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Local group facilitates 'love, not hate'

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove Community United encourages dialogue to promote diversity

On Aug. 22, community members and guests came together to discuss hate; where it comes from, what it means and how to eliminate it from Cottage Grove.

The event, billed as a discussion with guest speakers from around the region, was put on by Cottage Grove Community United as part of an ongoing effort by the group to

Promote diversity in the community. Other efforts by the group include the signs on several windows in downtown businesses urg-



GREG LEE/FOR THE COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

A roundtable discussion between area citizens was held last week in an effort to focus on embracing community diversity.

ing a community "united against hate" that appeared earlier this year. According to the group's social media

presence, it is "dedicated to encouraging and celebrating diversity, the elements that make us unique as well

as what binds us to-gether." The Aug. 22 discussion featured panelists Pastor Dan Bryant who heads

SquareOne, the non-profit responsible for Opportunity Village in Eugene and the forthcoming Cottage Village, both aimed at alleviating homelessness in the communities they serve.

Rabbi Ruhi Rubenstein, Lise Colgan, Vida Ellins and Bill Harris also took part in the discussion that opened with anecdotal instances of hate each panelist had encountered. They told stories of parents keeping their children home from school and students arriving to class hungry because their families hadn't gone grocery shopping; they were afraid to be in public, citing post 2016 election rhetoric surrounding immigration.

There were stories of school children drawing

See **UNITY 6A**

City gets funds for housing consultant

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove's efforts to sooth a growing housing crisis is getting a helping hand.

The city has been selected to receive funds by the Department of Land Conservation and Development through the Oregon Housing Project — a statewide effort to examine and work to alleviate the shortage of affordable housing within the state.

The funds will go towards hiring a consultant to work with the city to identify ways to implement a concrete housing plan to address the needs of the city which is currently experiencing a housing crunch and a soaring population of rent burdened residents.

According to city planner Amanda Ferguson, the partnership, which is set to end by June 2019, would yield tangible results.

"It would render a plan of action that will say 'do this like urban renewal or district or change your zoning,'" she said.

The housing crunch felt in Cottage Grove is regional, as well as national. Rents continue to rise with averages reaching \$1,200-\$1,500 in Eugene for a one-bedroom apartment while inventory continues to struggle to keep up with demand.

Earlier this year, it was announced that the Stewart Building on Main Street would serve as a retail shop with seven to eight apartments on the second floor that would be "mid-market" in price and the old hospital building adjacent to Community Sharing will be apartments as well.

The Department of Land Conservation and Development funds come just as EchoNorthwest finished its analysis on housing needs

See **HOUSING 7A**

CG City Council approval helps tiny house village

The ordinance decision clears the first of several logistical challenges for accessory dwellings

By Caitlyn May
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On Monday, Aug. 27, the Cottage Grove City Council approved the first reading of an ordinance that would bring the city's existing accessory dwelling codes into line with the state's updated legislation passed during the last session.

The change, essentially, according to city planner Amanda Ferguson, just means a change from allowing one accessory dwelling per lot to one accessory dwelling per existing residence. The change follows the state legislatures approval of Senate Bill 1051. However, Cottage Grove has allowed accessory dwellings for years prior to the state legislature's vote.

According to Ferguson, it wasn't uncommon for



An artist's rendering of a potential tiny house village in Cottage Grove off of Madison Avenue.

residences in the city to have apartments over garages or tiny homes in the backyard.

And while it may not have been uncommon, the re-

newed interest in accessory dwellings and tiny houses, along with the clarification in the city code, may help usher at least one tiny neighborhood.

Cottage Village Coalition has been meeting for the last three years to discuss solutions to the housing crisis in the region. Nearly two years ago, the group partnered with Eugene-based non-profit SquareOne to obtain a grant to build a tiny house community of 13 dwellings and purchased land on Madison Ave. According to the terms of the initial grant from Meyer Memorial Trust, the project was supposed to be completed by the summer of 2018. With the change in the code and renewed interest in tiny houses, the group is hoping to build its first house this fall.

According to Cottage Village Coalition's Bruce Kelsh, the terms of the grant have been extended and the group has the funds to build the first tiny home through the accessory dwelling ordinance. The exact logistics of electricity and water and how that initial

See **VILLAGE 7A**

'Zombie houses' deemed nuisance by council — again

City Council voices concerns about ineffectiveness of current nuisance laws in dealing with vacant homes

By Caitlyn May
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Last Monday night, the city council renewed its search for additional tools to combat the public safety issues caused by abandoned houses within the city's limits.

Planning tech Eric Mongan submitted a memo to the council that outlined the issue noting that the public works and development department had drafted code amendments to the city's nuisance codes.

"Recently, the city has tried unsuccessfully to use the existing nuisance code to abate and de-clar-



A 'zombie' house on Adams Ave., above, was the subject of arson earlier this year.

lic nuisances on vacant, derelict and dangerous structures that pose a risk to public health and safety," he

wrote.

The council heard proposed changes to the current code including the ability to classify buildings as being vacant and adopt standards for vacant buildings' security and maintenance.

"Before we vote, one thing," councilor Garland Burback said. "The city can't do anything on the old Soloman house on 12th and Adams. I think the city needs the ability to find out who owns these places. I want to hold off until the city has a way to deal with these places."

In February of this year, an abandoned house, also known as a zombie house, was the subject of arson when unknown individuals caused the property's garage to burn down, threatening other houses on the street. The incident came on the back of a lengthy legal juggling act on the part of the city to deal with a separate zombie house on S. Sixth Street that had

See **NUISANCE 6A**

COMMUNITY

Ribbon cutting
Community gets its first look at new Harrison Elementary School



SPORTS

Warriors victorious
North Douglas volleyball start off league play with win

INDEX

Calendar	B9
Channel Guide	B5
Classifieds	B7
Obituaries	A2
Opinion	A4
Sports	B1

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VOLUME 130 • NUMBER 46



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