

O P I N I O N



The Sisters Elementary School kindergarten staged a performance of "Pajama Party" last week in the school gym. The young actors enjoyed their time on stage.

PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

# Grappling with growth in Sisters

By **Cory Misley** Sisters City Manager  
**Nicole Mardell** Principal Planner

Land-use planning in the U.S. began in the late 1800s at the intersection of three vocations: public health, architecture, and social work, as all three groups had concerns about the arrangement of cities and the potential impacts of their growth.

In weighing all of these interests, the process of land-use planning was created to ensure thoughtful, orderly, and consistent review of construction projects. Zoning was established for public health and quality of life purposes, to separate industrial parks from residential areas, and to ensure an adequate mix of uses — homes, commercial services and retail, park space, and economic development land were all balanced. Development codes containing requirements for materials, building layout, and spacing were put into place to ensure a standard for development was set. The public hearing process was created so members of the public could verify that these standards were being met and properly applied.

Planning has evolved immensely since that time. In 1973, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill No. 100, requiring all cities and counties in Oregon to participate in a state-wide land-use system with specific goals and policies. One of the most notable requirements of this program is to concentrate development into cities with a defined boundary in which growth can occur, so that rural lands containing significant natural resources and working farm and forest land can be preserved. This drew a legal line in the sand around cities, prohibiting urban sprawl with state oversight. One consequence of this program is the pressure on cities of all sizes to grow.

In Sisters there are two arenas in which land-use planning exists. The first is application review (i.e. the recent Three Winds Master Plan), a responsive process at the intersection between individual property rights, for an owner to be able to reasonably develop land that they own, and the legal

guidelines that the City has adopted in its development code. When an application is submitted, the codes that are in place cannot be changed. This is known as the "Goal Post Rule," and ensures applicants have clear and objective standards to meet to entitle their land for construction. The second is through development code and plan amendments.

The City's development codes and zoning can be changed through a standalone process with state noticing, outside of review of a specific application. Wording changes are often initiated to fix issue areas (such as height limits or parking requirements), address changing conditions, or new topics. These code changes cannot target specific construction sites, but rather must have citywide impacts and meet statewide goals and policies.

There are two big ways that you can meaningfully participate in this process. You can provide input in the application review realm on the details of a specific development project by asking for higher-quality materials, building orientation to limit disruption to existing properties, additional landscaping and open-space areas, among other things. Although approval is based on code requirements, these "asks" are appropriate.

If you're interested in a holistic review of the development code and policies surrounding land use and their applications, you can also participate in the upcoming Comprehensive Plan amendment process. The plan guides the City's overall vision for development and growth for the next 20 years. This plan will also inform future updates to the code and development standards.

It is up to us as a community to be receptive to development where the code allows, while also providing meaningful input to ensure the high standard of quality and character continues in our built environment. If you have any questions or want to talk through any elements of planning and land use, don't hesitate to reach out. Call 541-549-6022.

## Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is 10 a.m. Monday.

To the Editor:

Last night, Monday, March 2, I came home from the movies to find my daughter upset. It seems like through a Facebook post she found out my dog was missing. It turned out alright, someone down the street found her and brought her home.

Now the rest of the story: It seems the gate in the corner facing St. Helens was open and neither of us had opened it. Noel didn't have a collar or tags on when she was brought home. I found the collar the next morning about 40 feet from the open gate, unhooked. There was no way she could have got it open or off by herself.

I have been a responsible pet-owner, my dogs go to the vet on a regular basis and I had a fence built to keep them out of the street. They have a doggie door to get in and out and the yard is theirs. Both my dogs run out and mostly greet everyone who walks past.

My greatest fear is someone opened the gate and took her. Did she get away from you

when you stopped to take off her collar? It was right in the driveway behind my car. Did you think she was just so cute you had to have her? Did you think you could love her more than I do? She was my Christmas present in 2017 to replace a dog that I had for over 18 years. I got her through potty training and broke her of shoe-chewing and dragging any article of clothing she found out the doggy door and into the yard. She has been my companion and best friend for over 2 years, and if I had not got her back this would be such a different letter.

So, if the one who tried to take her reads this, know she is chipped, and the vet knows her. And also know that I am putting locks on my gates to keep her safe. A six-foot chain length fence should have discouraged you; it didn't, but locks on all the gates should. It really bothers me that I should have to do that in Sisters to keep her safe. But I will. She is part of my family.

Shirley Miller

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 57/27	Sunny 55/29	PM Showers 54/24	Snow Showers 34/14	Snow Showers 31/14	Partly Cloudy 38/17

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