

LAW: Contract takes effect in Sisters this summer

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and levels of law enforcement. The survey showed a willingness to pay more for increased and enhanced law-enforcement service, with 52.5 percent of respondents “very willing” or “somewhat willing,” while 23.9 percent were neutral, and 23.5 percent were “somewhat unwilling” or “very unwilling.”

The data gathered indicated that the one biggest perceived threat to public safety in Sisters as perceived by the respondents is traffic, with a 50.2 percent response, followed by property crimes at 22.5 percent and drugs at 12.8 percent.

Data did not show a significant increase in crime, especially serious crime, and Sisters remains a safe place by any measure — but Misley notes that people’s perception is that public safety in Sisters has “slipped.”

“The perception of public safety is very important,” Misley said. “Our conclusion is that we did need more police, and the question becomes how much more.”

The City of Sisters contract with the Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office was due for renewal, which made it an opportune time to revisit Sisters’ law enforcement services. While there was some sentiment in the community that Sisters should reconstitute its own police force, the financial, logistical and liability requirements to do so were daunting.

“I can say with confidence that having a police force... is a very large general fund expense for cities that have one,” Misley said. “We would have to essentially double what we’re contributing to law enforcement if we had our own police force.”

In actual dollar terms, that would be approximately \$1.5 million rather than the \$725,000 called for in the new, enhanced contract. And that is not counting start-up costs such as vehicle and equipment purchases.

The Sisters City Council signed the contract with the sheriff’s office at its March 11 meeting. The contract calls for Sisters to have a dedicated force of one lieutenant and three deputies.

The Sisters contingent will have distinct markings on its patrol cars.

More than simply having more deputies on the streets, the new program allows for considerably more local control. The deputies will be “Sisters” deputies, working in the local community. Consistency of staffing was a critical component of the agreement — as close an approximation to having its own police force as Sisters

can realistically afford to come.

“They (citizens) want to know who (is) in those uniforms,” Misley said. “They want to know that they are working every day in our community... that they have relationships in this community.... People are going to see a difference and they’ll be getting to know deputies and getting to know a lieutenant that they’ll have a relationship with. They’re going to have a really good lay of the land, and that’s really valuable.”

Another critical element, according to Misley, is a community public safety plan, which will allow Sisters to determine its priorities for law enforcement.

“We’ve never had that in the past,” Misley said. “We will be creating that over the first year of the contract.”

The Sisters contingent remains under the command of Sheriff Shane Nelson, so local control is not absolute, and the City and the sheriff’s office will have to work together to determine priorities and how resources should be used.

“I don’t want to overstate these changes,” Misley said. “I think they’re substantial... but I don’t want to overstate that whatever we ask for we’re going to get.”

Misley feels that the new contract hits a sweet spot, the bottom line of which is that “this contract creates more law enforcement presence in Sisters, Oregon.”

HOUSING: Project has seen many modifications

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meeting to allow Hall to respond to potential conditions of approval proposed by Council members during the May 27 meeting.

In the original 2007 development agreement between the City and ClearPine, the developer agreed to construct eight affordable-housing units as part of the development and they were to be constructed by May 2020. Early in the process, Hall told the City he doesn’t normally build affordable housing so they would be completed by another builder, or perhaps Habitat for Humanity or NeighborImpact.

As market-rate housing construction continued in ClearPine, and another builder had not been identified, Hall agreed to sell six lots to Habitat for Humanity at a reduced price to build affordable housing. The other two units, being built by Hall as rental units, consist of a two-bedroom, two-bathroom single-family home for four, with a one-bedroom accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on the same property. They will both have deed restrictions to maintain them as affordable-rental units for 20 years.

The original deadline for all the affordable units to be built was May 2020. Due to delays in acquiring

funding from Oregon’s Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Housing Program and then the onset of COVID-19, the May 2020 deadline has come and gone.

The coronavirus shutdown of the Habitat for Humanity Thrift Store and ReStore has negatively impacted their income stream that is a key revenue source of Habitat’s affordable-home construction program.

In the meantime, 3 Sisters Partners has constructed the single-family home/ADU to meet the original requirement (modified) of a two-unit duplex and will record a deed restriction in order to be sure those two units will remain affordable for the required 20-year period.

Council wanted to have conditions of approval that are straightforward and easily enforced, given the history of modifications requested in the past. One condition requires that building permits for the six affordable-housing units being built by Habitat must be secured prior to Hall being able to move forward with Phase 4 of the subdivision. During negotiations, Hall agreed to cover the cost of the transportation and parks system development charges (SDCs) for four of the Habitat units (approximately \$3,400 each).

He told councilors he would be encouraging Habitat to secure their building permits by December 1, so he can begin work on Phase 4.

With the conveyance of the six lots to Habitat for construction of affordable units, 3 Sisters fulfilled its obligation to provide and construct a six-unit rental complex as specified in the 2007 Development Agreement and subsequent land-use approvals. The City approved a modification that allowed for the units to be built as three two-unit affordable-housing buildings for Habitat owners.

The construction of the deed-restricted single-family and ADU rental units fulfills the developer’s obligation to provide and construct a two-unit duplex as specified in the 2007 agreement. Filing deed restrictions ensure such units will remain affordable for the required 20-year period.

By placing two affordable-rental units on the market in 2020, and Habitat offering six affordable-housing units for sale to its client base in 2021 and beyond, the City decided 3 Sisters has fulfilled all obligations to construct and provide affordable-housing units within the City of Sisters as specified in the 2007 Development Agreement and all subsequent land-use approvals.



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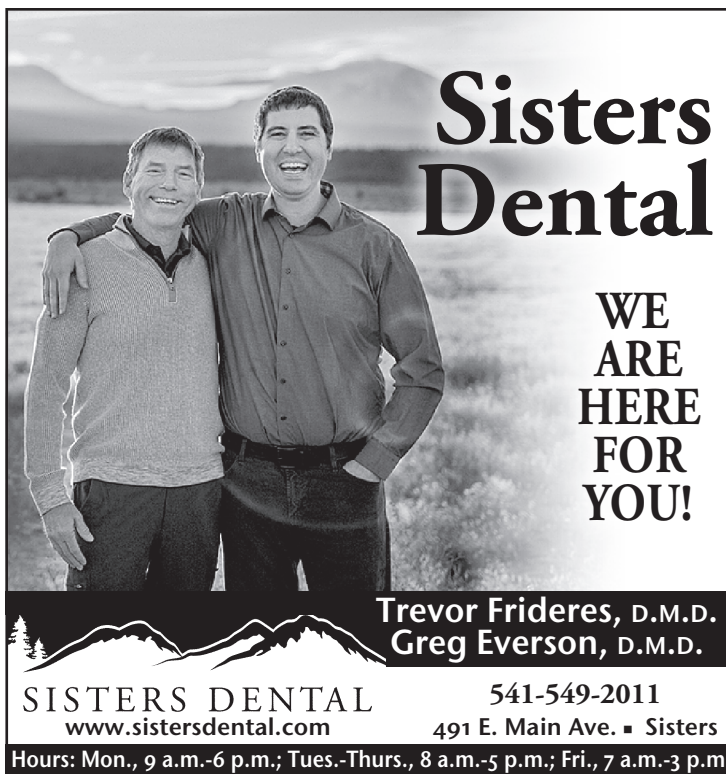
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