

HOUSING from page 1A

According to Day, there have been significant delays to the original start-up date of the project due primarily to a backlog of documents that must be reviewed by the Oregon Department of Justice and the start to a funding program known as the LIFT (Local Innovation

and Fast Track) Housing Program.

"We assumed that we would be breaking ground roughly six months after the award, because that's kind of typical of housing projects that are using some kind of public subsidy," said Day. "It turns out we were optimistic in that timeline and we underestimated the amount

of work that it would take OHCS (Oregon Housing and Community Services) to stand up the program."

The lot size is 1.73 acres or 73,359 square feet, with the plot zoned as Multi-Family Residential. The plan is to locate 12 homes there, including a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units, simultaneously.

The property will be placed in a Land Trust, which is a form of ownership where the land is legally separated from the structures and held in trust by a nonprofit, in this instance NEDCO, and the buildings are owned by individuals.

In 2018, Lane County determined the value of the property at \$245,522 and a similarly zoned property sold in Florence recently for \$213,333 an acre.

The NEDCO development is referred to as a "cottage cluster," which is defined as a development

of smaller homes centered around a common space. The homes will all have some individual space — perhaps a patio or small garden — and will share the common areas.

The hope is the development will eventually be able to offer homes for sale at prices that are below the current median average, according to Reiman.

"Erin did a quick study of 86 homes that were sold in Florence in the last six months and the average sale price was \$230,000. So, there is a just a really basic disconnect between what moderate income families can afford and the homes that are available for them in the market, which is really driven by the cost of creating new housing," Reiman said.

The delay in starting the Airport Road project was a concern for Florence Mayor Joe Henry, who voiced his

desire at Monday's meeting for assurances that the delay would not be repeated.

"I am absolutely in favor of this project, but I think this also touches on another of our council goals, which is communication and trust," Henry said. "A year-and-a-half ago, we told our community that this project was going to happen and last year we went out and recruited buyers. I don't know what we told them when it didn't happen, but I do not want to see that happen again."

Both representatives reiterated the hope that the delay in starting the project was nearing an end as the grant application for funding the project had been approved, assuring Henry that it was merely a matter of time until the money was received.

There was one essential element to the final approval of the funding, according to Reimann, and that was for the city to sell the land in question to NEDCO.

Henry then asked for a motion to authorize City Manager Erin Reynolds to

enter into a property sale agreement with NEDCO and Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services for the sale of 1424 Airport Road. The motion was then made, seconded and approved unanimously by the four councilors in attendance.

In other business, councilors received a positive quarterly financial report from Administrative Services Director Anne Baker and approved an engineering proposal presented by Public Works Director Mike Miller from Civil West Engineering for water and roadway improvements on Ninth Street.

Reynolds also notified the council during her city manager's report that city offices at Florence City Hall, 250 Highway 101, would now be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily and a new drop box has been installed for after-hours bill paying.

The next Florence City Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 16, beginning at 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit ci.florence.or.us.



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