

HOUSING

The
Portland
Observer

City wants more in-house rentals allowed

The Portland Bureau of Planning is considering zoning code changes to allow small apartments to be created in or added onto almost any single family home in Portland.

The proposed changes in the auxiliary rental proposal were originally scheduled to come before the Portland Planning Commission on June 24, but the hearing has been

moved back to July 8.

The A Overlay Zone, developed during the Albina Community Plan process in north and northeast Portland in the early 1990s, allowed small "granny flat" apartments to be created within large older homes, over garages or in back yards in separate structures in selected areas. The zone also allowed the building

of row houses on properties that have been vacant for at least five years. The provision caused more public debate than any other part of the plan, and led to the wholesale removal of neighborhood boards that supported it in Irvington and Overlook.

The Planning Bureau now hopes to apply liberalized versions of the

zone, minus the rowhouse development proposal, to all single family homes in the city, according to planner Jim Claypool. Right now only eight to 12 accessory units per year are being built, and the city hopes to increase this to 10,000 to 12,000 over the next 20 years. The new units could provide needed inexpensive housing for the elderly or students, he says.

The biggest "hot button" in the proposal, and one Claypool isn't sure will be brought forward, concerns owner-occupancy.

Right now, when accessory rental units are built, either the rental unit itself or the main house must be owner-occupied. It is the only type of housing in the code where this restriction applies, and some planners wonder if it is legal or practical to enforce it. If tenants in accessory rentals became a problem, Claypool argues, they could be dealt with through the city's Chronic Nuisance ordinance, allow the city to take action against properties that attract

problem behavior.

Another change concerns additions. You cannot now add an addition to a house to create an accessory rental, or create one in a house less than five years old. The problem, Claypool says, is that you can add onto an existing house for any other reason, so it is easy to circumvent this provision. The proposal would do away with it.

A related change concerns the size of the units and the houses they may be built in. The current regulations say that when accessory rentals are built, they must leave a main house of at least 1400 square feet, in effect, this means the house must be quite large to begin with. The proposed changes are still being developed, but they would allow much smaller houses to be converted.

The proposals were well received at two community workshops held in April attended by about 60 people, Claypool says. However, since then opposition is gathering. The Laurelhurst Neighborhood Associa-

tion is opposing the changes, and last week the Concordia Neighborhood Association voted to follow suit. A third neighborhood, Piedmont, has expressed concerns about the changes.

"We decided that Concordia should be a neighborhood of single family homes with detached garages," former neighborhood chair and state senator Bob Boyer said.

In Piedmont, former chair Betsy Radigan said that in the past absentee landlords have been a source of problems, and the proposed changes may add to this. "We found that many landlords were unaware of the impacts their tenants caused," she said.

Concordia resident Leila Piazza was less sure. "On one hand, I don't like the idea of a lot of people converting their houses into rentals," she said. "On the other hand, it would be nice to allow an apartment for someone's mother-in-law, and the current regulations don't allow that."

RENTERS' RIGHTS FORUM

Problems with your landlord? Learn your rights as a renter at the County Alliance of Tenants' - CAT - Renters' Rights Forum. A lawyer will give an overview of the Landlord/Tenant law in Oregon and answer questions. CAT will then lead a discussion on how tenants can work strengthen their rights as renters. The Renters' Rights Forum is an excellent opportunity to learn valuable legal information which will help protect renters from landlord abuse and neglect. The Renters' Rights Forum will be held Tuesday, June 17th, 7:00pm at the Turning Point Family Center - 6552 SW 19th Ave - Off Vermont. This event is free and wheelchair accessible. Free childcare will be provided if arranged in advance. For more information or to register for childcare, call the County Alliance of Tenants at 288-0317.

Western cities lead with neighborhood problem solving

Grass roots citizen service centers win confidence from Scottsdale, Arizona to Portland

BY GREGORY LAForge

When her neighbor's brush pile grew into an unsightly mound, an irritated Dagni Harkema looked no farther than her son's elementary school for help.

She didn't have to call City Hall in Scottsdale, Ariz., and talk to some faceless bureaucrat. Instead, she sought a familiar face just a few minutes away at the Citizen Service Center at Sonoran Sky Elementary School.

"I'm not the kind of person to complain. I wouldn't have known

who to call at City Hall and I would have been intimidated," said Harkema, a 44-year-old homemaker and school volunteer. "I didn't know what (the center) did but I went in and said, 'Maybe you can help me.'"

The roadside eyesore in the hilly development in north Scottsdale was cleaned up within a few weeks, thanks to the efforts of a "neighborhood specialist" who, Harkema recalled, "took over the problem and followed through."

Carla Cole, coordinator for one of

West Seattle's two neighborhood centers, provides services to the nearly 35,000 residents of the Duwamish Peninsula and keeps abreast of residents' concerns and fears as well as keeping up to date with the political scene.

"I see myself as an overt double agent, serving both the city and the neighborhood," Cole said. "People complain they're so isolated from Seattle out here. But we help connect the neighborhood to the city and we provide convenience."

Seattle's program has been a

model for other cities. Even some urban counties, such as Clark County, Nev., which surrounds Las Vegas, are studying the concept and have come to Seattle for ideas.

In Portland, Ore., the city has established offices in eight neighborhoods. Unlike Seattle and Scottsdale, however, Portland has geared its offices to support neighborhood groups, providing technical assistance to 93 neighborhood associations.

"A lot of copying goes on in our offices," said Diane Linn, director

of Portland's Office of neighborhood Associations.

Each office is staffed with a coordinator, a crime prevention specialist and other support staff to assist residents. The cost to Portland is about \$1.7 million a year.

"In many ways, we provide a lot of helpful services," Linn said. "It breaks down sometimes. We have our problems but overall, I think people see it as an asset."

St. Petersburg, Fla., officials set up City Hall in the Mall -- in a 10-foot by 12-foot booth at the Tyrone

Square Mall, the busiest in the region -- in 1990.

Here, residents can pay utility bills, watch City Council meetings on a television monitor, fill out a voter-registration form and browse through city job openings.

"People don't expect to see government in the mall when they're shopping for a dress or a refrigerator," said Joni Riedmillert, the site's supervisor. "But I think they find it convenient, and I don't think it's just a matter of saving money on a stamp."

POLICE NEWS

Asian Gang Sting Nets 16

A six month long investigation into Asian A Street Gangs operating in the Portland area has concluded with the arrest of 16 suspected gang members, and the recovery of over \$150,000 in property.

Gang Enforcement Team members began making arrests on Thursday and continued over the weekend.

Individuals arrested have been charged with a number of crimes, including weapon charges, burglary, theft and drug related offenses. Those arrested were lodged at the justice Center jail and have recently been arraigned, or are scheduled for arraignment.

Search warrants were also served at homes located at 5736 SE Woodward Street and 3736 SE Milwaukie Avenue. These two residences are believed to have been used to store stolen property.

The investigation began in December 1996 after members of the Asian Community expressed concern regarding the increased level of gang and criminal activity occurring in their community.

Members of the Asian Gang Detail of the Gang Enforcement Team, has received information from contacts on the street and within the community, of three prolific street gangs operating in the Asian community.

"The gangs were identified as the Nasty Boyz, the Oriental Ghetto and the V-Boyz. Officers believed that these gangs were involved in home and commercial burglaries, stealing property from vehicles, and weapon related offenses.

A plan was developed that involved two undercover Gang Team officers, posing as the business owners of an electronic store front.

The operation also involved the officers developing a rapport with gang members, while gaining their trust and confidence.

For additional information contact Captain Derrick Foxworth, pager 299-7778.

Teen girl shot in street gunfire

On Monday, Portland Police Officers responded to the 5000 block of N. Albina in regard to a person shot. Officers arrived to discover Tracy Green, black female, 17 years, of SE Portland, fatally wounded.

It appears Green was walking southbound on N. Albina, mid-block between N. Webster and N. Alberta, with three other females when the

incident occurred.

A large late 80's dark blue over light blue colored domestic vehicle carrying two black males, traveling eastbound on N. Webster, stopped at the intersection of N. Albina and fired multiple rounds in the direction of the females.

Green was struck in the upper torso by the gunfire and died at the scene.

The other subject involved were not injured. The victim, after being shot was pulled into 5021 N. Albina by the others.

Investigators believe the shooting is gang related. Anyone with information regarding this crime is requested to contact Investigative-Sergeants C. Kanzler or T. Wagner at 823-0400.

Katz responds to Rose Festival shooting

Editor's note: Mayor Vera Katz released the following statement Tuesday regarding the weekend shooting death of Kenneth Shanafelt at SW 2nd & Salmon:

"I have called Mrs. Shanafelt's home to personally give her my condolences and hope to talk with her face-to-face tomorrow. I want her to know that as Mayor, what happened to her and her

family outrages me, and that as a person who has been both wife and mother, I grieve with her for her loss.

Late this afternoon, I received a briefing from the Police Bureau and I want to assure everyone we are working to do everything we can to catch the person responsible for this horrible act. I refuse to turn this city over to a criminal element that makes it

impossible for law abiding citizens to enjoy the heart of our downtown.

Any death as the result of violence is tragic. The circumstances of Mr. Shanafelt's innocent encounter with this violence makes it the more difficult for people to understand. Finally, I want to urge anyone with information that may help find the perpetrator to please call the Police Bureau."

Emergency services coordinator arrested

Emergency Medical Services Coordinator for the Portland Fire Bureau, Tom Steinman was indicted Friday by a Multnomah County Grand

Jury on 12 counts of Theft. Bail has been set at \$165,000.

Steinman, a 22 year veteran of the fire bureau is alleged to have embezzled over

\$110,000 from city funds into his personal accounts. Six month's ago Steinman was placed on administrative leave pending this investigation.

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