

# City completes updates to housing code

BY CHARLES GLENN  
Of the Keizertimes

A much-publicized hearing drew only one Keizer resident with questions for the Keizer Planning Commission about the upcoming changes to the local housing code as a result of recent legislation.

Rhonda Rich, recently appointed as the West Keizer Neighborhood Association president, appeared at the public hearing to ask questions about lot sizes and development restrictions.

The April 13 session opened with an updated presentation from Brandon Crawford, representing Angelo Planning Group (APG) – a firm hired by the city to help get Keizer’s housing code into compliance with HB2001. The house bill, along with the state Senate’s SB458, effectively ends the ability of cities over a certain size to zone exclusively for single-family homes. Keizer has until the end of June to approve or modify APG’s recommendations.

“I’m not totally understanding what this middle housing is and I don’t know what the average lot size is in Keizer – I was wondering, are townhouses a possibility in our

neighborhood?” asked Rich.

Shane Witham, Keizer City Planner, confirmed that townhomes would be allowed under the new laws and that such developments count as middle housing.

Witham said lot sizes in Keizer vary to such a degree that getting a firm number for the average lot size is problematic.

“I can’t really give you average lot sizes in Keizer because it really does vary – some lots are in the quarter-acre and even up to the half-acre range,” said Witham. “But in what I would call the more established neighborhoods, those lots were developed at a time where the vast majority

of lots were developed to be in excess of 7,000 square feet.”

Rich also asked if the city was zoned for single-family housing at all, or if that was a thing of the past.

“The zoning for Keizer is primarily single-family – more than 70 percent of the residences are zoned for single-family development – that’s just the way it was when we became a city in the ‘80s,” said Witham. “A simple way to explain it is that we’re essentially redefining what a single-family home is,” said Witham. “So up to a

four-plex, we treat it the same as we would a single-family home.”

The key reason Witham and others have been seeking public input is because if the city doesn’t complete and approve an amended zoning plan by June, the state has a model plan which will supersede the city’s policies. The model plan, according to Witham, would be more disruptive to the future of Keizer residential land development than any plan the commission produces or amends.

Matt Lawyer, who chaired the planning commission meeting, thanked APG and others who contributed to the completed set of recommended changes, and expressed some frustration over the way the city was forced into compliance.

“We’ve had a lot of discussion – some disagreements – but really I think we’ve made the best out of a situation that we have no control over,” said Lawyer. “This is a big ask for a city that’s already constrained.”


A motion was made and passed at the end of the hearing approving most of the recent changes.

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“To put it simply, we’re essentially redefining what a single family home is.”

— SHANE WITHAM  
Director of Planning, City of Keizer

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**PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY**  
Publication No: USPS 679-430

**POSTMASTER**  
Send address changes to:  
Keizertimes Circulation  
142 Chemawa Road N.  
Keizer, OR 97303

Periodical postage paid at Salem, Oregon