

On current path, new Keizer families will have limited space

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

If Keizer attempted to absorb all of its projected growth within the existing city boundaries, the next 3,800 families moving into new, single family homes would be placed on one-tenth of an acre each, roughly 5,100 square feet.

Bob Parker, a projector director at ECONorthwest, a consulting firm assisting the city in a housing needs and buildable lands analysis, told members of the committee reviewing the data that Keizer has only 450 acres of vacant and partially vacant land. Even

that is a generous estimate because it takes into account privately-owned large lots that could be subdivided further. Reaching the 450-acre capacity would require motivating the owners to develop their property to the maximum possible extent.

However, it's not time to sound the alarm, yet.

"The important part of this process is strategies to accommodate housing for the next 20 years. It's pretty clear that the city will have unmet housing needs," Parker said.

That means the Housing Needs and Buildable Lands Inventory Task Force will

be doing some heavy lifting in the months to come. The group met most recently on Feb. 21.

Topping the list of needs is accommodation for families making less than \$35,000 per year. Keizer was recently designated as rent-burdened by state officials. About 54 percent of renters in Keizer are paying more than a third of their monthly income on rent, and 25 percent of homeowners are in the same situation when it comes to their mortgage.

"The city is not producing enough housing to accommodate those making less

than \$35,000. We need to find a way to work with the market and encourage the market to address those needs," Parker said.

Community Development Director Nate Brown said the city has run out of "green field" development spaces that attracted developers looking to capitalize on Keizer's low property taxes and equally low system development charges.

"I think we need to fill in the gaps. If we zone it they will come. I feel like we need to be picky and get what we need out of it," said Nick Stephenson, a member of the committee.

Parker said the current market isn't forcing redevelopment at this point, but that some space could be recouped by changing some commercially-zoned land to mixed use, given that the need for commercial land needed in the past might not be as great in the present.

Rick Kuehn, another member of the committee, said the city is between the proverbial rock and hard place.

"From a business perspective, Keizer needs to grow. From a residential perspective, I want it to stay as we are," Kuehn said.

Brown countered that a

"business need" for the city to grow has not yet been identified. He said the task force needs to help determine whether such a need actually exists and how to balance growth with sustaining services for existing residents.

"Can we continue to meet our needs [such as adequate funding for public safety services] while investing in new infrastructure for expansion? Developers will only pay for their share for constructing new homes, not expansion of capacity," Brown said.

A public input session following the meeting and recapping prior work only drew a handful of residents and stakeholders.

obituaries

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Ruby Brock

February 15, 1924 - February 14, 2019

Ruby Brock was born on February 15, 1924 in Forest City, Iowa to Bertha and Rudolph Strand. Her family immigrated to the United States from Norway. She grew up in Iowa and Minnesota during the Depression and enjoyed the closeness she felt in those small, rural communities. Ruby was an excellent student with a keen intellect and a superior memory for detail. As a young adult in the early 1940s, Ruby moved with her family to Oregon to find employment. She lived in west Salem and worked in Schreiner's fields, the Del Monte cannery, as a cashier and later assistant manager for Warner Brothers that owned the Elsinore and Capitol theaters,



and for the telephone company.

Ruby met her husband Howard on a blind date to an Oregon State University ball. They were married in 1951, living briefly in Medford and then moving to Grants Pass where Howard worked in the state and federal forests. Two daughters, Janet and Barb, were born there. As a homemaker, Ruby excelled at canning, cooking, sewing, and knitting. She even upholstered the living room furniture, at least twice.

In 1965, the family moved to Astoria where Howard taught forestry at Clatsop Community College. There Ruby had the opportunity to begin to pursue her dream to

graduate from college. In late 1969, when the family moved to the Salem-Keizer area, she enrolled at Oregon College of Education (now WOU) and graduated with a degree in Humanities in 1975. She attended Willamette Law School and was offered a position as Title Examiner at Willamette Valley Title Company, where she worked until her retirement.

After retirement, Ruby traveled around the western United States and Canada with Howard in what she called the "tin tent" and enjoyed spending time with family. She was married for 54 years until Howard's passing in 2005. In 2008, Ruby suffered a stroke and moved to Orchard Heights where she lived for the past ten years. She endured many health limitations but continued to offer kindness to all around her and was much loved by the residents and staff.

Ruby was preceded in death by her husband

Howard, sister Sylvia, brother Raymond, and son-in-law Nick. She is survived by her daughters: Janet (Dee) Carlson and Barb Jones; along with six grandchildren: Erika (Keith) McCauley, Justin (Jessica) Carlson, Christian Carlson, Rick Jones, Kim (Frank) Gorgei, and Torrey (Audra) Jones; plus ten great grandchildren.

Ruby was one of the Greatest Generation - a strong and independent woman with high ideals

who valued honesty, loyalty and work. She sacrificed her entire lifetime for her family and will be greatly missed.

The family expresses appreciation to the staff at Willamette Valley Hospice and Prestige Orchard Heights for their loving care, and to Virgil T. Golden and Belcrest Memorial Park for the funeral arrangements. A celebration of life will be held at Prestige Orchard Heights, 695 NW Orchard Heights Road, Salem, on Saturday, March 9, at 2 p.m.

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