 to 80 percent at the area median income, and then maybe another 50 to 100 units for workforce housing. And that would be affordable for households making 80 to 120 percent of the area median income,” King said.

“Whether we can get all the way up to 150 units or not remains to be seen, but the principle here is that we’re looking at, at least in the area of 100 units,” he added.

The area household median income of Port Townsend in 2019 was \$51,389, according to the Census Bureau.

Although the project would partially address the housing shortage in Port Townsend, there are some potential challenges and unknowns that could halt plans to develop the property.

To start, the city would have to build a sewer lift station and pipe extension for sewage in the area, estimated to cost approximately \$4.1 million.

Despite obstacles and unknowns, many city council members and residents remain optimistic, voicing their support before the final purchase.

“I encourage the city to move forward with local engagement around the Evans Vista opportunity, and to take a stand to boldly call us to radical action in the area of permanent affordability,” said Lauren Ehnebuske.

“If we do not take creative and bold actions now to insure the availability of affordable housing in and around Port Townsend we risk becoming another Carmel or Aspen,” added Peter Bonyun, referencing the sky-high property prices elsewhere.

Justine Gonzalez-Berg, the director of the Housing Solutions Network, listed the organization’s priorities for the project and voiced her support.

“Housing Solutions Network would be excited to help design and facilitate a robust community engagement process regarding what kind of housing is built, how it is built, and how it is managed/

owned,” Gonzalez-Berg said.

Councilmembers said the city has a stake in providing affordable housing.

“I really appreciate the direction this appears to be going and the public inclusion in this as well. I’m excited about the possibilities of this project,” Faber said. “We have to take risks, we have to put skin in the game to make affordable housing a reality in our town,” he said.

Councilmember Ariel Speser mentioned the previous Cherry Street project — a 70-year-old building purchased by the city in 2017 for affordable housing that ended up stalling out, and is currently unoccupied — and how the council learned a lot from that undertaking.

“It’s hard to think about this project without also thinking about Cherry Street and just to let the public know that I think this council has a very strong commitment to affordable housing,” Speser said. “It would be kind of an elephant in the room without talking about it as a council and what we learned from that project.”

“It’s very exciting and it sounds like there’s great community support for it,” she added.

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