

Tragedy strikes Enterprise pedestrians

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

A blistery winter evening turned tragic during the snowy evening of Friday, Feb. 15, when a car struck two pedestrians, killing one and injuring the other in Enterprise. The pair were hit as they crossed the intersection at Hwy. 82 and Holmes St., near Safeway.

Enterprise Police Department chief, Joel Fish, said the incident was reported at about 5:30 p.m. The pedestrians, Molly Wells of Lostine, 40, and Kathleen Kim of Enterprise, 80, were taken to Wallowa Memorial Hospital by ambulance. Kim suc-

cumbed to her injuries.

Law enforcement officials from Enterprise Police Department, Wallowa County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police responded as did emergency services personnel including two ambulances and Enterprise Fire Department.

According to Chief Fish, eye-witness accounts at the scene relayed to responding law enforcement that the women were attempting to cross southbound over West North Street, i.e., Hwy. 82, through the Holmes Street intersection when they were struck by an westbound car. An eastbound car had stopped to

let the women cross.

Addressing the weather conditions and visibility at the time of the accident, Chief Fish explained that it was snowing heavily at the time of the incident and he noted that it was one of the worst times of day to drive. "You can't really see anything," he said.

Flora's Charles Cannon, 54, was behind the wheel. Chief Fish said that law enforcement officials noted that the driver did not appear impaired at the time. It is unknown if a citation will be issued.

The Wallowa County Chieftain will update this report as new information comes in.



Jaime Valdez/Portland Tribune

The Oregon Legislative Assembly at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem.

Housing bills sponsored by Portland legislators draw complaints from east side

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

As Oregon communities struggle to fix housing problems, solutions sponsored by legislators on the west side of the state are drawing complaints from Eastern Oregon.

The city of Hermiston is voicing opposition to a bill banning single-family residential zoning in communities of more than 10,000 people.

House Bill 2001, sponsored by House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland), would require cities to allow "middle housing" — duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes and cottages clustered around a courtyard — in all of its residential zones. Proponents of the bill say it will help reduce the state's housing shortage and create more diverse neighborhoods.

Hermiston city planner Clint Spencer said the city has "pretty strong feelings" against the bill. He submitted written testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Housing for a public hearing held last Monday.

Spencer called the bill a "top-down" solution that takes control away from cities. He said it also conflicts with Statewide Planning Goal 1, which seeks to include citizen input on all stages of land use planning.

"It would be changing the character of existing neighborhoods without the neighborhood having any say in it," he told the *East Oregonian*.

The bill as currently written would retroactively include existing zones within cities. Spencer said for many neighborhoods in Hermiston, the water and sewer pipes, street width, on-street parking and other elements were planned with single homes in mind. If someone was able to start building fourplexes on empty lots there instead, it would in some cases require new infrastructure to accommodate the strain.

"Who pays for that?" he asked.

Allowing multi-family dwellings in all residential zones would also impact long-term planning that cities already poured time and money into creating, as it essentially "quadruples our buildable land."

Spencer said he agrees that communities need to find solutions to their housing shortages, but there are better ways to do so. Hermiston, for example, saw an increase in housing permits issued last year after making several changes, including the creation of an infill program and easing require-

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Clint Spencer, Hermiston city planner

ments for setbacks and lot coverage.

If HB 2001 passes, Oregon would be the first state to ban single-family zoning. But cities such as Minneapolis, Minnesota have started to embrace the tactic as a way to diversify neighborhoods by removing a designation that has historically kept low-income families and people of color out of certain neighborhoods.

Proponents also hope that the bill will encourage new housing to open up faster as developers add multi-family dwellings instead of traditional houses to lots. The Oregon Housing Alliance submitted testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Housing stating there is a "mismatch between the types of homes available, the people who need a place to live, and the incomes that people earn."

"Increasing the number of homes which can be built per lot, subject to reasonable restrictions allowed under HB 2001, may over time either help to decrease the cost per home or offer options which are better aligned with current needs based on household size," wrote the coalition.

House Bill 2001 is one of several bills introduced during the legislative session

in an effort to tackle Oregon's housing shortage.

Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athens) recently spoke out on the Senate floor about Senate Bill 608. The bill caps rent increases at one per year, at no more than 7 percent per year plus the consumer price index. It also bans no-cause evictions for tenants on month-to-month leases after the first 12 months.

"One size does not fit all," Hansell told his colleagues. "If Portland has a problem — and I believe they do — don't impose the fix on the rest of the state."

He said housing developers and landlords in his district have written him to say that the bill would unfairly tilt Oregon's housing laws in favor of tenants. A tenant would be able

to give 30 days notice without cause to exit the lease, for example, but a landlord could not.

Hansell said the bill, while meant to protect tenants, would actually hurt them as landlords became much more strict in their screening process and housing developers pulled out of Oregon altogether. He said landlords needed to be able to raise rents fast enough to keep up with increases in property taxes and other costs.

"You're eliminating a free market and turning it into a state-run business," he said.

Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), one of the bill's sponsors, told the Senate that when she was knocking doors to campaign, the top worry she heard was housing insecurity.

She said she heard from people who had lost their long-time homes due to evictions for no apparent reason, and met seniors, families and children who were displaced from their neighborhoods or even left homeless due to "extreme rent spikes."

"I heard from parents afraid to request repairs or complain about mold for fear of receiving a no-cause eviction," she said.

The bill passed the Senate on Tuesday by a vote of 17 to 11 and was sent to the House.

Branson

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