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Building department continues to prosper

by DAN DILLON

While communities throughout the United States sing the blues about the apparent paralysis of the construction industry, Sandy has maintained an even keel — gradually growing in its monthly valuations.

One possible answer to the seeming steadiness is the current swing to smaller, more affordable homes by local contractors.

"One thing that has happened," said Sandy Building Official Tom Day earlier this week, "is that the guys who were building splits and tri-levels are building smaller houses."

Those smaller houses, in the \$50,000 to \$55,000 price range, are easier to finance and the current trend shows it.

During December, 32 permits were issued; five building, four plumbing, two miscellaneous, seven mechanical, three water and sewer, and eight plan reviews for the state Department of Veterans Affairs.

Although this represents a slowdown for the first time since the national

economy slumped, Day said he knows of 30 to 40 buildings going right now in Sandy.

"The high cost of money for housing has stopped building except for Farm Home or Veterans, but commercial will probably keep going," he said in a monthly Building Department report.

As of Jan. 2, the city had a valuation on new buildings of more than \$3.2 million at the halfway mark in the fiscal year. "Our income through the Building Department at the fiscal halfway point is \$138,935.12, for all permits including water and sewer and system development charge," the monthly report said.

Day said that the amount collected exceeded what was anticipated. But that is getting to almost be expected at the Building Department.

He said that although the city tries to be conservative in its estimates of what revenue will be generated, "the Building Department has never cost the taxpayers one cent."

"All in all, it has been a very good year," Day said in the report.



Photo by Dan Dillon

With the unseasonal sunny weather, Kelso School blocked off the parking lot during recess and created a roller skating rink. Even an occasional sit-down, like first grader Walter Dillard's, doesn't cast a shadow over the good time.

Portland man accused of Boring homicide

A 19-year-old Portland man has been charged with the murder Saturday night of a Sam Barlow High School counselor who was shot to death at the Boring home of his former wife.

Thomas Johnson, 42, of Troutdale, died instantly when he was struck once in the chest by a bullet fired from a rifle, according to the Multnomah County medical examiner.

Johnson was shot about 8 p.m. Saturday at the home of his former wife, Lou Ann, at 10170 Eastmont Drive in Boring, according to Ross Cravens, Clackamas County's chief deputy district attorney.

Arrested at the home in connection with the shooting and accused of murder was Michael John Hendrix, 19, of Portland. He was being held without bail in the Clackamas County Jail in Oregon City.

Cravens said Johnson went to visit his former wife about 6:15 p.m. Saturday. Cravens alleged that Hendrix, who reportedly worked at the same store with Mrs. Johnson, was at Mrs. Johnson's home.

Two persons witnessed the shooting, he said. The rifle used in the shooting did not belong to the Johnson household.

No other details were being released by the Clackamas County sheriff's office or district attorney's office, pending completion of a police investigation.

Johnson was employed by Sam Barlow High School in 1972 as a full-time counselor and head boys basketball coach. He was the counselor for some 350 seniors this year, having counseled the same group of students

since the beginning of their freshman year 3½ years ago.

"There's such a feeling of loss, especially among the seniors," said Barlow Principal Bob Taylor. He described students' and staff reactions to Johnson's death as ranging from shock and disbelief to "compassion" for Johnson's family. Johnson's two oldest daughters attend Barlow, he said.

Jack Gleason, a U.S. History teacher at Barlow who worked with Johnson to develop a college and career counseling program at the school, said he was "shocked greatly . . . I think we all are. It hasn't really quite hit us."

"I had a great deal of respect for Tom," said Gleason. "I remember he always had the time to talk to you . . . especially to students. He was a very caring, open individual."

Jim Babson, a counselor for Barlow's freshman class, said Johnson's death was "a terrible irony, really. He'd spent most of his life trying to help people . . . he was a real compassionate guy. It doesn't seem just, somehow."

Johnson came to Barlow from Knappa, a small community near Astoria, where he had been a full-time counselor and head basketball coach at the high school. He also taught social studies and counseled at Glide and Gaston High Schools and at Medera High School in California.

He is survived by his four daughters, Linda, Kathy, Gayden and Kristy.

No funeral arrangements have been made because of the police investigation.

Deadline for plan appeals draws near

by DAN DILLON

The city of Sandy has set a deadline for appeals by landowners who feel they did not get a fair opportunity to address the city before their property was rezoned with the adoption of the updated zoning ordinance.

This is not to say that the city is reopening the ordinance for public scrutiny, City Planner Don Wilson said, but rather, it is bringing the document back for some "minor fine tuning."

The city will review any appeal that is received before Feb. 15, if the landowner feels the zoning was changed without his getting a proper chance to testify during the adoption process. From then on, the plan will be reviewed only on an amendment basis which requires the appellant to pay a fee.

Since the adoption of the city's updated zoning ordinance, the city staff has received several formal and informal requests for changes in the zoning of particular parcels or amendments to the text of the zoning

ordinance itself, according to Wilson.

The approach of the staff has been to accumulate the requests and bring them before the Sandy Planning Commission at one time. At its Jan. 7 meeting, the commission decided to hold public hearings at its Feb. 4 and March 4 meetings to handle the various requests.

At the February meeting, the commission will hold a public hearing on a zone change and comprehensive plan change request from V.J. Keating of Baker who owns the site of the previous Mt. Hood Animal Clinic at 37820 Highway 26. He wishes to change the property's zone from high density residential back to general commercial.

A modification of the home occupation provisions of the zoning ordinance will also be considered. Billie McNutt, who operates a hypnosis center at her home, 38336 Hood Street, requested a small identification sign which is not permitted under the present standards.

The commission will also consider a zone change for properties between Pioneer Boulevard and McCormick Drive.

These properties offer good opportunities for commercial development for frontage on Pioneer, according to Wilson. The area also has unique problems due to the topography and dual frontage onto McCormick Drive.

Potential for conflict arises if the properties north of McCormick Drive develop under the present zoning standards.

City Attorney Jack Hammond is expected Feb. 4 to offer his interpretation of the city's zero side-yard standards to see if the ordinance allows each half of a duplex to be sold separately, splitting an 8,000-square-foot lot into two parcels.

As currently applied, the city's zero side yard development standards offer no bonus in density, in that the technique may not be used to decrease average lot size or increase density.

ESD cuts would hamper local services

The superintendent of Clackamas County Education Service District (ESD) has prepared a \$6.2 million proposed levy for 1981-82 and a pretty gloomy budget message for the District's budget committee.

The gloom in that message could spill over into services at both Sandy Union High School and the Sandy Elementary School District if the ESD levy is rejected by voters at the March 31 election.

According to Bob Burns, the superintendent of ESD, the District's "future is in a state of uncertainty. Since 1977, their responsibilities have burgeoned while during that same period of time their financing capabilities have deteriorated."

The ESD will ask for approval of a \$6,228,274 levy that would provide stable funding for the ESD through 1985. If the levy fails, the ESD will be thrown back on last year's levy plus the 6 percent increase allowed by law.

At SUHS, the defeat would mean "our whole operation would have to shore up," said Superintendent Jack Peters. "We think ESD is an essential arm of our school district."

He said the district gets a "tremendous service" from the ESD film library on a daily basis, and

pointed out that services including career education and classes for the trainable mentally retarded would be curtailed.

The district also uses the date processing service through ESD. "We certainly appreciate the services they bring to a small school district," Peters said.

At its Monday night meeting the SUHS School Board passed resolutions authorizing the ESD to continue providing special services for the high school such as instruction for mentally retarded developmentally disabled students, student assessment, services for handicapped students and educational media services.

"We are now at a point where we've cut every corner, rounded every rough edge, streamlined every program and

gone after every grant to provide services," Russ Nelson, of ESD told The Post. "There ain't nothing else to do — we'll have to cut programs or pass a levy."

Failure means the proposed levy would have to be reduced by \$3,086,856 or nearly half. Most of that reduction — \$2,620,935 — would come from the Handicapped Child Fund which is intended to help county school districts cope with the rapid increases in new programs and rising costs in special education.

If the levy fails, the ESD will have to cut staff and services as well as the Handicapped Child Fund to stay within last year's levy plus the 6 percent growth factor, Burns said. Cuts will be based on a priority study completed last month by the Superintendent's

Council. The council is a group made up of superintendents from nine of the 28 school districts in Clackamas County served by the ESD. Peters serves on the council.

The cut list for both personnel and programs will be finalized during the first two weeks of January, according to Burns. It will go to the ESD Board at the February meeting along with the proposed budget.

"We hope we won't have to institute the staff and program reductions," Burns said. "However, if the levy doesn't pass in March, we will have to be ready with a plan to live within the budget we will be allowed."

He added that the school districts in Clackamas County served by the ESD are involved in the planning wherever possible.

Law project aids local seniors

The possibility of facing a large bill has traditionally been a deterrent to persons in need of legal advice.

If the problem turns out to be inconsequential, they are faced with a bill for consultation. If they don't seek the advice and later wish they would have, the problem ends up being compounded.

For senior citizens living on a fixed income, the possibility of a bill for a half hour of a lawyer's time is prohibitive.

But that needn't be the case anymore. The Clackamas County Senior Law Project, begun through the Clackamas County Area Agency on Aging, offers an alternative.

Once a month at the Sandy Senior Center, an area attorney offers a free half hour of consultation to any senior member of the community.

The philosophy of the program, according to Sandra Potter, Community Services director, realizes that many seniors do not know when they need legal advice. It understands that they are afraid if they approach an attorney, they may be strapped with legal fees.

Thus, it gives the senior citizen an opportunity to get his or her legal matters straightened out.

Subsequently, they may be able to save additional money when they get into the actual legal matters as a result of their free preliminary consultation. Sandy attorney John Pefley is one of

five area lawyers who have volunteered time and he is sold on the project. "I believe community service is important in the legal profession," he said, "and you meet a lot of interesting people."

Generally, three things bring the seniors in for consultation, Pefley said. Wills and estate reviews, real estate problems and landlord-tenant problems make up the bulk of the inquiries.

"This provides an opportunity so they know they get a half hour of a lawyer's time without getting nicked," he said. "If they do need a will, then I charge my standard rate. But a lot of people's papers are in order and they get some peace of mind finding that out."

One case that is an outgrowth of the Senior Law Project involves the Sandy Golden Age Club.

The group, founded in 1970 to give help and assistance to senior citizens and to further interest in the community in matters relating to senior citizens, is trying to change its non-profit status. Faced with trying to cut the bureaucratic red tape, they haven't even been able to get the Internal Revenue Service to send them an application for the change. Pefley has gone to bat to help them out.

Currently, the group's status prevents donors from claiming tax deductions on their donations. A change in status would allow that to happen. Pefley said, the directors and himself approach the task of changing with

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