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Silverton council axes development plan

JUSTIN MUCH
SALEM STATESMAN JOURNAL
USA TODAY NETWORK

Silverton is amenable to planned unit developments (PUD), but not the way this one was planned.

That is the message Silverton City Council delivered to a packed council chambers on Monday, Dec. 4, following lengthy deliberation on a proposed development of 9.51 acres on the north edge of town, south of Hobart Road, bordering James and Jefferson streets and west of the East Willamette Valley Railroad tracks.

The development's conceptual plan was approved by the Silverton Planning Commission earlier, and that approval was under appeal.

"The city council upheld the appeal, reversed the planning commission decision, and denied the application," Community Development Director Jason Gottgretu summarized.

The council vote was unanimous.

Two weeks earlier the council agreed to hear the proposal "de novo," as requested by an appellant of the subdivision, Mary Rose Brandt. That agreement essentially meant the council would take testimony from

scratch, which it did at length as the public hearing and council meeting continued for more than 4 hours.

The hearing compelled the city to postpone another controversial issue on the evening's agenda, a smoking ban in city parks and downtown, until its first meeting in January.

Developer Gene Oster of Silverton, his counsel, Silverton attorney Owen Von Flue, and a planning engineer, Natalie Janney of Multi Tech Engineering, explained to the council that they had provided the city with all required information for the conceptual plan's approval.

The commission had approved the plan with 30 conditions, which the developer agreed to meet.

Brandt, who lives on a James Street Century Farm across from the proposed development, expressed concerns about the project's compatibility with the area.

"The point of planning is to (avoid) incompatible uses," Brandt said. "You don't put a noisy factory next to a nursing home, so we shouldn't put a large housing development next to hundreds of acres of farmland."

Her counsel, David Coulombe of Corvallis, argued

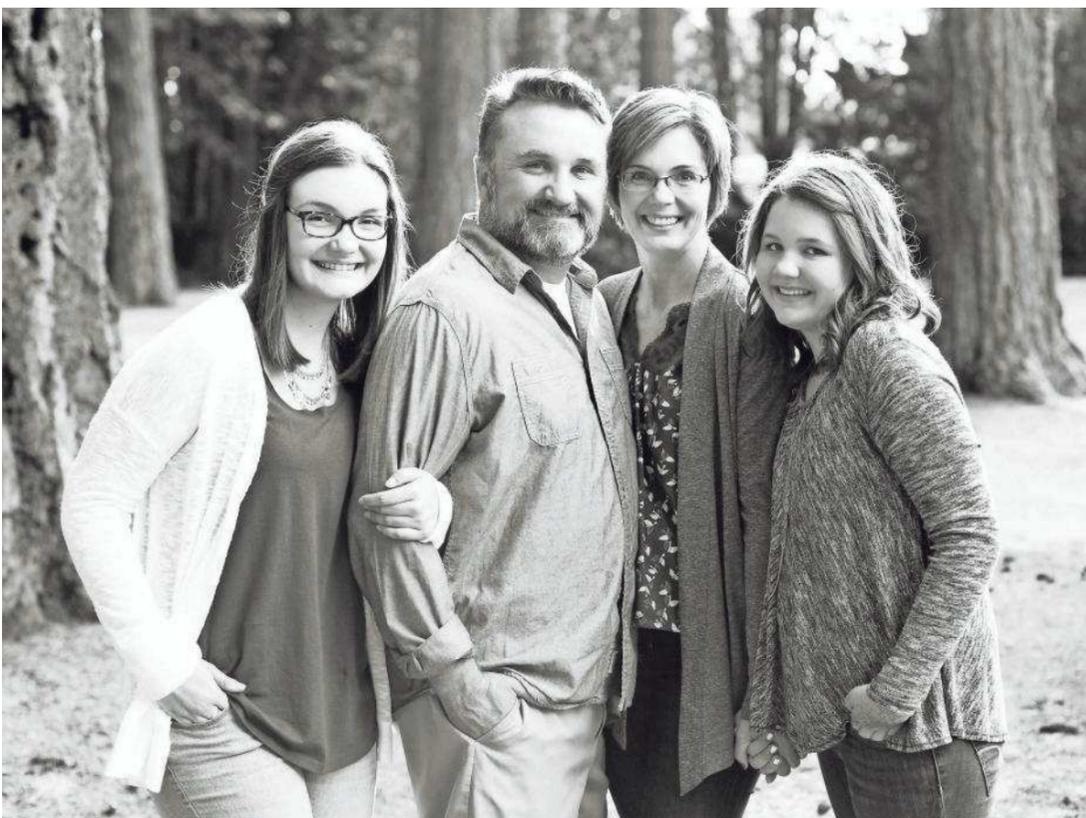
See PLAN, Page 2A



A planned unit development of 56 lots on roughly 9.5 acres at 608 James Street at the north end of Silverton has been a topic of much discussion. The Silverton City Council rejected a conceptual plan for the site that was approved earlier by the city's planning commission. JUSTIN MUCH/STAYTON MAIL

An 'amazing soul'

Silverton teen's tragedy inspires acts of kindness



Silverton High School graduate Elizabeth Hoke, left, stands with her family for a group portrait. Elizabeth died in a car crash last September. SPECIAL TO THE APPEAL TRIBUNE

CHRISTENA BROOKS
SPECIAL TO SALEM STATESMAN JOURNAL
USA TODAY NETWORK

In the nighttime hours after Silverton High School graduate Elizabeth Hoke died in a car crash last September, her parents, Anthony and Kristan, felt a grief so heavy they wondered how they could survive until sunrise — and then live the next day too.

"It felt like all the oxygen had been sucked out of the room, and I couldn't breathe," said Anthony. "When a child dies, you're not wired for it as a human being."

In those same dark hours, a thought coalesced in his mind. He should start a fund to help other kids do good in the world like his daughter would've. To carry on her spirit. To thank the community that made her who she was. To survive.

"We had to find a way to carry on this amazing soul," he said.

Now, less than three months after Elizabeth's death, the Hokes and their close friends have created

"She was shy, sweet and wickedly smart. She grew from a shy young girl to a vibrant and confident young woman."

ALISON STOLFUS,
SILVERTON HIGH SCIENCE TEACHER, REGARDING ELIZABETH HOKE

the Elizabeth Ashley Hoke Memorial Trust, a nonprofit that is funding 10 scholarships for local students, has purchased books for area schools and has hosted a free Thanksgiving meal.

On Thanksgiving Day, more than 200 people, many regular attendees of Silverton's free weekly community dinners, came to Immanuel Lutheran Church to eat a feast conceptualized and cooked by the Hokes,

See TEEN, Page 3A

A shout out to young professionals

CREEKSIDE CHAT
JUSTIN MUCH

Cool, crisp weather outside around Silverton make the cozy coffee shop at Live Local a popular place on Wednesday, Dec. 6.

There weren't any direct takers for a Creekside Chat, but there were scattered conversations whirring among local patrons that touched on current issues around town that week, such as growth, development and upcoming codes that may create a smoking ban downtown and in Silverton's parks.

Those issues have swamped Silverton's city councilors, but individually councilors have marked out a segment of time during meetings to promote less controversial, yet certainly community enhancing, events and activities.

A new group in that fold is Rotaract, shared by Silverton City Councilor **Rhett Martin**, who defines it as a service club for adults age 18 to 30. Rhett tipped his hat to **Elvi and Tim Sutton** and **Tess Schurter** who he said "have been an integral part of getting this going."

Silverton Rotaract will meet twice a month to exchange ideas, plan activities and projects and just to socialize.

"While the Silverton Rotary club will serve as the sponsor, our Rotaract club will decide how to organize and run the club and what projects and activities to carry out," Martin said.

The idea is to give young men and women the opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills that will assist in personal and professional development while also addressing needs of the community.

Martin said a broader Rotaract aim is to promote better relations between people worldwide through a framework of friendship and service.

"It offers the unique chance for young professionals to serve their community, meet new friends, and build their professional profile all at the same time," Martin said. "Regular meetings will be held (6 to 7:15 p.m.) on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month in addition to a monthly club social gathering."

Anyone interested in learning more about Silverton's Rotaract should attend the first meeting, 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20, in the upstairs mezzanine of Main Street Bistro, 201 E Main St. You can also inquire at silvertonrotaract@gmail.com or on Facebook at [facebook.com/silvertonrotaract](https://www.facebook.com/silvertonrotaract).

See PROFESSIONALS, Page 2A

Next chat

What: Creekside Chat

Where: Live Local Coffee, 111 Water St., Silverton

When: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20 (First and third Wednesdays)

Questions and information: Contact Justin Much, jmuch@StatesmanJournal.com; cell 503-508-8157; or follow at twitter.com/justinmuch

Oregon invests \$10.3M in CTE

NATALIE PATE
SALEM STATESMAN JOURNAL
USA TODAY NETWORK

More than 200 Oregon middle and high schools have secured career readiness grants totaling \$10.3 million.

The Career Technical Education (CTE) Revitalization Grants will serve communities around the state with programs focused on advanced manufacturing, engineering, agricultural science, aviation, robotics, forestry, home construction/renovation and biomedical/health sciences.

Recipients were announced Dec. 4.

"Our state's ability to attract and retain good jobs is fundamentally linked to the availability of a skilled workforce," said Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian.

"(These) grants mean that more students ... will have access to hands-on learning programs," he said.

"As our economy changes — especially with automation on the rise — the importance of skills training in middle school, high school and throughout a person's career will only continue to grow."

The 32 grants will leverage additional funds and resources from 582 local business and community partners, benefiting 205 schools statewide.

"These programs are good for students, good for businesses, and good for local communities," said Colt Gill, acting state deputy superintendent.

The grants build on earlier investments by the Oregon Legislature in 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2015 totaling \$23 million.

The CTE Revitalization Advisory Committee reviewed 64 applications totaling \$21 million in requests. Officials said they prioritized applications based on geographic diversity, community partner-

See CTE, Page 2A

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