

Community leaders work to improve development in CG

By Caitlyn May
cmay@cgsentinel.com

When current Cottage Grove Councilman Mike Fleck was running for mayor last year, he focused on several issues, including development within the city of Cottage Grove; specifically the matter of System Development Charges or SDC fees. It was, and still is, Fleck's contention that the fees, meant to help offset the addition of a new business to a city's streets, water systems and other public services, are too high.

"My concern is that they're just so high that they're killing development," Fleck said. "But when I started talking to Travis at the chamber to look at that, we expanded our discussion into the whole development process."

The result is what Fleck is calling a development focus group. Together with Travis Palmer at the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, the two will hear from residents and other individuals concerning the obstacles to development within the city.

The group will reportedly operate as a sub-committee to the

chamber with Fleck taking on a facilitator role rather than a leadership position.

Fleck was careful to note that the new focus groups were in no way criticizing current or former staff at the community development or planning offices but noted the high demand for affordable housing in Cottage Grove.

"Especially with such a huge rental shortage, my focus is not low income specifically but I do believe by increasing the number of rentals, it certainly will help folks across all income levels," he said.

"We invited people in the industry or a related field who have experience in Cottage Grove and outside. We want to know what we're doing right and how we compare to other communities," Palmer said.

The initial meeting, according to Fleck, would be held for residents to give their input on development in the city and what factors they think play into the shortage of construction. Subsequent meetings would focus on a "broader discussion" concerning issues in the city code, SDC fees, permit fees and any other factor that currently hinders de-

velopment.

Newly appointed director of planning and community development, Faye Stewart would also have a role in the focus groups with Fleck explaining his hiring came at the perfect time.

"Initially, before Faye Stewart, Travis and I were going to do this from the outside and give recommendation from the city," he said. "Any time you have a new person there's always a great opportunity to do a fresh look at how you do things."

The shortage of housing in Cottage Grove has been the center of discussion for months, if not years, with several solutions popping up.

Cottage Village Coalition has teamed with Eugene nonprofit, SqaureOne Villages to create a 13 tiny home village for low-income residents in danger of becoming homeless. Under the terms of their grant, the group must complete construction by the end of 2018.

Hayden Homes has also attempted to ease the crunch of affordable housing by creating a development of rental cottages currently under construction as well.

Cottage Grove woman arrested for same crime, one year later

Jessica Bennett, 27, was arrested on Saturday, April 22 on seven charges of contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor.

According to Lane County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Carrie Carver, "At 10:46 a.m., the sheriff's office received a report of an assault in the Cottage Grove area...The case has been

referred to our detectives and is actively being investigated."

Bennett was arrested last year for the same crime when she was allegedly discovered to be having sexual relations with her neighbor's son.

In July 2016, the teen's father discovered her in his son's bed while the boy got dressed nearby. The report noted used con-

dom wrappers were discovered and Bennett told officials she had, had sex with the boy several times. She pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 10 days in jail and two years of probation.

Bennett is expected to be in court again on May 30 after pleading not guilty to the latest charge.

LCSO responds to CG suicide

The Lane County Sheriff's Office has confirmed that it responded to a medical call in Cottage Grove on Saturday, April 22 for a deceased juvenile.

Cottage Grove authorities confirmed they responded to the scene on a call of a gunshot wound and secured the premises for the fire department and sheriff's office.

No further details were released and the Cottage Grove Sentinel does not publish the names of deceased juveniles without prior consent from their families.

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Cottage Grove

ART WALK

The Sidewalks of Historic Downtown Cottage Grove come alive Friday, April 28 for the first Art Walk of the season.

This anticipated event brings together artists, musicians and community to celebrate our talented, artistic and diverse population.

New this year: BUSKERS FOR CG ART WALK ... APRIL
VIOINIST Kira Carver...
JAW HARPIST Nico.....
SINGER/SONG WRITERS/GUITARISTS.....Bob and Tanya
JAZZ DUO Guitarists Jacob St. Clair and Matthew Staples on Saxophone

The Cottage Grove Art Walk is a free community event held monthly from 6-8pm, the last Friday of the month April-October, rain or shine.

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Reception Hall at the Cottage Grove Community Center

May 4th, 2017
Moonlight (2016) (rated R)
A chronicle of the childhood, adolescence and burgeoning adulthood of a young, African-American, gay man growing up in a rough neighborhood of Miami.



May 11th, 2017
Do the Right Thing (1989) (rated R)
On the hottest day of the year on a street in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, everyone's hate and bigotry smolders and builds until it explodes into violence.



May 18th, 2017
13th (2016) (rated TV-MA)
An in-depth look at the prison system in the United States and how it reveals the nation's history of racial inequality.



May 25th, 2017
Selma (2014) (rated PG-13)
A chronicle of Martin Luther King's campaign to secure equal voting rights via an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965.



June 1st, 2017
Their Eyes Were Watching God (2005) (NR)
A drama set in the 1920s, where free-spirited Janie Crawford's search for happiness leads her through several different marriages, challenging the morals of her small town. Based on the novel by Zora Neale Hurston.



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700 E Gibbs Ave Cottage Grove, OR 97424
541-942-3828