

# Tighter rental regs on table

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

Despite protest from the real estate community, the Sisters Planning Commission is recommending tighter regulation of short-term rentals in Sisters.

Commissioners voted unanimously on May 17 to recommend the Sisters City Council approve Text Amendment #18-01, which covers a variety of topics within the Development Code. The amendment requiring the most time and receiving the most public attention dealt with Chapter 2.15.2700 Special Provisions – Vacation Rental Housing Units, revising VR/short-term rental regulations.

Strong opposition came from local Realtors who mounted an email campaign against stricter regulations regarding short-term rentals (STR). They were particularly opposed to the lack of transferability of a property's approval as a STR when it changes ownership. They claim the lack of transferability could be a deal-breaker for buyers who are purchasing residences in Sisters as second homes.

Realtors also questioned the methodology for determining the percentage

increase in STR allowed each year. They also requested clearer language regarding grandfathering of existing STR.

On the other side of the aisle, local neighborhood residents expressed concerns about dilution of their neighborhoods with increasing numbers of STR, not having full-time neighbors, noise and trash from renters, and negative impact on their property values.

The Planning Commission and staff tackled the issue of STR at the direction of the City Council, which has had as a goal for four years the regulation of STR. They are attempting to be proactive rather than reactive in addressing vacation rentals, which are impacting all Central Oregon cities. At issue are questions of livability and character of the community versus the rights of private property owners.

There are currently 67 STR properties in the city approved or being reviewed. With approval of the text amendment by the council, the cap would start at 104 properties and be increased by four residential units each year to account for growth.

Currently the STR owner must have land-use approval

and acquire a City business license each year and pay transient room tax. Under the new regulations, each STR owner would have to acquire an operator's license. For new properties, an operator's license would be required in order to get a land-use approval. The land-use approval doesn't run with the land but rather with the owner.

For properties that are grandfathered in, if they sell, the new property owners would be required to get an operator's license and would receive priority as far as the annual cap is concerned, moving to the front of any waiting list. However, it would have to be accomplished within 60 days from the time of the title transfer.

Properties that receive approval after adoption of the text amendment is approved by City Council will not be eligible to transfer their STR permit. Current STR owners will be given until July 1, 2019 to secure an operator's license.

The City Council will be reviewing the STR amendment at their May 23 workshop, and at their June 27 regular meeting will hold a public hearing before voting on the full #18-01 Text Amendment.

## CIVIL WAR: Encampment covered meadow for three days

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was General Lee's favorite cannon. And was widely used by both sides," Whatez said.

During the reenactment all the members wear authentically reproduced clothing, handle blackpowder weapons, cook over open fires and sleep in canvas tents.

Life during the Civil War in 1863 wasn't easy, and the reenactment members presented their activities and struggles during the war. Visitors were welcome to walk around and mingle with the reenactors viewing life as it was back in 1863 during the war. They got the chance to watch everyday lives of the men, women, and children of that time period.

"People are encouraged to go around and ask questions," Banks said.



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Sisters resident Holly Foster possesses several letters from the Civil War.

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For more information contact Matt Kirchoff at 541-647-7586.