

The Carmel Pine Cone

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After two-month wait, post office lobby reopens

By MARY SCHLEY

NINE WEEKS after an elderly Pebble Beach woman crashed her car into the front of the Fifth Avenue post office — causing so much damage that that part of the building was declared unsafe — it reopened with a temporary fix Wednesday morning.

Last Thursday afternoon, planning director Brandon Miller, building official Jermel Laurie and building inspector Duane Dauphinee met with the local postmaster, Jorge Gonzalez, and “came to an agreement on a temporary solution that would get the lobby back open on the Fifth Avenue side,” Swanson said, so residents could finally be able to buy stamps, mail packages and use the other services that have been unavailable since the building was damaged.

The plan they developed called for walling off the damaged section of the lobby on both sides, while letting the public use the undamaged doors from Fifth Avenue and access the customer service area from the post office box vestibule.

Extraordinary measures

The building’s property management company, Manco Abbott, agreed to the construction, and Dauphinee and Laurie met with a representative from Cal Con Construction the next day. Work on

the temporary fix started Monday and wrapped up Tuesday afternoon, and the post office reopened for business at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

Swanson acknowledged the city’s involvement in what’s considered a private matter between the building

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PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Residents can once again buy stamps, mail packages and conduct other business at the post office, thanks to a temporary fix.

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owner, tenant, insurance company and contractor is unusual.

“I made the decision to break from typical protocol and insert the city into this matter, given the importance of the post office to the community and the amount of time it was taking,” he said. “Typically, the city does not get involved in landlord/tenant issues.”

But when people began mistakenly blaming the city for holding up the process when, in fact, the building owner, the Bing Sung Trust, has yet to even apply for a building permit, Swanson decided

company will shell out for the repairs.

“The landlord is waiting for the insurance company to approve the claim money before authorizing the contractor to finish the drawings and submit an application,” he said.

Laurie confirmed Wednesday that he still hasn’t received an application for a building permit but said the post office was again open for business as of 10 a.m. June 26 — nine weeks, to the day, after the collision.

