

KYRGYZSTAN: Volunteers are sought for another adventure

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and resume the relationship with this wonderful and very appreciative family.

This will be the third trip to Barskoon for Jack and MaryAnne, who have found helping families in this breathtaking country to be such a rewarding and fulfilling experience.

Sisters Habitat for Humanity is seeking adventurous volunteers to join the McDonnells. No building experience is required, only a desire to help a family in need of a decent home while learning about each other's cultures in the process.

Sisters Habitat contributes 10 percent of the net proceeds from the Thrift Store and ReStore to Habitat International for building homes overseas. Last year Sisters Habitat contributed \$10,000 to Kyrgyzstan. Since its inception, Sisters Habitat has contributed funds to build 97 homes abroad.

For more information on the upcoming build, contact Sharlene Weed at Sisters Habitat for Humanity at 541-549-1193, sharlene@sistershabitat.org, or info@sistershabitat.org; or MaryAnne and Jack at 541-549-6337 or jmjaaneho@msn.com.

GOALS: Staff is ready to take on additional work load

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Nancy Connelly; and councilors David Asson; Amy Burgstahler; and Andrea Blum.

Also there representing the City staff were: City Manager Andrew Gorayeb; Public Works Director Paul Bertagna; Community Development Director Patrick Davenport; outgoing Finance Director Lynne Fujita-Conrads; incoming Finance Director Joe O'Neill; and City Recorder Kathy Nelson. Three citizens came to watch City government in action.

Some of the goals are for work already undertaken, such as finalizing outstanding urban-renewal grants and establishing a forgivable loan program to help attract new traded-sector businesses to Sisters.

Prior to the meeting, each councilor had submitted his/her own list of priorities, which were then consolidated by the City Recorder to act as a template for discussion of goals by the Council. The proposed goals were organized under six categories: economic development; community development; city finances; improve connectivity; improve

community outreach; and City Manager/Administrator.

The far-ranging discussion considered a multitude of city issues, activities, and responsibilities, clearly highlighting the complexity of maintaining and improving the operations of a smoothly running City.

Several times councilors raised the question as to the impact of increased workloads on a staff that is currently smaller than in the past and being asked to take on more and more responsibilities.

"Have you heard anyone complaining?" Gorayeb queried, assuring Council that staff can handle the work.

One new hire being considered is a building official who would take over the duties now being performed on a contract basis by staff from the Deschutes County Building Department. There is also preliminary interest in looking at the viability of hiring a part-time grant-writer/public-relations person.

Deliberation on the goals lasted for three hours until several Council members needed to leave for other commitments. At a future workshop, Council will complete discussing a few remaining items and then will determine their final 2016 goals and prioritize them according to importance and timeliness.

One goal suggested by

a majority of the Council, with agreement to pursue it, was review of the need for an increase in the system development charges (SDCs) currently charged developers and builders when they apply for permits. SDCs are levied to help cover the cost of increased sewer and water infrastructure to handle the impact on the City's systems by the new construction. SDCs ensure that current residents are not required to pay for expansion and improvements necessitated by new building projects.

There are also parks SDC fees to cover expenses for increased demand on the City's parks system. Currently, Sisters SDCs are considerably lower than those of neighboring communities.

Another concept proposed for investigation is the possibility of a "Makers Lab Initiative." The City could look into what an industrial arts/creative arts/startup incubator facility might offer Sisters in terms of local entrepreneurship and economic opportunity.

There was much discussion about the ongoing concern for improving Council outreach to the community, to provide adequate transparency and communication. Several vehicles are already planned to keep the community better informed, including a

quarterly newsletter from the Community Development Department about new projects being proposed in the city as well as any code updates.

Public Works Director Paul Bertagna plans a quarterly news release to run in *The Nugget* to help keep the community informed on upcoming projects, road maintenance/construction, potential traffic delays, public events, and water/sewer system work planned.

Council will continue to post important notifications and information in the monthly City utility bills. They will also explore, in a future workshop, improving the clarity of the agenda item summaries.

Affordable-housing needs in Sisters, and possible enhancements by the city to attract developers to build such projects, are still at the top of the Council priorities. They will also continue to work with EDCO to attract family-wage jobs to encourage families to move to Sisters.

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