



GATEWAY

Fire station demolished to make room for \$15.5M facility

BY JULIA PARK
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The walls began coming down on Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One Station 51 on a rainy Monday morning, as crews prepare to build a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility the fire department says will help reduce response times and improve accommodations for their firefighters on-duty.

The new \$15.5 million station, paid through an \$80 million capital bond that voters approved in 2022, will replace an aging structure that's been remodeled four times since it was built and suffers from leaky roofing, according to Fire Chief Dennis Doan. The station was originally built in 1979 and its

last remodel was in 2000, per the Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One website.

Other projects funded by the bond include a new fire training facility and renovations to other fire stations in the district, The News Tribune reported. The department initially estimated that replacing Station 51 would cost over \$20 million, and the lower-than-expected bid they accepted means the department will have some money saved "to do some other projects on the back end, when we get there," Doan said.

Doan emphasized the fire department's gratitude to the community, fire commissioners and city leaders in a short ceremony before the excavator start-

SEE FIRE STATION, 2A



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Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One has over 100 career firefighters and serves a population of about 53,000 people on the Gig Harbor peninsula. The department has five fully-staffed, 24/7 stations, including Station 51 at 6711 Kimball Dr. in Gig Harbor, Wash.

Bill aims to get derelict boats removed more quickly

BY JULIA PARK
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It can take weeks, months or even years before deserted vessels are removed from the waters of Puget Sound. A bill in the state Legislature aims to change that.

House Bill 2199 was scheduled for executive session in the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources on Feb. 4. Lawmakers passed the bill out of its policy committee and onto the next step in the legislative process.

The bill aims to get derelict vessels removed more quickly, including by eliminating the requirement that public entities identify the owner before pulling boats out of the water, said state Rep. Adison Richards, District 26, the bill's primary sponsor. District 26 includes the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula areas as well as areas extending north to Bremerton.

"This happens too routinely ... where derelict vessels go under, or just left on the beach, and now it's the responsibility of taxpayers, apparently, to take care of it," he said. "And to me, that's not acceptable."

Several people spoke in favor of the bill at a public hearing before the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources Jan. 27, saying that the bill's changes to state law will lower the bar for agencies to act fast on boats that pose a risk to public safety and the environment. No one spoke against the bill at the hearing.

"Derelict vessels are not just an eyesore, they pose a real and escalating risk for fuel releases, debris fields, navigation hazards, shoreline damage and threats to our public safety," James Weaver, port manager for the Port of Poulsbo in Kitsap County, said at the hearing. "In many cases, by the time the existing statutory thresholds are met, this environmental harm has already occurred, and the public always bears the cost."

State law authorizes a number of public entities to take charge of abandoned or derelict vessels, including the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, metropolitan park

SEE BILL, 3A



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Pouneh Minovi Kaufman and Mandy Minovi purchased the property at 3216 Harborview Dr. in Gig Harbor, Wash. The building on-site is home to BlueWind Boutique, a furniture store with home decor.

Market with food, sundries planned for downtown Gig Harbor

BY JULIA PARK
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If all goes according to plan, Gig Harbor residents will have another place to pick up sundries and to-go items while strolling the waterfront by the end of this year, though a long-awaited supermarket has yet to appear.

A new specialty market, gather Gig Harbor, with plans to offer custom charcuterie and other pre-packaged items, is

expected to move into 3126 Harborview Dr. this year. It will be next to the former Heritage Distilling Co. space that will soon host a new bakery-deli-market of its own.

Pouneh Minovi Kaufman and Mandy Minovi, a mother-daughter duo, purchased the property earlier this year and have plans to open the market, called gather Gig Harbor, by fall, though they're still finalizing approvals with the city of Gig Harbor.

"Really, we want to make it your local market," Minovi

Kaufman said in a phone call Feb. 2. "You go in there, we want boaters and visitors (to) grab whatever they need. They can come in there for sunscreen. They can come in there for food. They can come in there for anything that they're looking for."

BlueWind Boutique, a furniture store with home decor, currently rents the property. It's not clear when gather Gig Harbor will open and BlueWind Boutique will close its doors, but the boutique's owner Amy Er-

icksen said in a phone call Feb. 4 that she is working with Minovi Kaufman on timelines.

"We're all working together to create a space to complement and support Gig Harbor's waterfront," Ericksen said. While speaking highly of Minovi Kaufman's concept, she expressed sadness to see BlueWind Boutique go — the store opened just last May. She hasn't been able to find another spot to move into with the limited space avail-

SEE MARKET, 3A

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