

# Theler's future may need more ideas

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FOR MASON COUNTY LIFE

After three months of meetings, the North Mason School District's Theler citizen advisory committee has made little progress on what the district should do with its property, to the consternation of some of its members and members of the public.

The school district formed the five-member citizen advisory committee in October to recommend solutions to Superintendent Dana Rosenbach for how the district should manage the financially troubled Mary E. Theler Community Cen-

ter and Wetlands.

The district inherited the community center in 1968 from Sam Theler, and the tenets of Theler's will, as well as the dismal financial state of the community center, have been topics hashed out in previous advisory board meetings.

"I see all of this and I see it going on and on and on," said advisory board member Bill Bernier, at the board's Jan. 8 meeting. "We need action. We've been coming through this for so long without anything happening."

Now, the advisory board plans to ask the district to submit a request for

more proposals to come in from entities wishing to manage or use the Theler community center, wetlands and classrooms.

Only one proposal, from the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center, has been submitted to the advisory board. Port of Allyn board member Scott Cooper said the port would submit a proposal once it knows what the advisory board was looking for in a proposal.

With a projected 2015 expense budget of \$85,434 and an income of only \$56,588, the Theler Center is operating with a shortfall of more than \$28,000 this year.

Approximately \$62,000 in expenses is for payroll for three part-time positions: a receptionist, groundskeeper and exhibit center staff person.

The expenses don't include money owed to the IRS in unpaid taxes.

The salmon center's draft proposal outlines a 10-year lease agreement between the salmon center and the school district, whereby the salmon center would lease Theler for \$1 per year.

However, due to Theler's budget shortfall, the salmon center's proposal would require the district to partially fund Theler with up to \$30,000 per year for the first three

years, while the salmon center works toward making Theler sustainable.

Advisory board member opinions differ on how detailed the request for proposals should be, with some members advocating for more general language that would not limit an agency's vision for the property, while still adhering to the district's legal obligations to Theler.

"My statement would be stop losing massive amounts of money," said advisory board member Kristina Schweigert.

Without more specific language, however, the advisory board could get proposals that have little to do with how the community center and wetlands have been previously used or how Sam Thel-

er intended the property to be used, said board member Richard Calvin.

"If we don't have a road map, we don't know where we're going," Calvin said. "We've been getting proposals without really knowing anything. We've spent since October getting nowhere."

Board chair Craig Patti said he would meet with the superintendent to find out the legal obligations the district needs to follow when sending out a request for proposals.

For more information on the Theler Advisory Board, visit [www.nmsd.wednet.edu/domain/644](http://www.nmsd.wednet.edu/domain/644).

The next Theler Advisory Board meeting is at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 22, at the North Mason School District board room.

## WSDOT explores options for US 101 repairs

HAMMA HAMMA - Drivers traveling on U.S. Highway 101 near the Mason/Jefferson county line can expect brief delays for several months as the Washington State Department of Transportation works to design repairs on a section of roadway.

Earlier this month, rain saturated a portion of the hillside below the highway along Hood Canal, resulting in damage to about 75 feet of the northbound US 101 shoulder.

Since Dec. 11, US 101 at milepost 316 has been reduced to one lane of alternating traffic and the speed limit has been reduced to 25 miles per hour.

"This repair will not be quick," said WSDOT chief engineering geologist Tom Badger. "The terrain and soils in this area are challenging. We've finished drilling to gather geologic data, and we'll use that data to evaluate repair options. In the meantime,



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to ensure motorist safety we're slowing drivers down and restricting them to the uphill lane."

Engineers are considering several repair solutions, all of which are extensive enough to require WSDOT to create a full project design and hire a contractor.


"We understand these temporary restrictions are inconvenient, and we appreciate drivers' patience as we work to design and build permanent repairs," said Kevin Dayton, WSDOT Olympic Region administrator.

The speed reduction

and the one-way alternating traffic will remain in place until permanent repairs are complete, which could take months. During that time, WSDOT will continue to monitor the area for any additional earth movement.

Drivers can expect delays for months as they travel US Highway 101 near the Mason and Jefferson county lines.

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