

Sisters Habitat for Humanity seeks City assistance

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Sharlene Weed, executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Sisters, made requests for some type of City assistance with five projects Habitat has planned.

At last week's Council meeting, she requested that the City extend the deadline for the System Development Charge waivers for transportation and parks on houses planned for Village Meadows on Brooks Camp Road and

McKinney Butte Road. She also asked that the instrument guaranteeing affordability be simplified.

Two other requests for fee waivers totaling approximately \$20,000 have to do with a modification to a Master Plan and a Zone Change and Comprehensive Plan amendment. There is also a request to ease requirements for upgrades of sidewalks and planter strips.

Weed asked for the City to support Habitat's application for funding through Oregon

Housing's LIFT program to help build eight affordable housing units in the Clear Pine subdivision.

In preparation for building a new 20,000-square-foot Thrift Store/ReStore at the corner of Adams Avenue and Cedar Street, Weed asked the City to resolve the question as to whether or not Cedar Street will eventually be pushed through. Their plans are at a standstill until that issue is resolved. Weed also hoped the City might help with infrastructure expenses, and

waive some fees on the new building.

Weed pointed out to Council that Habitat for Humanity has partnered with 63 families since it was founded in 1991. The homes are sold at zero percent interest usually over 30 years. The monthly payments are generally around \$650.

The last houses that closed in December 2017 sold for \$130,000 with an appraised value of \$260,000. Those homes sold to families who earn 60 percent or

less of median income, which amounts to about \$38,000 for a family of four. Habitat homeowners work all over town, from BiMart and St. Charles to FivePine and the Sisters School District.

Habitat provides seven full-time jobs with benefits, and seven part-time jobs. The Thrift Store and ReStore annually provide about \$300,000 each to provide over half the income needed to do the work of Habitat. Last year 242 Habitat volunteers provided 19,000 hours of service.

Sisters readies for Battle of the Books

The 2018 Region 7 Oregon Battle of the Books Tournament is set for Saturday, March 10, at Sisters Middle School. Registration of teams and training for volunteers start at 8 a.m. and battles begin at 9 a.m.

Teams from four Eastern Oregon counties in divisions 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 will compete. The top two teams in each division will move on to compete at the state OBOB finals on April 7 at Chemeketa Community College in Salem.

At the regional Battle of the Books tournament, 50 teams will participate in a round robin, quiz-style competition hosted by Sisters Middle School. Student-teams in each division read up to 16 books and answer questions on the content of those books written by volunteer teams of teachers, librarians, and others.

Participation in this competition fosters a love of reading in students and can generate excitement about academic achievement. The program continues to grow each year to the point now where thousands of students participate at the school level in this literary enterprise.

In many schools the final school team is selected in a competition held in front of the entire student body, so the reach of the program extends beyond just participating team members. The positive image of reading created by the Battle of the Books has incalculable effects on attitudes toward reading of a large number of area students.

For more information visit Oregon Battle of the Books <http://oboblsta.pbworks.com>.

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