

CAMAS-WASHOUGAL POST-RECORD

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Prune Hill drug detox center decision pending

Over 20 Camas residents testify at hearing on Discover Recovery conditional-use permit

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record editor

Camas Hearings Examiner Joe Turner will rule by the end of this month on a conditional-use permit that would allow a substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation center to operate in Camas' mostly residential Prune Hill neighborhood.

At a virtual public hearing held March 24, Turner listened to more than three hours of tes-

timony regarding the proposed Discover Recovery drug rehabilitation center.

If approved, the facility would operate out of Fairgate Estate, a former bed-and-breakfast turned assisted living center located next to the Dorothy Fox Elementary School, the city's Dorothy Fox Park, and the Harvest Community Church at 2213 N.W. 23rd Ave. The 2.39-acre property, which includes a 14,626-square-foot main structure as well as a detached garage

with a second-story apartment, is located in a residential-12,000 (R-12) zone intended for single-family homes with an average lot size of 12,000 square feet.

The city's R-12 zone also allows for several conditional uses, including "nursing, rest or convalescent homes," defined by the city as "an establishment which provides full-time care for three or more chronically ill or infirm persons" and by the state of Washington as a facility that "maintains and operates 24-hour skilled nursing services for the care and treatment of chronically ill or convalescent patients, including mental, emotional or behavioral problems, intellectual

disabilities or alcoholism."

Discover Recovery, a company that has operated a 40-bed inpatient drug treatment and rehabilitation center in Long Beach, Washington, since 2018, applied for a conditional-use permit on Jan. 21.

Turner will decide if the proposal meets the city's criteria for conditional-use permits, including a requirement that the proposed use "not be materially detrimental to the public welfare."

That was the criteria most opponents of the drug treatment and recovery center hinged their arguments on during the March

See Detox, page A6



A "No Drug Detox Next to Dorothy Fox" sign points to the site of Fairgate Estates in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood, where Discover Recovery hopes to open a 15-bed, inpatient drug treatment and recovery center, on March 16, 2021.

Camas man arrested for fatal collision

Ethan Province, 31, charged with vehicular homicide

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record editor

Camas man charged with vehicular homicide after fatal Camas collision

A Camas man has been arrested and charged with vehicular homicide in connection to a Nov. 5, 2020, head-on collision that left one person dead and three others injured.

Camas police reported this week that they have arrested one of the drivers in that two-car collision, Ethan Province.

Province, 31, of Camas, has been booked in the Clark County Jail and charged with one count of vehicular homicide and two counts of vehicular assault.

Police say Province was driving a 2021 BMW sport utility vehicle northwest on Northwest Lake Road around 11:30 a.m. Nov. 5, 2020, when he allegedly crossed into the oncoming lane and collided head-on with a 2020 Kia Sportage driven by Marisa Silva, 37, of Portland.

Police say an investigation showed Province was driving at "an excessive speed when the collision occurred."

Silva's mother, Francine Wohl, 62, of Vancouver, a

See Fatal, page A6

'YOU GET ONE SHOT TO DO IT RIGHT'

Residents, officials weigh in on hazardous materials cleanup at Camas paper mill



Cars fill a parking lot across from the Georgia-Pacific paper mill in downtown Camas in 2018.

Georgia-Pacific says it has no plans to close mill or sell property

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record editor

Camas residents, officials and even a former mayor are weighing in on what they say could be a critical step in the future of the city's historic downtown area.

"Almost 40 years ago, the Camas City Council and I worked together and took bold action to change our city's vision of itself and tried to ensure long-term fiscal viability, focusing on an excellent quality of life for future generations of Camasonians," former Camas mayor and lifelong Camas resident Nan Henriksen recently told the Camas City Council. "Now, you have a similar opportunity to alter our city's vision and destiny."

The opportunity, Henriksen

IF YOU GO

Department of Ecology sets public hearing on draft cleanup order for April 20

said, is to ensure any required cleanup at the nearly 135-year-old Camas paper mill, located at 401 N.E. Adams St., in downtown Camas, will be done to standards that would allow for something other than heavy industrial uses if Georgia-Pacific (GP) ever decides to close the mill and sell its property.

The Washington State Department of Ecology has issued a draft of an agreed order for future hazardous material cleanup at the Camas paper mill, and will hold an online public hearing on the draft order at 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 20.

"Even though the mill is currently zoned Heavy Industrial, I would be surprised if the city's future vision for that property is for more heavy industrial (uses)," Henriksen told the city council. "If we have a vision for aesthetically pleasing and vibrant mixed-use with waterfront access (in downtown Camas), we must ensure now that a required cleanup of the mill site is adequate and safe for mixed-use and not just good enough for more heavy industrial usage."

Henriksen and others have urged Camas city officials to get more involved with the state's environmental cleanup orders at the downtown Camas paper mill "before it's too late."

The state has said the Camas paper mill site, which has

See Mill, page A5

Council makes pick for Boger's seat

Pharmaceutical administrator David Stuebe appointed to Washougal council

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
Post-Record staff writer

Washougal City Council members have selected a replacement for outgoing city-councilman Brent Boger.

At the council's March 29 meeting, council members named David Stuebe, a retired military member and longtime pharmaceutical administrator, as Boger's replacement.

Boger informed city officials earlier this year that he intended to vacate his council position in late March. Boger also said he plans to retire from his job as an assistant city attorney for the city of Vancouver and move to Ecuador later this year.

Stuebe will serve on the council until at least November 2021, when the position will be up for re-election. The person elected to the No. 1 position will be sworn in as the city's mayor immediately upon certification of the results.

The councilors interviewed five applicants, including Stuebe; Stephen Baranowski, an associate principal at Liberty Middle School in Camas; and Washougal residents Derik Ford, Jeremy Clark Rescorla and Chris Kosmas as potential replacements for Boger's council seat. The council brought Stuebe and Baranowski back for a second round of questioning, then cast their final votes on March 29. Stuebe won with a vote of 4-2.

"I'm very humbled and honored to be selected as a member of this esteemed panel," Stuebe told the council members on March 29, after being sworn in by Mayor Molly Coston. "I hope I can live up to your expectations. I'll do my best. I know I'm going to learn a lot."

"You have been diligent in attending meetings, getting to know what's on agendas, and educating yourself on topics and the problems we currently have and are working through," Coston replied. "It's a well-deserved selection. I appreciate all the hard work that

See Council, page A2

'Grown up' version of First Friday

Downtown Camas' Third Thursdays kick off April 15



Downtown Camas Association Executive Director Carrie Schulstad (right) and DCA Event and Volunteer Coordinator Jan Carter (center) talk to Lily Atelier owner Marilyn Reed (left) at the downtown Camas boutique on Friday, March 19, 2021.

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record editor

With its emphasis on art shows, shopping specials, games and prizes, the Downtown Camas Association's monthly First Friday event is fun for the whole family.

Now, the DCA is turning its attention to another monthly event — Third Thursday — in a bid to bring grown ups downtown for after-hours dining, shopping

and maybe even a "date night" without the kids.

"We're continuing to find ways to support our downtown businesses," said Carrie Schulstad, executive director of the DCA, "and one thing people would love to have in our downtown is stores that are open later."

Visitors often say they appreciate the DCA's First Friday events, because it gives them a chance to shop locally after working long hours on weekdays, Schulstad

explained, but it's not feasible for most downtown Camas shops to stay open in the evening all the time.

"That's just not where we are right now," Schulstad said.

Having another monthly event geared toward after-hours shopping and dining seemed more doable.

"These events will be every month, just

See Thursday, page A3

Two Rivers Heritage Museum in Washougal opens this weekend

News, Page A3



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Fatal:

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passenger in the Kia, was critically injured in the crash and later died at the hospital from her injuries.

Silva, as well as Bogdan Valcu, 40, of Washougal, a passenger in the BMW, both suffered “extensive injuries,” from the crash, according to Camas police.

Province sustained minor injuries from the collision.

Camas Police Sgt. Scot Boyles said the gap between the November 2020 collision and Province’s arrest this week was due to the time it took investigators to gather the proper information, including car computer data and medical records. Members of the Clark County Traffic Homicide Unit assisted the Camas Police Department in their investigation.

Province had his first appearance in Clark County Superior Court at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 31.

Detox:

From page A1

24 hearing.

Brian Lewellan, a pro bono attorney representing the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance — a group that has garnered more than 1,300 signatures on a petition opposing the placement of a drug treatment center in Prune Hill and has raised more than \$5,000 on GoFundMe to pay for legal fees for an appeal if Turner rules in favor of the Discover Recovery conditional-use permit — told Turner on March 24 that “no one with any common sense would site that center right next to an elementary school.”

“We’re not saying these services shouldn’t be in our community,” Lewellan said.

The attorney submitted sheriff’s reports and audio transcripts connected to Discover Recovery center’s Long Beach site, which he said showed reports of patients leaving against medical advice, including one call, Lewellan said, in which a Discover Recovery staff member called police to let them know that a newly admitted client who “looked like he was in some

sort of meth psychosis” had left the facility without being properly discharged.

“What has transpired in Long Beach ... creates a public welfare concern,” Lewellan told Turner. “Please consider how the public would be affected if this happened while kids are walking to and from school each day.”

Lewellan added again that, while substance abuse treatment centers “are needed and play a super important service in our community, it is irresponsible and wholly incompatible to the uses of this facility.”

Other opponents echoed Lewellan’s concerns, with several saying they believed the proposed use would be detrimental to public welfare and voicing concerns that Discover Recovery patients might leave the facility without medical advice and interact with children at the nearby park, church or elementary school.

“We do value and support those going through the hard work of drug detox and rehabilitation,” said Prune Hill resident James Rogers during the March 24 hearing. “However, I want to step everyone back and challenge you with one thought: Can you think of a worse location to put a drug detox facility? I cannot. It sets a horrible precedence. The safety concerns alone in my mind are enough to deny this application. ... Camas has worked hard to be known as one of Washington’s safest cities. Do you think it would stay that way? Allowing (a drug detox facility) next to a school will cause life-changing harm to our community.”

Rogers, who said he has three children under the age of 7, told Turner he believed a conditional-use

permit for the Discover Recovery center would damage the nearby Dorothy Fox Elementary School’s reputation and that many families who had moved to Prune Hill for the school would “completely move out of the neighborhood.”

Turner, who had warned the hearing participants at the beginning that the issue of a conditional-use permit was “not a popularity contest,” said he understood that people’s perceptions of the neighborhood might change with the addition of a drug treatment and rehabilitation facility, but that “the fact that people may leave” is not something he could consider.

Rogers argued that people leaving the neighborhood would show the drug rehabilitation center’s conditional-use permit would be detrimental to the public welfare.

“It changes the quality of life and the reason people would come here,” Rogers said. “It also changes the real estate realities in this neighborhood. ... It is an irresponsible proposal and I hope the city will reject it and change city code to prevent this from happening.”

Some neighbors said they worried the facility, which would be geared toward professionals hoping to treat substance-abuse disorders with 30- to 90-day inpatient rehabilitation, would admit sex offenders.

“At one point (Discover Recovery’s) message is that no sex offenders would be allowed. Then it was that they wouldn’t be allowed unless by court order. The lack of information and inconsistent information to me is very concerning to me as a female and as a mother,” said Prune Hill resident Kristen Maxwell

during the March 24 hearing. “It just takes one incident. And I don’t want it to be my child or any of my neighbors’ children.”

Though several opponents of the drug treatment facility told Turner they would not be against a similar facility being built somewhere else in Camas, few had a clear understanding of where that “somewhere else” might be.

Camas Senior Planner Sarah Fox said the city would allow a similar facility to be built without a conditional-use permit in several zones, including multi-family, regional commercial, mixed-use, downtown commercial and community commercial zones. The facility would be allowed in other zones with a conditional-use permit. Only one zone, the city’s industrial zone, would not allow the facility.

Thomas Feldman, one of the co-owners of Discover Recovery, said he wanted to correct misinformation during the public hearing.

“We have heard a lot of comments about public safety,” Feldman said, adding that some of the safety concerns about clients who would be court-mandated to seek treatment for their substance abuse disorders would not apply to the Camas facility, as it would only treat patients who were there voluntarily.

Feldman said Discover Recovery “offers the highest compliance and safety measures available,” and that facilities owners would be willing to work with the city of Camas on concerns regarding patients who opted to leave the facility against medical advice.

Feldman said Discover Recovery “has a great relationship with (its) neighbors” in Long Beach and has had “terrific outcomes with (its) program,” having served more than 750 clients at the Washington coast facility since 2018.

He added that the Long Beach facility is licensed by the state’s Department of Health and accredited by the Joint Commission and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, an independent, nonprofit accreditor of more

than 60,000 health facilities, including opioid treatment programs.

“Ours is a voluntary treatment facility,” Feldman said, adding that “intimate” drug rehabilitation facilities are often located in residential neighborhoods, and that the Camas facility would “be one of the smallest treatment facilities every licensed in Washington.”

Kris Wilson, the attorney representing Discover Recovery, said Camas city staff told Discover Recovery’s owners in November 2020, during the pre-application hearing, that the drug treatment center’s use was consistent with the city’s definition of a “convalescent home” permitted by conditional use in the R12 zone.

Wilson argued that if Turner were to deny the conditional-use permit based on the “not materially detrimental to public welfare” criteria, he could not “base on suppositions or things not supported by substantial evidence.”

Wilson said she and the applicants would like a chance to respond to the new information brought up at the March 24 hearing.

Turner ruled that the record would remain open for new information through March 31, with responses to the record open until 5 p.m. April 7. No new information will be allowed after March 31. The applicant will have until April 14 to make their final arguments. Turner will release his decision by April 28.

If Turner does allow the conditional-use permit, Camas city staff have proposed several conditions, including the dedication of 10 to 12 feet for a future pedestrian walkway, the installation of a continuous 6-foot fence along the eastern portion of the property line, and the expiration of the permit one year after the final decision if no building plans have been submitted.

The city has the ability to revoke the conditional-use permit “if the activity does not comply with the conditions of approval or provisions of the development code.”

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CAMAS-WASHOUGAL POST-RECORD

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Hearings examiner OKs Discover Recovery permit

Decision will allow drug rehabilitation center to operate in Camas; opponents say site, next to school, is wrong spot

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record editor

Camas Hearings Examiner Joe Turner has ruled in favor of granting a conditional-use permit to Discover Recovery, a substance-abuse treatment and recovery center hoping to operate in Camas' mostly residential Prune Hill neighborhood.

If there is no appeal, Turner's decision will pave the way for Discover Recovery's owners to convert

the former Fairgate Estate assisted living center into a 15-bed rehabilitation center geared toward working professionals seeking help for substance abuse disorders.

The 2.39-acre Fairgate Estate property is located next to the Dorothy Fox Elementary School, Dorothy Fox Park and Harvest Community Church at 2213 N.W. 23rd Ave., in Camas, in a residential-12,000 (R-12) zone.

Though intended for single-family homes with an



A "No Drug Detox Next to Dorothy Fox" sign stands at the corner of Northwest 28th Avenue and Northwest Utah Street, across from the Camas elementary school, on March 16, 2021.

average lot size of 12,000 square feet, Camas' R-12 zone also allows for several conditional uses, including

"nursing, rest or convalescent homes," defined by the state of Washington as a facility that "main-

tains and operates 24-hour skilled nursing services for the care and treatment of chronically ill or convalescent patients, including mental, emotional or behavioral problems, intellectual disabilities or alcoholism."

Discover Recovery, a company that has operated a 40-bed inpatient drug treatment and rehabilitation center in Long Beach, Washington, since 2018, applied for the conditional-use permit on Jan. 21.

By the end of February, hundreds of Prune Hill neighbors had come together online to oppose the rehabilitation facility, form the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance — a group that

later registered as a limited liability corporation — sign a petition opposing the placement of a drug rehab in Prune Hill and raise more than \$5,000 on GoFundMe to pay for an appeal if Turner ruled in favor of the Discover Recovery conditional-use permit.

At a March 24 public hearing before Turner, dozens of Prune Hill residents urged the hearings examiner to deny Discover Recovery's permit based on a city requirement that the proposed conditional use "not be materially detrimental to the public welfare."

See Permit, page A8



Jemtegaard Middle School teacher Dani Allen (right) instructs students in April 2021. The students are creating a painting featuring Mount Hood and the Columbia River that will soon cover an unsightly sign at the Washougal Food Center on Washougal's "E" Street.

MAKING A MORE BEAUTIFUL WASHOUGAL

Local students, nonprofits partner on project to beautify prominent corner

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
Post-Record staff writer

The metal post that holds the marquee sign in the parking lot of the Washougal Food Center, at 1736 "E" St., has seen better days. Some of the black paint used to spell out the word "liquor" has peeled away, revealing chunks of the original surface and turning the letter "I" into a silver splotch.

"The liquor sign is in the middle of the community, and it's not very nice looking and falling apart," Amara Farah said. A senior at Washougal High, Farah felt compelled to beautify the prominent Washougal corner. "I wanted to cover it with a picture that's going to positively represent Washougal and lift others up."

Farah is now working in conjunction with the Unite! Washougal community coalition and the Washougal Arts and Culture Alliance, to create a Washougal-themed painting that will be erected on one side of the post later this spring.

"We were like, 'This is a very popular part of town ... and we should do something beautiful with it,'" said Taylor Vincent, also a Washougal High senior and the project's co-leader. "Instead of it being gray and dented, it will be colorful and wonderful. And I think it will catch people's eyes



The painting that will be erected onto the metal post in the parking lot of the Washougal Food Center includes representations of the Columbia River and Mount Hood.

and make them respond in a positive way."

After talking with Unite! Washougal's executive director, Margaret McCarthy, about her idea, Farah approached Washougal Food Center owner Jesse Singh, who approved of the project.

"We went in and said, 'Hey, we'd be willing to replace your liquor sign with something that would positively impact Washougal. Here are some of the designs.

Let us know if you want to change anything or if you have anything in mind,'" Farah said. "The first time we were there he seemed excited, but the more we kept showing up to show him what progress we were making, he seemed more and more on board with it, and that enthusiasm really started to come through."

A group of middle- and high-school students have gathered every Monday and Friday afternoon in Washougal High School art teacher Rob Yee's classroom for the past three months to work on the painting.

"The opportunities for youth to engage and own their community, and for us to partner with them, that's what's so exciting for me," McCarthy said. "If I don't like something about my environment, I can work with others and collaborate and have teamwork and value each other as we change it for the positive. That's what community is all about, and hopefully what Unite! Washougal is all about — working together and learning from each other and making this a better place for us all to live."

The picture will feature representations of the Columbia River and Mount Hood, and the phrase "You are enough."

Farah, who has volunteered

See Washougal, page A6

Local election season kicks off

There are 15 open positions on Camas-Washougal city councils, school boards and commissions

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record editor

Camas-Washougal area voters will decide the fate of 15 open positions on city councils, school boards and other commissions this year, beginning with the primary election on Aug. 3.

Candidates have until 5 p.m. May 21, to declare their intention to run for an open position. Registered Clark County voters will receive their primary ballots in the mail in mid-July.

Washougal voters will select a new mayor this year, as well as three council members and two school board members.

Open Washougal City Council seats include position 3, a four-year term currently held by Councilman Paul Greenlee; posi-

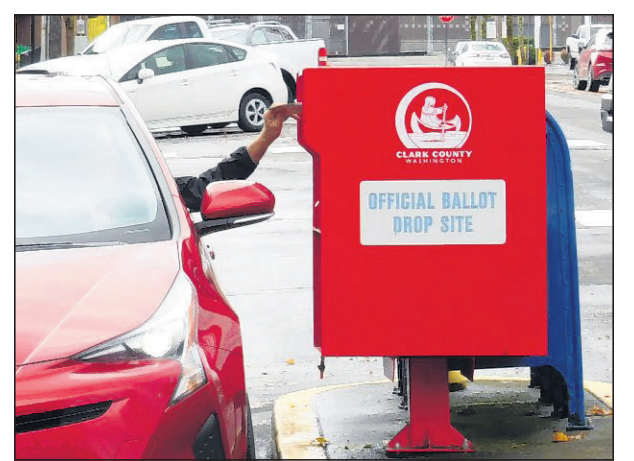
tion 5, a two-year term currently held by Mayor Molly Coston; position 6, a four-year term currently held by Councilwoman Julie Russell; and position 1, the four-year, vacant mayoral position.

On April 21, Greenlee registered with the state's Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) as a full-reporting candidate (those expecting to raise more than \$5,000 during a campaign) in the Washougal mayoral race.

Washougal School Board positions include the director 4 and director 5 seats currently held by school board members Donna Sinclair and Chuck Carpenter.

In Camas, there are three open city council positions — all are four-

See Election, page A8



A voter drops off a ballot in the 24-hour ballot drop box next to the Camas Post Office on Oct. 29, 2018.

Gresham passes on Camas' Fox

Mayor: City administrator 'decided to pursue other opportunities'

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record editor

The city of Gresham, Oregon, has not selected Camas City Administrator Jamal Fox to be its next city manager.

Fox, who began his position in Camas eight months ago, was one of three candidates being considered for the top Gresham post.



Camas City Administrator Jamal Fox

See Fox, page A6

WASHOUGAL'S 'RISING STAR'
Clark College grad turns life around, gives back
Community, Page A7

COMMUNITY
Washougal man wins 'Rising Star' award
Clark College grad turns life around, gives back

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Permit:

From page A1

Many of the opponents voiced concerns that Discover Recovery patients might leave the facility without medical advice and interact with children at the nearby park, church or elementary school.

Brian Lewellan, a pro bono attorney representing the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance, told Turner on March 24 that “no one with any common sense would site that center right next to an elementary school.”

“We’re not saying these services shouldn’t be in our community,” he said.

The attorney submitted several sheriff’s reports and audio transcripts regarding the Discover Recovery center’s Long Beach site, which showed reports of patients leaving against medical advice, including one call where a Discover Recovery staff member called police to let them know that a newly admitted client who “looked like he was in some sort of meth psychosis” had left the facility without being properly discharged.

“What has transpired in Long Beach ... creates a public welfare concern,” Lewellan told Turner



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS FELDMAN

Notice of a proposed substance abuse treatment and recovery center development is posted outside Fairgate Estate in Camas’ Prune Hill neighborhood in early February 2021.

at the March hearing. “Please consider how the public would be affected if this happened while kids are walking to and from school each day.”

Other opponents echoed Lewellan’s concerns, with several saying they believed the proposed use would be detrimental to public welfare and voicing concerns that Discover Recovery patients might leave the facility without medical advice and interact with children at the nearby park, church or elementary school.

“It just takes one incident,” Prune Hill resident Kristen Maxwell during the March 24 hearing. “And I don’t want it to

be my child or any of my neighbors’ children.”

Though several opponents of the drug treatment facility told Turner they would not be against a similar facility being built somewhere else in Camas, few had a clear understanding of where that “somewhere else” might be.

Camas Senior Planner Sarah Fox said the city would allow a similar facility to be built without a conditional-use permit in several zones, including multi-family, regional commercial, mixed-use, downtown commercial and community commercial zones. The facility would be allowed in other zones with a conditional-use permit.

Only one zone, the city’s industrial zone, would not allow the facility, Fox said.

Thomas Feldman, one of the co-owners of Discover Recovery, said he wanted to correct misinformation during the public hearing.

“We have heard a lot of comments about public safety,” Feldman said, adding that some of the safety concerns about clients who would be court-mandated to seek treatment for their substance abuse disorders would not apply to the Camas facility, as it would only treat patients who were there voluntarily.

Feldman said Discover Recovery “offers the highest compliance and safety measures available,” and that the facilities owners would be willing to work with the city of Camas on concerns regarding patients who opted to leave the facility against medical advice.

Feldman said Discover Recovery “has a great relationship with (its) neighbors” in Long Beach and has had “terrific outcomes with (its) program,” having served more than 750 clients at the Washington coast facility over the past three years.

Approval comes with conditions

On April 28, Turner ruled the proposed Discover Recovery facility does comply with city code and should be granted a conditional-use permit.

The city’s hearings examiner also set a few additional rules in his decision.

Most of those stipulations were things Discover Recovery’s owners had proposed to help alleviate the community’s concerns, Feldman told the Post-Record on Tuesday, May 4.

“Most of those were conditions set forth by us in the final brief we submitted,” Feldman said. “We wanted to make sure that we heard the community, and we believe those conditions are OK and suitable to implement.”

To maintain their conditional-use permit, the Discover Recovery owners must build a 6-foot solid fence, with gates for the driveways, around the property; install staff-monitored security cameras; designate an outdoor patient-use area within the fenced portion of the site; and dedicate a 10- to 12-foot right-of-way to allow for the future construction of a pedestrian walkway.

The conditional-use permit approval also requires the inpatient facility to use no more than six of its 15 beds for “subacute detoxification services” and to not provide any Level 4 detoxification — the highest level of drug detoxification, which includes 24-hour treatment and a high level of medical monitoring.

Discover Recovery staff must have 24-hour surveillance of all patients and perform routine bed checks at 30-minute intervals; and that patients will all be subjected to criminal background checks prior to being admitted.

The facility will not be allowed to admit registered sex offenders or anyone convicted of a violent crime, and will not be able to provide court-mandated treatment.

To maintain its conditional-use permit, Discover Recovery must, for the first three years, produce an annual report to the city of Camas that includes brief descriptions of all discharges against medical advice as well as any safety mea-

asures used at the center or police incidents; and meet on an annual basis with representatives from the city of Camas, the Camas School District, Harvest Church (next to Fairgate Estate) and three designated neighborhood representatives to discuss the annual reports and address safety concerns.

Finally, Turner ruled that patients at the Discover Recovery center will not be allowed to leave the facility “without direct staff supervision” and that the center’s staff must immediately report any patient who has left the facility against treatment advice to Camas police.

Requests for reconsideration must be filed within 14 days of Turner’s decision. Parties of record have 21 days after the April 28 decision to file a judicial appeal.

Feldman said he believed Turner’s decision was “very thorough” and he had no concerns complying with all of the stipulations in the agreement.

If the decision moves forward without a request for reconsideration or an appeal, Feldman said Discover Recovery will move forward with getting the business up and running.

“It will take a few months with the fence and licensure, recruiting and hiring staff and doing the interior alterations ... but I would imagine we could be up and running in August.”

The Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance referred media questions to Lewellan, but a representative said neighbors “do have questions as to how the stipulations regarding admittance will be enforced by the city.”

The Post-Record was unable to contact Lewellan in time for this newspaper’s print deadline.

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HIGH END MARKET PLACE

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Election:

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year terms — including Councilwoman Melissa Smith’s ward 1, position 2 seat; Councilman Steve Hogan’s ward 2, position 2 seat; and Councilwoman Ellen Burton’s ward 3, position 2 seat.

Burton announced in late April that she does not intend to run for reelection this year.

In the Camas School District, school board members Corey McEnry’s and Erika Cox’s four-year district 1 and district 2 seats are open. Cox and McEnry have both registered with the PDC as mini-reporting candidates (those raising less than \$5,000 during a campaign) for the 2021 elections — McEnry on Feb. 21, and Cox on March 19.

The Port of Camas-Washougal also has two open commissioner posi-

tions this year: the four-year term district 1 seat held by Commissioner John Spencer and the four-year district 3 seat held by Commissioner Larry Keister.

Voters in the East County Fire and Rescue district, which covers emergency medical and fire calls in rural areas north of Camas and Washougal, also have choices to make in this year’s elections. The ECFR District has two, six-year commission seats open in 2021, including position 3, currently held by Commissioner Mike Berg; and position 5, currently held by Commissioner Sherry Petty.

The top two candidates will go on to compete in the general election on Nov. 2. Because the local councils, schools boards, port commission and fire district commission are all considered nonpartisan offices, a primary election will only be held in the case of more than two candidates vying for the same position. If

only one or two people are running, there is no primary election and the candidates will only compete in the November general election.

Voters can choose to write-in the name of a candidate for any position, but write-in candidates must submit a declaration of write-in candidacy to have officials count their votes. Camas’ mayor, Barry McDonnell, won his 2019 campaign as a write-in candidate.

Candidates can declare their intention to run in-person, online or via mail. Due to the ongoing pandemic, county election officials are urging candidates to declare online at clarkvotes.org; or by mail to Clark County Elections, P.O. Box 8815, Vancouver, WA 98666. Mail-in declarations must arrive no later than 5 p.m. May 21. Online declarations must be made by 4 p.m. May 21, and in-person candidates who choose to go to the county elections office in Vancouver must declare by 5 p.m. May 21.

County elections staff will hold a drawing shortly after 5 p.m. May 21 to determine the order of candidates on the ballot. Candidates must submit information for the Voter’s Pamphlet by 5 p.m. May 28. Candidates have until 5 p.m. May 24 to withdraw. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/vw88sshv.

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CAMAS-WASHOUGAL POST-RECORD

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Chaos at school board meeting ends in arrest

Washougal officials cancel meeting, call police after attendees refuse to wear masks, vandalize board members' cars

By Doug Flanagan
Post-Record staff writer

Washougal School Board members said they were forced to end their May 11 meeting early after several residents — who had been asked to leave the in-person meeting after they refused to wear face cov-

erings in accordance with the school district's COVID-19 safety protocols — began writing on district windows and board members' cars parked outside the meeting room.

"There was an incident with some individuals being disruptive by refusing to wear masks, yelling and writing on windows with

washable window markers," Washougal Police Chief Wendi Steinbronn said. "The main problem person was criminally cited for disorderly conduct, and all three were trespassing on the property."

Washougal Police Department officer Ashley Goulding arrested Camas resident Tatyana Stepa-

nyuk on disorderly conduct charges, and issued trespass warnings to Stepanyuk and Washougal residents Patricia Bellamy and Melissa Meilwain.

Board president Cory Chase ended the meeting early, saying he wanted "to allow the board and staff to contact law enforcement and work with them to

deal with the vandalism of the building and cars."

"Most of the board members and many staff members wrote statements about the incident for law enforcement and needed time to consult with the responding officers," said Chase, a Port of Portland police officer. "While I do not believe we were in dan-

ger, the escalating pattern of behavior by these individuals, in my judgement, warranted the vote by the board to stop the meeting to involve the Washougal police rather than trying to finish the agenda."

Goulding wrote in a post-incident report that when

See Meeting, page A9

Washougal High School plans in-person ceremony for class of 2021

'Cautious, but excited'



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY RENE CARROLL, COURTESY OF WASHOUGAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community members celebrate Washougal High seniors during a senior car parade on Main Street in downtown Washougal on June 5, 2020. The school district debuted the senior parade in 2020 after it was forced to cancel its traditional, in-person graduation ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The parade was so successful, the Washougal School District has decided to make it an annual tradition.

School district will host outside event 'rain or shine' on June 12

By Doug Flanagan
Post-Record staff writer

Mary Templeton's main concern about the Washougal School District's plans for its upcoming in-person graduation ceremony doesn't have anything to do with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We just hope it doesn't rain," said Templeton, the district's superintendent. "That's something that we can't control. I don't think we're going inside. If it's raining on us and we have a plan and we can be in-person to celebrate our wonderful seniors, we're just going to get our hair wet. That's just how it's going to have to be."

Rain or shine, the district will celebrate its class of 2021 with a graduation ceremony at Fishback Stadium on June 12.

"We're really excited about it," said Washougal High School principal Sheree Clark. "We're being cautious about it, but we also understand that people want to have a graduation outdoors. We're definitely taking all the mitigating factors (into consideration) to make sure that it's safe. But we're trying to make sure that we have as much there that would be at a traditional graduation as possible. It's costing a little bit more, and it's taking a little bit more work, but it's worth it for us to provide this for our kids."

Templeton said she believes an outdoor ceremony is "doable" for the district.

"We, of course, are looking to the governor, and we'll see what he does ... and there are some caveats -- if we were to go back to Phase 2 -- that we would still be able to do in-person," she said. "By gum, we're going to get those children on a stage of some nature. They might get 'air high-fives' instead of handshakes, but we want to celebrate our kids. We're excited about the opportunity that we have right now with the safety guidelines."

Every graduating student at Washougal High will re-

See Graduation, page A6

Camas OKs consultant to review fire merger

City officials have clashed over funding formula for joint Camas-Washougal Fire Department

By Kelly Moyer
Post-Record editor

The city of Camas has selected an outside consultant to review the merger of Camas' and Washougal's fire departments.

The Tualatin, Oregon-based Merina + CO will meet with stakeholders, conduct a facilitated analysis of the decade-long partnership between the cities' fire departments that formed the existing Camas-Washougal Fire Department in December 2013, and develop recommendations for the future of fire and emergency medical services in the Camas-Washougal area.

The Camas City Council unanimously approved the \$94,770 contract with Merina + CO at the council's Monday, May 17 meeting.

City leaders in Camas and Washougal hope the consultants will help find a solution that allows the fire department to meet the community's growth and increased needs without putting financial strain on any one jurisdiction. "The cost-sharing formula that forms the basis of the CWFD merger has created friction in the partnership, and has, at times, threatened the continuance of it," CWFD Fire Chief Nick Swinhart told city councilors this week. "Both cities have expressed frustration at their inability to fund the necessary growth of the fire department."

City council members in Camas and Washougal have urged the type of facilitated review that Merina + CO will undertake over the next several months, Swinhart said.

"We believe the agreement has been very good for both cities," the fire chief added, "but there have been some bumps in the road, particularly when it comes to the cost-sharing formula being equitable. There are concerns on both sides, in both cities."

See Merger, page A2

Camas Council starts hunt for interim mayor

Voters will name Barry McDonnell's replacement Nov. 2

By Kelly Moyer
Post-Record editor

Following last week's surprise resignation of Camas Mayor Barry McDonnell, the Camas City Council said it will soon select an interim mayor to guide the city through the Nov. 2 general election, when Camas voters will select McDonnell's replacement.

According to Camas Communications Director Bryan Rachal, the city will announce more details about the vacancy and the

application process "in the coming weeks."

"The city will accept applications for the vacancy for three weeks following the public announcement, or longer should the city council determine it is needed," Rachal stated in a news release sent Friday, May 14. "The applicants will then be interviewed at a special meeting of the city council, with only council members being involved in the process per the applicable provisions of the Revised Code of Washington."

Mayor Pro Tem Ellen Burton appointed an ad hoc committee consisting of City Administrator Jamal Fox and councilmem-

See Mayor, page A2

Camas business owner secures grant for garden

Community, Page A5



Washougal wrestler eyes 'iron' prize

Sports, Page A6

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Drug rehab opponents file petition for reconsideration

Prune Hill neighbors insist Discover Recovery should not go next to school

By Kelly Moyer
Post-Record editor

Opponents of a proposed drug rehabilitation facility in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood are challenging a recent hearings examiner decision granting the facility a conditional-use permit.

Camas Hearings Examiner Joe Turner ruled in favor of the Discover Recover substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation center's conditional-use permit on April 28, paving the way for Discover Recovery's owners to convert the former Fairgate Estate assisted living center into a 15-bed rehabilitation center geared toward working professionals seeking help for substance



KELLY MOYER/POST-RECORD FILES

A "No Drug Detox Next to Dorothy Fox" sign stands at the corner of Northwest 28th Avenue and Northwest Utah Street, across from the Camas elementary school, on March 16, 2021.

abuse disorders.

The 2.39-acre Fairgate Estate property is located next to the Dorothy Fox

See Rehab, page A8

Rehab:

From page A1

Elementary School, the city of Camas' Dorothy Fox Park and the Harvest Community Church at 2213 N.W. 23rd Ave., in a residential zone intended for single-family homes that also allows for a variety of conditional uses, including "nursing, rest or convalescent homes."

Discover Recovery, a company that has operated a 40-bed inpatient drug treatment and rehabilitation center in Long Beach, Washington, since 2018, applied for the conditional-use permit on Jan. 21.

By the end of February, hundreds of Prune Hill neighbors had come together online to oppose the rehabilitation facility, form the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance, sign a petition opposing the placement of a drug rehab in Prune Hill and raise more than \$5,000 on GoFundMe to pay for an appeal if Turner ruled in favor of the Discover Recovery conditional-use permit.

At a March 24 public hearing before Turner, dozens of Prune Hill residents urged the hearings examiner to deny Discover Recovery's permit based on a city requirement that the proposed conditional use "not be materially detrimental to the public welfare."

Many of the opponents voiced concerns that Discover Recovery patients might leave the facility without medical advice and interact with children at the nearby park, church or elementary school.

Brian Lewellan, a pro bono attorney representing the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance, told Turner on March 24 that "no one with any common sense would site that center right next to an elementary school."

On May 12, Lewellan filed a petition for reconsideration on behalf of the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance, arguing Discover Recovery's permit should be reconsidered and denied for three main reasons: that the proposed use is "materially detrimental to public welfare;" that Turner's final order "relies on speculative and unsubstantiated assertions and conclusions, which are not grounded in facts presented in the record;" and because Turner's decision "uses improper or invalid tests to exclude or otherwise discount evidence presented by (the Safety Alliance) and others."

Turner ruled in April that the opponents who spoke at the March hearing — many of whom said they worried patients at the 15-bed rehabilitation center would harm children at the nearby elementary school or at the Harvest church's preschool — provided "speculative or unsubstantiated concerns" that were not relevant to his consideration of the conditional-use permit.

Lewellan, however, argued in his petition for reconsideration that the concerns presented by members of the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance at the March hearing before Turner were "grounded in truth and based upon specific events that actually happened."

"DFSA's concerns about citing the detox center next to a school, park, church and homes are neither unsubstantiated nor generalized," Lewellan argues in the petition. "DFSA presented the Hearings Examiner with numerous and specifically documented cases where intoxicated, suicidal and mentally ill patients fled Discover Recovery's other detox center without notice, with or without their belongings, for whatever reason at



KELLY MOYER/POST-RECORD FILES

Owners of Discover Recovery, a substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation center, hope to site a holistic, 15-bed treatment center at the former Fairgate Estate assisted living center (pictured) in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood.

any time of day or night. Those are not generalized or unsubstantiated fears. Those events happened. ... They are not based on common displeasure for detox centers or some whimsically implausible story of impending doom. These things happened and there is no condition that can be placed on this conditional use permit (to keep it) from happening in the future, if approved."

Turner's final order set several conditions for the conditional-use permit, including: building a 6-foot solid fence around the property; installing staff-monitored security cameras; designating an outdoor patient-use area within the fenced portion of the site; using no more than six of the 15 beds for "subacute detoxification services;" prohibiting Level 4 detoxification — the highest level of drug detoxification, which includes 24-hour treatment and a high level of medical monitoring; requiring staff to have 24-hour surveillance of all patients and perform routine bed checks at 30-minute intervals; requiring patients undergo criminal background checks prior to being admitted; prohibiting registered sex offenders or any patient who has been convicted of a violent crime from receiving treatment at the facility; and not providing court-mandated treatment.

Additionally, to maintain its conditional-use permit, Discover Recovery must, for the first three years, produce an annual report to the city of Camas that includes brief descriptions of all discharges against medical advice as well as any safety measures used at the center or police incidents; and meet on an annual basis with representatives from the city of

Camas, the Camas School District, Harvest Community Church (located next to Fairgate Estate) and three designated neighborhood representatives to discuss the annual reports and address safety concerns.

Finally, Turner ruled that patients at the Discover Recovery center will not be allowed to leave the facility "without direct staff supervision" and that the center's staff must immediately report any patient who has left the facility against treatment advice to the Camas Police Department.

Thomas Feldman, one of the owners of Discover Recovery who plans to relocate his young family to Southwest Washington soon, told the Post-Record in early May that he believed Turner's decision was "very thorough" and had no concerns complying with all of the stipulations in the agreement.

In the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance's petition for reconsideration, Lewellan listed 11 supplemental conditions opponents believe should be added to the Discover Recovery conditional-use permit, if Turner rejects the petition for reconsideration, including:

- Setting up and maintaining a text-based emergency notification system to notify residents in the area if a patient leaves the location unsupervised and against medical advice;
- Meeting on a quarterly, as opposed to annually, with neighborhood, city and school district representatives;
- Providing the number of patients that would need to leave against medical advice before the city would revoke the conditional-use permit;
- Defining the specific security system Discover Recovery plans to use;
- Requiring Discover Recovery to pay for and provide "a properly trained security guard to be stationed on the sidewalk in front of the detox facility location during times of the day when schoolchildren are walking to and from Dorothy Fox Elementary;"
- Installing a motion alarm or other device to notify staff and nearby residents "that a patient has breached the fence line;"
- Clarification that the facility will not admit patients convicted of sexual misconduct, indecent exposure, resisting arrest, solicitation, prostitution, sex trafficking, rape, attempted rape, domestic violence, interpersonal violence, intimate partner violence, domestic battery, sexual assault or battery, child abuse, menacing, robbery, kidnapping, attempted

kidnapping, manslaughter, assault and/or murder" or patients who have existing protective or restraining orders against them;

• Designating an independent, third-party medical administrator to "periodically review medical charts, contents of patients' background checks, Washington State Department of Health records" and other information for the first three years of operation;

• Having a requirement that the facility notify nearby residents "of the times and locations of all off-site field trips," and that supervised field trips with patients "should not occur shortly before or after school when children are walking to and from Dorothy Fox Elementary;"

• Providing for a "properly trained security guard to be onsite 24 hours a day, seven days a week," and

• "Reimbursing nearby residents for the costs associated with purchasing and installing privacy film on their windows," as Fairgate Estate rooms "look directly into some homes' bedrooms and common living areas."

Opponents call out city council: 'There's one group who could make all the difference, but they've been absolutely silent'

Lewellan, an environmental litigation attorney, told the Post-Record this week that he decided to take the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance's fight on pro bono after seeing a man pulling up "No Detox Near Dorothy Fox" signs while walking his son home from the elementary school this winter.

"I didn't have a petition on the detox center one way or another," Lewellan said, "but then I saw someone was taking away people's rights to speak their minds. I went on Nextdoor and there were people on there saying they were looking for a lawyer, that, 'Please, we're just a bunch of citizens who want to speak up for our rights,' and I thought, 'Yeah, someone does need to speak up and help.' So I reached out to the person who was the head of the Alliance and said, 'If you're still looking for a lawyer, I'll do it for free.'"

Lewellan describes the Safety Alliance, which gathered more than 1,500 signatures against siting the Discover Recovery center near an elementary school, as "a small group of citizens ... who know we're up against a developer who

paid over \$2 million for that property ... and who know the chips are stacked against us."

The attorney said many Safety Alliance neighbors believe there are a group of people who could help them in their fight to stop the drug rehabilitation facility from coming into the Prune Hill location — and that is the Camas City Council.

"They're the one group who could make all the difference," Lewellan said, "but, so far, they have been absolutely silent in this fight. They've written the code this way ... and then said they weren't going to adjudicate it and sent it to (the Hearings Examiner). They have been silent when we need them to speak on our behalf. And their silence is deafening."

Lewellan added that some of the elected officials on the city council have said they have been instructed by the city's attorney to not say anything while the matter is still being decided by the hearings examiner and — if the opponents decide to push the matter even further — by a state superior court judge.

"That's shocking to me because I thought, when they took the oath of office to represent our city, that the primary purpose and function of their positions was to protect the security of their citizens," Lewellan said. "But no, the No. 1 priority is to make sure they protect themselves."

The attorney added that he suspects members of the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance will eventually bring the issue of conditional-use permits for similar drug treatment facilities before the city council and push for changes at the city level.

"I suspect we will want to make sure this situation doesn't happen again," Lewellan said.

Camas Senior Planner Sarah Fox said the city would allow a similar facility to be built without a conditional-use permit in several zones, including multi-family, regional commercial, mixed-use, downtown commercial and community commercial zones. The facility would be allowed in other zones with a conditional-use permit. Only one zone, the city's industrial zone, would not allow the facility, Fox said during the March hearing.

Although many of the opponents have claimed they would like to see a drug treatment center sited in Camas, none have pointed to specific areas of the city that might be able to accommodate a small, holistic treatment and rehabilitation center for professionals like the one Discover Recovery has proposed at Fairgate Estate.

"I believe there's a real opportunity for public-private cooperation here, and to site (a drug rehabilitation center) in a place that makes sense for their business and is also right for the citizens of Camas," Lewellan said this week. "Those two outcomes, however, are not possible when it's sited right next to an elementary school."

Turner has 45 days to issue a decision on the opponents' request for reconsideration.

Feldman, of Discover Recovery, did not respond to the Post-Record's request for comment in time for this paper's deadline.





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Judge rules against Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance

Decision upholds city's hearings examiner; paves way for drug treatment center in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record staff writer

A Clark County Superior Court judge has ruled against the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance in its land-use appeal against the city of Camas, paving the way for the Discover Recovery substance abuse treatment and recovery facility to operate in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood. Superior Court Judge Suzan L. Clark submitted her decision on Jan. 26, upholding "in all respects" a Camas hearings examiner's decision to grant a conditional-use permit to

the owners of Discover Recovery, a company hoping to open an inpatient substance abuse recovery center on a 2.39-acre Prune Hill property known as Fairgate Estates — a property that has been used as a bed and breakfast, wedding venue and, most recently, assisted living center. Discover Recovery, which has operated a 40-bed, inpatient drug rehabilitation center in Long Beach, Washington, since 2018, applied for a conditional-use permit to operate at the Camas site on Jan. 21, 2021. Within a few weeks of the company's announcement, the DFSA's anonymous founders built a website,

insinuating online that future Discover Recovery patients might kidnap or murder children at the nearby Dorothy Fox Elementary School, circulated a petition opposing the drug rehabilitation center, formed a limited liability corporation, opened a GoFundMe to raise money for legal fees and placed "No Drug Rehab Next to Dorothy Fox" signs throughout the Prune Hill neighborhood. On March 24, 2021, Camas Hearings Examiner Joe Turner held a public hearing to consider Discover Recovery's conditional-use permit application. The hearing drew 106 attendees and 27 people testified

for and against the drug treatment center, with many opponents arguing the proposed use would be "materially detrimental to the public welfare." DFSA members voiced unfounded concerns during the March 24 hearing that Discover Recovery patients would leave the facility against medical advice and harm children in the neighborhood. On April 28, Turner ruled the facility does comply with city code and should be granted a conditional-use permit. The hearings examiner also

See Treatment, page A2

Camas eyes zoning limits on drug rehabs

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record staff writer

A proposal that would severely limit where drug and alcohol treatment and recovery centers — as well as transitional "sober living" homes — can operate in the city of Camas will soon make its way to the Camas City Council. The Camas Planning Commission held a public hearing on the issue on Jan. 19, and unanimously agreed to pass the proposed code changes on to the city council for their consideration.

If the city council approves the city code changes OK'd by the planning commissioners, any facility functioning "as a residence, day-treatment facility or combination" of the two that "provides support services including, but not limited to, counseling, rehabilitation, and medical supervision for the need of drug or alcohol treatment" would be prevented from operating within the city's single-family residential, multi-family residential, mixed-use, neighborhood commercial and downtown commercial zones.

The city also would prohibit such facilities from operating "within 1,000 feet of public and private schools, public parks, public libraries, other (drug and alcohol treatment facilities), or similar uses" under the proposed code changes.

The commissioners also asked city staff to include "sober living homes" — which allow people in recovery to live in a supportive, drug- and alcohol-free group setting — to the proposed code changes, and approved a code change excluding substance abuse treatment facilities from being considered under the city's definition of a "nursing, rest or convalescent home."

Camas Planning Manager Robert Maul told planning commissioners in November 2021, that city officials had asked city staff to look into the issue. Maul later clarified that Mayor Steve Hogan, then a city council member, asked in April 2021 if staff could look into the issue of zon-

See Zoning, page A5



Dorothy Fox students created groundhog-inspired art, posed for photos and voted on whether Punxsutawney Phil would see his shadow during a Groundhog Day celebration on Feb. 2, 2022.

'Groundhog ambassador' brings East Coast tradition to Camas

Dorothy Fox teacher Julie Savelesky gets entire school in on Groundhog Day fun

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record staff writer

When Camas elementary school teacher Julie Savelesky says she's a "groundhog ambassador," she's not hyperbolizing.

Savelesky even has the plaque from the Chamber of Commerce in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania — home of the famed, season-predicting groundhog known as Punxsutawney Phil, "The Great Seer of all Seers" — to prove it.

"Yes, I'm a groundhog ambassador," Savelesky recently told The Post-Record, breaking into laughter. "I spread the joy of Groundhog Day whenever I can and as often as I can."

This year, Savelesky, a second-grade teacher at Dorothy Fox Elementary, got her entire school community together to celebrate Groundhog Day on Feb. 2.

"There were lots of lessons leading up to the day," she says. "We read stories about groundhogs and were writing about them. There were all kinds of arts and crafts and learning



Camas teacher and "groundhog ambassador" Julie Savelesky's parents, Sue and George Culp (pictured), were named Punxsutawney High's "groundhog queen and king" in 1964.

facts about groundhogs. The students learned that farmers hate them, but also look to them to see if they should plant their crops."

Groundhogs are not native to the Pacific Northwest, so Sav-

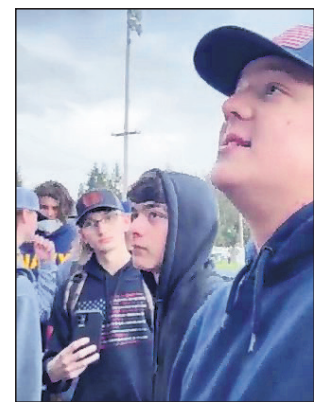
elsky brings photos and books and videos to help her students understand more about this fascinating, long-hibernating mammal.

This year, the teacher discovered that researchers are even studying groundhogs' lengthy hibernation cycles — which have been compared to a coma-like state, Savelesky said — to learn more about how science might allow humans traveling through deep space to go into a similar state of hibernation.

"They're really remarkable mammals," Savelesky said of the groundhog. "They can move up to 700 pounds of dirt and rock every day. And they're very clean animals. There are a lot of amazing facts about groundhogs out there."

And, thanks to Savelesky, many Dorothy Fox students leave second grade equipped to talk groundhogs — and Groundhog Day — with folks who grew up near Punxsutawney (including this reporter) and regularly

See Groundhog, page A5



Washougal students protest mask mandates at Fishback Stadium on Jan. 31, 2022.

'We're done with the masks'

Washougal High students protest COVID mandates

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
Post-Record staff writer

A group of Washougal students are protesting Washington state's mask mandates for K-12 schools.

The students, who call themselves the "Freedom Fighters of Washougal," are led by seniors Caleb Bennett, Harrison Tanner and Cade Costales.

"We are just trying to gain back our rights as citizens," Costales told his peers gathered at Fishback Stadium on Monday, Jan. 31. "The teachers, in the end, are just doing their jobs. (The mandates don't) come from them. They come from the state. Now, what we're hoping is that they kick us out. This sounds bad, but we're hoping that they kick us out, because they have to report that attendance to the state, and if the state sees a day when 100 or I don't even know how many kids are absent, they're going to start asking questions. ... They can suspend me, I don't care. We're done with the masks, and obviously all of you are, too."

A group of students — described by school administrators as "20 to 30 students" and by the "Freedom Fighters" as "75 to 100 kids" — showed up to Washougal High School on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 1-2, but refused to wear face coverings in accordance with state public health mandates meant to curb the spread of COVID-19.

After school staff denied the students entry into the

See Protest, page A3

Port reverses controversial permit decision

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
Post-Record staff writer

In response to pleas from several marina users, Port of Camas-Washougal commissioners have voted to reinstate a popular permit program that offers an annual permit for people who regularly use the launch ramp at the Parker's Landing Marina in Washougal.

A group of marina users

— including members of a nonprofit group that takes veterans fishing on the Columbia River — appealed to Port commissioners in January, telling them that paying a daily launch-ramp fee instead of being able to purchase the annual permit would greatly increase their costs.

On Feb. 2, the Port commissioners said they had taken the marina users' concerns to heart.

"We got some really

great feedback. It was so constructive," Port Commissioner Cassi Marshall said during a virtual Feb. 2 meeting. "It was a really great example of how the public process is supposed to work. We needed to give additional input and information to the community, and the community had some information to give back to us, but they did so really constructively. There were a lot of solution-oriented

suggestions, and it was a good conversation of pointing out what people did and didn't like about it and also trying to explain staff rationale for making the proposal. I'm appreciative of that."

The commissioners had voted to eliminate the annual permits during their June 16, 2021, virtual meeting, forcing boaters to pay a \$7 daily fee to launch their vessels from the marina's ramps.

This month, the commissioners agreed to bring the annual launch-ramp permit back for 2022 with a slight price increase. Instead of costing \$50 for the general public and \$35 for seniors and veterans, the 2022 permits will cost \$75 for the general public and \$50 for seniors and veterans.

"We're trying to cover our excess expenses,

See Permits, page A5



County Councilor Eileen Quiring O'Brien resigns

Clark County Councilor Eileen Quiring O'Brien last week stepped down from her position as chair of the council and announced her retirement from the county. Her last day will be March 1.

The council elected Councilor Karen Dill Bowerman, District 3 to serve as chair and Councilor Gary Medvigy, District 4 to serve as vice chair. Both positions take effect immediately and end Dec. 31, 2022.

Councilor O'Brien was first elected to the county council to represent District 4 and served from Jan. 1, 2017 to Dec. 31, 2018. She was elected council chair in a county-wide vote in November 2018 and began serving as chair in January 2019. Due to voter approved changes to the county charter, the chair of the council is now elected by council members at their first public meeting of each year. Due to another charter amendment, Councilor O'Brien currently is serving as representative of the newly created District 5. Her term ends Dec. 31, 2022.

The council will discuss filling Councilor O'Brien's seat at an upcoming council meeting. More information on the process will be forthcoming. Council meeting information is on the county website at clark.wa.gov/councilors/clark-county-council-meetings.

Councilor O'Brien said she is looking forward to spending more time with her family and grandchildren when she retires. "It's been an honor and privilege to serve the people of Clark County," said O'Brien.

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Treatment:

From page A1

set a few additional rules in his decision, including 24-hour surveillance of all patients; routine bed checks at 30-minute intervals; criminal background checks on all patients; a 6-foot solid fence around the property; no admittance for sex offenders or a patient who has been convicted of a violent crime or been court-mandated to seek treatment for their substance-abuse disorder; annual meetings with city, school and neighborhood representatives; and reporting to Camas police if a patient leaves against medical advice.

The extra requirements, however, did not sway the facility's opponents. In May, the DFSA filed a request for reconsideration and proposed even more conditions they would like to see connected to the conditional-use permit, including a requirement that Discover Recovery have a security guard posted at the facility at all times and more frequent meetings with city and neighborhood representatives.

Turner denied the petition for reconsideration on May 24, 2021. In October 2021, the DFSA, led by attorney Brian Lewallen, filed an appeal in Clark County Superior Court through the state's Land Use Petitions Act (LUPA), asking the court to review the city of Camas' hearing examiner's decision.

On the group's website, DFSA members said they believed the group's best chance of overturning Turner's decision was to take the issue to superior court.

"Unlike the Hearings Examiner assigned to this case, a Superior Court Judge will carefully consider ALL evidence and arguments in this case before making a ruling," the group wrote on its website.

Camas City Council member Leslie Lewallen, then a candidate for city council, wrote about the issue on her campaign site in the summer of 2021, stating: "My husband, Brian Lewallen, is the pro-bono attorney representing these citizens in their lawsuit against the City to stop this tragedy from taking place. My sister, Stephanie, is also co-counsel on the case. Last week, they filed a 50-page opening brief in Clark County Superior Court to reverse the decision of the hearing examiner. In this brief, they map out more than 60 errors committed by the Hearing Examiner."

Clark ruled the DFSA had failed "to show that the examiner did anything but weigh the evidence and reach a decision based on the evidence."

"The examiner clearly sets forth his reasoning and the evidence supporting it in his decision," Clark wrote. "The examiner's decision is affirmed in all respects."

Clark also ruled the DFSA's claim that the city had violated its members' due process rights was unproven: "DFSA fails to

meet its burden of showing that it was deprived of life, liberty or property, without due process of law," Clark wrote. "The strong level of participation in the process by the DFSA and the public at large indicates that adequate notice was given. DFSA and the public had an ample opportunity to be heard, as demonstrated by the record. ... DFSA has failed to establish any deprivation of cognizable property right protected by the constitutional due process guarantees."

The DFSA also contended the city had engaged in an unlawful procedure during Discover Recovery's pre-application process, arguing there were missing communications between the city and Discover Recovery between October and December 2020, despite available public records showing otherwise.

While city of Camas staff initially told Discover Recovery representatives they would likely need to go through a process involving public hearings before the city council if they applied as a "residential treatment facility" — something not in the city's code — Discover Recovery's representatives decided to go another route, arguing that, because Discover Recovery intended to "provide full-time care and treatment for individuals seeking to recover from disorders in the abuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances," the proposed use fell under the city's definition of "nursing, rest or convalescent home," listed as a conditional use in Camas' R-12 zones.



A "No Drug Detox Next to Dorothy Fox" stands in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood on March 16, 2021.

The state of Washington defines a convalescent home as a facility that "maintains and operates 24-hour skilled nursing services for the care and treatment of chronically ill or convalescent patients, including ... alcoholism."

Because Discover Recovery was now calling its facility a "convalescent home" instead of a "residential treatment facility" the applicants no longer needed to go through the public hearings process to change the city's code. They did, however, still need to get a conditional-use permit to operate a convalescent home in the former bed and breakfast turned assisted living center.

That was the issue Turner tackled in the spring of 2021, ruling in favor of granting Discover Recovery a conditional-use permit. Judge Clark upheld that decision, stating that, "because the proposed use meets the definition of a convalescent home, a (conditional-use permit) was the appropriate procedure."

The DFSA wrote on the group's website on Jan. 28, that they believed Judge Clark "unfortunately upheld the flawed and 'end-justifying-the-means' decision by the Hearings Examiner ... (in a) tough and complicated case."

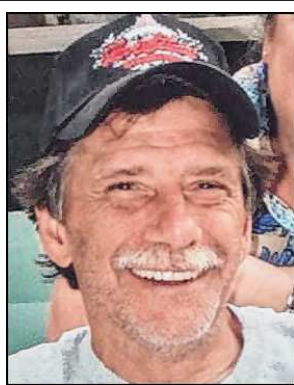
"As this is no longer under litigation, there is no legal reason why the city council cannot talk with citizens about what happened," the group stated on its website on Jan. 28.

The city's communications director, Bryan Rachal, said last week that the city is waiting to see if the DFSA will appeal Clark's decision before commenting on the case.

"There is a 30-day period following the entry of Judge Clark's ruling, during which DFSA may appeal to the Court of Appeals," Rachal said.

To date, the city of Camas has spent \$10,525 on attorney's fees related to the case, according to Rachal. The DFSA raised nearly \$30,000 through GoFundMe to pay for legal fees.

OBITUARIES



DUANE IVES
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Duane passed away far too young, in his home, surrounded by his loving family, after losing his fight with cancer. He was born and raised in Spokane, WA, to Hazel and William F. Ives who preceded him in death. He married his Junior High School sweetheart before serving his country for 7 years in the US Army. In 1983 he moved his family and became a longtime resident of Washougal, WA. He is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Tammy; two daughters with spouses, Jennifer (Jon) and Jamie (Ben) who between them gave him five grandchildren, Ethan, Dillon, Rylee, Braydon and Sydney; and an older brother, William C. He was a strong presence in our lives and will be forever missed. A remembrance gathering is scheduled at The Outpost, located at 573 30th St. Washougal, WA on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at 3:00.

DEATH NOTICES

Branum, Gail Marguerite, 68, Washougal, died Jan. 28, 2022. Brown's Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

Haight, Eric John Charles, 84, Washougal, died Feb. 4, 2022. Brown's Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

Hubbard, Donna R., 74, Washougal, died Feb. 6, 2022. Straub's Funeral Home & Columbia River Cremation, 360-834-4563.

Nickelson, Wendy G., 72, Vancouver, died Jan. 24,

2022. Straub's Funeral Home & Columbia River Cremation, 360-834-4563.

Nowlin, Shane Jack, 54, Vancouver, died Jan. 30, 2022. Brown's Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

O'Harra, Michelle M., 55, Vancouver, died Feb. 1, 2022. Straub's Funeral Home & Columbia River Cremation, 360-834-4563.

Sadewasser, Dana Lenore, 34, Vancouver, died Jan. 26, 2022. Brown's Funeral

Home, 360-834-3692.

Slesh, Isabella E., 80, Vancouver, died Jan. 21, 2021. Straub's Funeral Home & Columbia River Cremation, 360-834-4563.

Whitten, Ronald H., 61, Washougal, died Jan. 25, 2022. Straub's Funeral Home & Columbia River Cremation, 360-834-4563.

Yackell, Paul Ernest, 55, Washougal, died Feb. 1, 2022. Brown's Funeral Home, 360-834-3692.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Camas City Council: The Council will hold its second day of its 2022 annual planning conference during a remote meeting at 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 11. For more information, visit cityofcamas.us/your-government/minuteagenda-video.

Camas School District: The school board will hold a workshop at 4:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 14 in the Dennison Board Room of the Zellerbach Adminis-

tration Center, 841 N.E. 22nd Ave., Camas. To send a written comment, email gail.gast@camas.wednet.edu. For more information about the meeting or how to watch or listen to the meeting, visit camas.wednet.edu/about-csd/school-board/meetings-minutes.

Washougal City Council: The Council will hold a remote workshop at 5 p.m. and remote regular meeting at 7 p.m. Monday,

Feb. 14. For more information about the agenda or about how to watch or listen to the meetings, visit cityofwashougal.us/129/Agendas-Minutes.

East County Fire and Rescue Board of Commissioners: The Board will meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15. Members of the public may attend this meeting by calling in to 253-215-8782. The meeting ID is 862 5779 5728 and the passcode is 946999. To view the meeting agenda, visit ecfr.us.

Port of Camas-Washougal: The Port Commission will hold a remote meeting at noon Wednesday, Feb. 16. Members of the public may attend by calling 253-215-8782. The meeting ID is 977 5197 8968 and the passcode is 091071. For more information, visit portcw.com.

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Judge rules against Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance

Decision upholds city's hearings examiner; paves way for drug treatment center in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record staff writer

A Clark County Superior Court judge has ruled against the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance in its land-use appeal against the city of Camas, paving the way for the Discover Recovery substance abuse treatment and recovery facility to operate in Camas' Prune Hill neighborhood. Superior Court Judge Suzan L. Clark submitted her decision on Jan. 26, upholding "in all respects" a Camas hearings examiner's decision to grant a conditional-use permit to

the owners of Discover Recovery, a company hoping to open an inpatient substance abuse recovery center on a 2.39-acre Prune Hill property known as Fairgate Estates — a property that has been used as a bed and breakfast, wedding venue and, most recently, assisted living center. Discover Recovery, which has operated a 40-bed, inpatient drug rehabilitation center in Long Beach, Washington, since 2018, applied for a conditional-use permit to operate at the Camas site on Jan. 21, 2021. Within a few weeks of the company's announcement, the DFSA's anonymous founders built a website,

insinuating online that future Discover Recovery patients might kidnap or murder children at the nearby Dorothy Fox Elementary School, circulated a petition opposing the drug rehabilitation center, formed a limited liability corporation, opened a GoFundMe to raise money for legal fees and placed "No Drug Rehab Next to Dorothy Fox" signs throughout the Prune Hill neighborhood. On March 24, 2021, Camas Hearings Examiner Joe Turner held a public hearing to consider Discover Recovery's conditional-use permit application. The hearing drew 106 attendees and 27 people testified

for and against the drug treatment center, with many opponents arguing the proposed use would be "materially detrimental to the public welfare." DFSA members voiced unfounded concerns during the March 24 hearing that Discover Recovery patients would leave the facility against medical advice and harm children in the neighborhood. On April 28, Turner ruled the facility does comply with city code and should be granted a conditional-use permit. The hearings examiner also

See Treatment, page A2

Camas eyes zoning limits on drug rehabs

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record staff writer

A proposal that would severely limit where drug and alcohol treatment and recovery centers — as well as transitional "sober living" homes — can operate in the city of Camas will soon make its way to the Camas City Council. The Camas Planning Commission held a public hearing on the issue on Jan. 19, and unanimously agreed to pass the proposed code changes on to the city council for their consideration.

If the city council approves the city code changes OK'd by the planning commissioners, any facility functioning "as a residence, day-treatment facility or combination" of the two that "provides support services including, but not limited to, counseling, rehabilitation, and medical supervision for the need of drug or alcohol treatment" would be prevented from operating within the city's single-family residential, multi-family residential, mixed-use, neighborhood commercial and downtown commercial zones.

The city also would prohibit such facilities from operating "within 1,000 feet of public and private schools, public parks, public libraries, other (drug and alcohol treatment facilities), or similar uses" under the proposed code changes.

The commissioners also asked city staff to include "sober living homes" — which allow people in recovery to live in a supportive, drug- and alcohol-free group setting — to the proposed code changes, and approved a code change excluding substance abuse treatment facilities from being considered under the city's definition of a "nursing, rest or convalescent home."

Camas Planning Manager Robert Maul told planning commissioners in November 2021, that city officials had asked city staff to look into the issue. Maul later clarified that Mayor Steve Hogan, then a city council member, asked in April 2021 if staff could look into the issue of zon-

See Zoning, page A5



Dorothy Fox students created groundhog-inspired art, posed for photos and voted on whether Punxsutawney Phil would see his shadow during a Groundhog Day celebration on Feb. 2, 2022.

'Groundhog ambassador' brings East Coast tradition to Camas

Dorothy Fox teacher Julie Savelesky gets entire school in on Groundhog Day fun

By **KELLY MOYER**
Post-Record staff writer

When Camas elementary school teacher Julie Savelesky says she's a "groundhog ambassador," she's not hyperbolizing.

Savelesky even has the plaque from the Chamber of Commerce in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania — home of the famed, season-predicting groundhog known as Punxsutawney Phil, "The Great Seer of all Seers" — to prove it.

"Yes, I'm a groundhog ambassador," Savelesky recently told The Post-Record, breaking into laughter. "I spread the joy of Groundhog Day whenever I can and as often as I can."

This year, Savelesky, a second-grade teacher at Dorothy Fox Elementary, got her entire school community together to celebrate Groundhog Day on Feb. 2.

"There were lots of lessons leading up to the day," she says. "We read stories about groundhogs and were writing about them. There were all kinds of arts and crafts and learning



Camas teacher and "groundhog ambassador" Julie Savelesky's parents, Sue and George Culp (pictured), were named Punxsutawney High's "groundhog queen and king" in 1964.

facts about groundhogs. The students learned that farmers hate them, but also look to them to see if they should plant their crops."

Groundhogs are not native to the Pacific Northwest, so Sav-

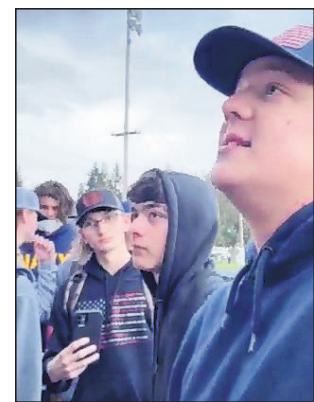
elsky brings photos and books and videos to help her students understand more about this fascinating, long-hibernating mammal.

This year, the teacher discovered that researchers are even studying groundhogs' lengthy hibernation cycles — which have been compared to a coma-like state, Savelesky said — to learn more about how science might allow humans traveling through deep space to go into a similar state of hibernation.

"They're really remarkable mammals," Savelesky said of the groundhog. "They can move up to 700 pounds of dirt and rock every day. And they're very clean animals. There are a lot of amazing facts about groundhogs out there."

And, thanks to Savelesky, many Dorothy Fox students leave second grade equipped to talk groundhogs — and Groundhog Day — with folks who grew up near Punxsutawney (including this reporter) and regularly

See Groundhog, page A5



Washougal students protest mask mandates at Fishback Stadium on Jan. 31, 2022.

'We're done with the masks'

Washougal High students protest COVID mandates

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
Post-Record staff writer

A group of Washougal students are protesting Washington state's mask mandates for K-12 schools.

The students, who call themselves the "Freedom Fighters of Washougal," are led by seniors Caleb Bennett, Harrison Tanner and Cade Costales.

"We are just trying to gain back our rights as citizens," Costales told his peers gathered at Fishback Stadium on Monday, Jan. 31. "The teachers, in the end, are just doing their jobs. (The mandates don't) come from them. They come from the state. Now, what we're hoping is that they kick us out. This sounds bad, but we're hoping that they kick us out, because they have to report that attendance to the state, and if the state sees a day when 100 or I don't even know how many kids are absent, they're going to start asking questions. ... They can suspend me, I don't care. We're done with the masks, and obviously all of you are, too."

A group of students — described by school administrators as "20 to 30 students" and by the "Freedom Fighters" as "75 to 100 kids" — showed up to Washougal High School on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 1-2, but refused to wear face coverings in accordance with state public health mandates meant to curb the spread of COVID-19.

After school staff denied the students entry into the

See Protest, page A3

Port reverses controversial permit decision

By **DOUG FLANAGAN**
Post-Record staff writer

In response to pleas from several marina users, Port of Camas-Washougal commissioners have voted to reinstate a popular permit program that offers an annual permit for people who regularly use the launch ramp at the Parker's Landing Marina in Washougal.

— including members of a nonprofit group that takes veterans fishing on the Columbia River — appealed to Port commissioners in January, telling them that paying a daily launch-ramp fee instead of being able to purchase the annual permit would greatly increase their costs.

On Feb. 2, the Port commissioners said they had taken the marina users' concerns to heart. "We got some really

great feedback. It was so constructive," Port Commissioner Cassi Marshall said during a virtual Feb. 2 meeting. "It was a really great example of how the public process is supposed to work. We needed to give additional input and information to the community, and the community had some information to give back to us, but they did so really constructively. There were a lot of solution-oriented

suggestions, and it was a good conversation of pointing out what people did and didn't like about it and also trying to explain staff rationale for making the proposal. I'm appreciative of that."

The commissioners had voted to eliminate the annual permits during their June 16, 2021, virtual meeting, forcing boaters to pay a \$7 daily fee to launch their vessels from the marina's ramps.

This month, the commissioners agreed to bring the annual launch-ramp permit back for 2022 with a slight price increase. Instead of costing \$50 for the general public and \$35 for seniors and veterans, the 2022 permits will cost \$75 for the general public and \$50 for seniors and veterans.

"We're trying to cover our excess expenses,

See Permits, page A5



Groundhog:

From page A1

celebrated Punxsutawney Phil's sunrise emergence from his burrow on "Gobbler's Knob" every Feb. 2, to see if he would "predict" six more weeks of East Coast winter or an early spring. This year, at 7:25 a.m. (Eastern Time Zone) on Feb. 2, Punxsutawney Phil "the seer of seers, the prognosticator of all prognosticators," emerged for the 136th time (legend holds that Phil is gifted with immortality "sustained by drinks of groundhog punch, the elixir of life," according to Groundhog.org, but most groundhogs live about five years) and, after being placed on top of a stump, cast a long shadow, predicting six more weeks of winter — at least for people living in western and central Pennsylvania.

The Dorothy Fox second-graders had helped decorate their school with groundhog-themed art and posters — and had their own predictions about what Phil might predict about spring or winter weather.

"The kids have so much fun. There's a lot of laughter," Savelesky says of the annual celebration inside her Dorothy Fox classroom. "And, this year, we got the whole school involved."

Being a groundhog ambassador comes naturally to Savelesky. The 48-year-old teacher's parents, George and Sue Culp, grew up in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, and were voted their high school's 1964 "Groundhog King and Queen."

Savelesky grew up in Connecticut, but regularly visited her grandparents in Punxsutawney and grew up learning all about groundhogs, Phil and the annual Groundhog Day festivities in the

small western Pennsylvania town.

"My grandmother nominated me to be a groundhog ambassador, and the Chamber of Commerce gave me my official certificate in 1995."

Savelesky took her role seriously — spreading groundhog facts far and wide during her college years in Virginia, grad school days in Portland and, of course, in her teaching jobs in Hawaii and, since 1999, in Camas.

"It's fun and I love talking about them," Savelesky says. "This is what my mom did and it's what I do. I love to have fun with learning, and being a groundhog ambassador allows me to do that."

Savelesky's family, which includes her two children — a 10th-grader at Hayes High School and a sixth-grader at Skyridge Middle School — has a Groundhog Day tradition involving the baking of groundhog-shaped cookies, which Savelesky dips in vanilla (for an early spring) and chocolate (to represent the groundhog seeing his shadow and predicting six more weeks of winter weather).

"You make a wish and get a cookie," Savelesky says. "Depending on how the person eats it determines if their wish comes true."

The teacher usually shares her special groundhog-shaped cookies with her second-graders and other Dorothy Fox staff, but says the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily stymied that tradition.

"That's OK. Maybe next year," she says of bringing the cookies to her classroom. "It was still so much fun this year. The whole school got involved and we had a huge shindig."

To learn more about Punxsutawney Phil and Groundhog Day, visit groundhog.org.

Zoning:

From page A1

ing and substance abuse treatment facilities.

"We were formerly directed to start work on a proposed code change by then-Mayor Ellen Burton and Interim City Administrator Jeff Swanson in the early fall (2021)," Maul said. "The delay was ... based on the status of the lawsuit at the time."

"We were directed by (the city) council to look at language for drug and alcohol detox facilities," Maul told planning commissioners during the commission's Nov. 16, 2021, meeting.

He added then that the city was still in litigation over a proposed drug and alcohol facility — the Discover Recovery facility that was granted a conditional-use permit to operate in Camas' Prune Hill residential neighborhood in the site of a former assisted living home and that recently had this decision upheld by a Clark County Superior Court judge — so staff could not discuss that project with planning commissioners, but that city officials wanted to "make sure siting of future (drug and alcohol treatment) facilities are not next to schools, parks, things like that."

The state considers drug and alcohol treatment centers to be "essential facilities" so the city could not ban them outright, Maul told the commissioners.

"We are, by law, required to provide for essential facilities," Maul said in November 2021. "We can't prohibit via no possibility through zoning."

Some of the planning commissioners seemed to agree with Camas residents who have contended, without proof, that patients seeking treatment at drug and alcohol recovery centers pose a danger to children in nearby schools.

"I think it's important that we take our time with this," Camas Planning Commissioner Georri Niles, a pastor and executive director of Ascend International Ministries, said during the commission's November 2021 meeting. "We have the ability to look at something that's come to light ... we're dealing with a subject people have been very voiceful and want to provide in our city, but not on the doorsteps of where it could be dangerous. We have to take that very carefully."

Other commissioners seemed hesitant to ban the facilities from so many of the city's zones.

"I totally support not having (drug treatment centers) around any schools, but want to make sure that zoning is not (so) limited that there's no way to have this facility in town," Planning Commissioner Mahsa Eshghi commented during the Nov. 16, 2021, meeting. "It's good to add limitation(s) and make sure they're not in certain areas, but want to make sure we have some areas that those centers can be open."

A few weeks later, during the planning commission's Dec. 21, 2021, meeting, Eshghi brought the issue up once more.

"With the limited areas we have, some are so expensive I would say it's not affordable for these types of facilities to be built in these areas," she said. "I think we should think about where we want that facility to be. Maybe think about some residential, too. To me, I think business parks or light industrial are good areas for this facility. They're more

affordable, more outside or residential or school zoning. But there are not that many."

As written, the city would ban the facilities and sober living homes from residential areas, mixed-use zones and some commercial zones, and would require a conditional-use permit in other zones, including the city's community and regional commercial, business park, light industrial/business park, light industrial and heavy industrial zones.

At the planning commission's public hearing on the code changes, held Jan. 19, attorney Brian Lewallen, the lawyer representing the Dorothy Fox Safety Alliance in its nearly yearlong fight against the 15-bed Discover Recovery drug and alcohol treatment center hoping to operate in Camas' Prune Hill, spoke in favor of the proposed code changes, and urged planning commissioners to change the wording in its proposed code amendment from "substance abuse treatment centers" to "residential treatment facilities" and to include sober living homes and transitional homes for people in recovery from drug and alcohol abuse to its proposed code changes.

"I would encourage the commission to consider putting (sober living homes) in the definition," Lewallen said. "That is a use that will be coming our way ... consider putting (sober living homes and transitional housing) in to make sure they're outside the 1,000-foot buffer."

Niles agreed. "Transitional housing is becoming more and more prevalent in our society," Niles said. "We don't want to deal with this in a year."

In the end, the planning commissioners voted to send the proposed code changes to the city council.

Maul said city staff is still researching the proposed code changes and preparing its staff report for the city council. He added that planning staff will likely bring the proposed changes to the Camas City Council during the council's March 7 work session. The city council will hold a public hearing on the matter before voting on the proposed code changes.

To read more about the planning commission's decision, visit The Post-Record online at camaspostrecord.com, where an extended version of this article will be published on Thursday, Feb. 10.

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Permits:

From page A1

which are growing faster than our revenues," said the Port's executive director, David Ripp, on Feb. 2. "We're going to look at ways of improving. I think for now, and even next year, we'll continue with the annual pass, but if we can find ways of improving it and making it easier, that's the direction that we'll recommend to the commission this June. We'll continue our discussion and see what happens. Moving forward, we're going to do a better job of communicating and improving our communication updates when we're looking at the marina."

Washougal resident Keith Hyde, a member of The Fallen Outdoors, a nonprofit organization that facilitates outdoor trips for veterans and active-duty military members, and the Columbia River Chapter of

Northwest Steelheaders, a group of anglers dedicated to the conservation of steelhead and salmon and advocating for public access, expressed appreciation for the reversal.

"Obviously, this has been an eye-opening and ear-opening dilemma for a lot of us," Hyde told the Port commissioners during the Feb. 2 meeting. "I think a lot of us learned a lot from this. ... That being said, I'm ecstatic that you have recommended that we go back (to annual permits) and I'm ecstatic that you're recommending that we could stay with some kind of annual fees or annual pass for next year. I can live with a modest increase."

Washougal resident Harry Barber told the commissioners he believes the cost increase seems excessive. But the commissioners said the majority of residents who spoke up about the issue seemed to support increasing the annual permit fees.

"I heard from a lot of people who said that since

we haven't had a price increase on these annual permits in a significant number of years, that they were OK with the increase if they could get the convenience of the permit," Marshall said. "I think some of that is what the staff was trying to address with this recommendation. The price hasn't gone up for these permits in quite some time. I do appreciate (Barber's) comment that this is kind of a big (increase), but it's also a little bit of a makeup for not having any increases for several years and trying to meet needs and keeping the convenience of the permits going."

Port commissioners will vote on marina fees for 2023 in June.

"To be clear, we're going to reinstate and increase the rates by a fair chunk for now and we'll be reevaluating the whole thing for next year (in June)," Port Commissioner John Spencer said. "I don't know what the change will be, but there will probably be more changes."

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ESD 112 Seeks Candidate to Fill Vacant Board Position

Posted: January 26, 2022

The Educational Service District 112 (ESD 112) Board of Directors is seeking applicants interested in filling the Director District #7 board position that encompasses the following districts: Roosevelt, Wishram, Centerville, Klickitat, Glenwood, Trout Lake, Lyle, White Salmon Valley, Mill A, Stevenson-Carson, Skamania, Washougal, Mount Pleasant, and Camas School Districts; and parts of the Evergreen School District.

ESD 112 is a regional service agency for schools in six Southwest Washington counties. The ESD board members are non-paid volunteers who attend monthly meetings normally held at the ESD headquarters in Vancouver, WA but are currently being held virtually via Zoom. The Director District #7 position appointment expires in January 2024.

Applicants must be a registered voter and reside within Director District #7 boundaries. Applicants may not be a board member or an employee of a public or private school district, Educational Service District, Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the State Board of Education.

Applicants interested in receiving an information packet or who have questions regarding the ESD board position and responsibilities may contact Sara Moore, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and ESD 112 Board of Directors, at (360) 952-3318 or via email at: sara.moore@esd112.org. Those interested in applying for the board position are asked to submit a letter of interest citing their reasons for seeking the position, as well as related service and/or educational background, a completed Declaration and Affidavit of Candidacy Form, and a biographical data form.

Completed application packets should be sent directly to:
Darlene Stickel, President, ESD 112 Board of Directors, C/O Sara Moore,
2500 NE 65th Avenue, Vancouver, WA 98661.
Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on February 11, 2022 or until a qualified candidate is appointed.

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