

Affordable housing project to break ground soon

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Provided a compromise can be reached between the City's attorneys and Tom Kemper of HousingWorks and his partners, ground will be broken next week for the 48-unit affordable housing apartment complex to be built on two separate parcels of land along Brooks Camp Road, north of McKinney Butte Road.

At last week's Sisters City Council meeting, an agenda item called for discussion and approval of an agreement between Central Oregon Regional Housing Authority (CORHA) dba HousingWorks and the City of Sisters for a \$300,000 grant for the development and construction of a multi-family affordable-housing development at Village Meadows Phase 2 and authorize the City manager to execute the agreement subject to legal review and approval.

A legal glitch in the language of the agreement surfaced that could delay the beginning of the project, given the fact there are nine layers of financing and five different groups of attorneys involved in the project. However, Council approved the agreement with some contingencies, and the City attorneys are still fine-tuning the agreement to make sure it works for all parties involved.

On September 8, 2016, City Council approved the allocation of \$300,000 to the project in support of Council's number-one goal for the year – securing affordable housing in the city. Other Central Oregon cities have made contributions to affordable housing in their communities with monetary contributions, providing land for a project, and services such as paving of project streets.

Kemper has been working with City Council and City staff for over a year-and-a-half to bring an affordable townhouse rental project, similar to Tamarack Village, to Sisters. The 33 units at Tamarack Village have an average waiting list of one year.

The new project will consist of six buildings and be offered for rent at 60 percent of adjusted median income. There will be seven three-bedroom units, nine two-bedroom units, and 32 one-bedroom units. The site plan has been approved and the building permit is nearing final approval for issuance by the County.

Kemper estimates the entire project will cost \$5.5 million. The Land Innovation

and Fast Track Housing (LIFT) Program money will provide about \$38,000 per unit. Many different funding sources are essential in order to build the new project because it costs just as much to build affordable housing as it does to build market-rate

apartments, and the costs aren't offset enough when the rents need to be affordable for people who make 60 percent of the adjust median income in Deschutes County.

The \$300,000 will cover most of the project's system development charges:



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water \$99,111.75; sewer \$57,264. The balance of SDC fees due (\$14,586.21) will be paid by the developer. \$127,974.30; transportation \$30,236.16; and parks



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